

# Chu Chu Rocket Expert Battle Guide

by benjamin

Updated to v1.2 on Mar 16, 2006

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EXPERT BATTLE GUIDE                 @R3@@
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CRN1

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CHAPTER ROMAN NUMERAL ONE

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Introduction

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ChuChu Rocket is a very chaotic and fast moving puzzle game for your Sega Dreamcast system. It is also war. This guide is written to help people become better ChuChu Rocket players by revealing various helpful tips and strategies that can be used to better secure a win. While there IS a certain "luck" factor inherent in the game, bettering one's skill beyond simply mindlessly dropping tiles and hoping to collect more mice will SIGNIFICANTLY increase the player's chances of winning.

ChuChu Rocket is a game of opportunity, and a good player knows the best ways to take advantage of the opportunities as they present themselves. The Expert Battle Guide will highlight these opportunities for players so that they may become more formidable battle opponents.

This is a free guide and NOT to be sold or altered under ANY circumstance. I ONLY authorize this document for personal, non-profitable use. The most current version of the ChuChu Rocket: Expert Battle Guide can be found at GameFAQs [ [gamefaqs.com](http://gamefaqs.com) ].

If you wish to host this FAQ on your web site, then you have my permission so long as you DO NOT alter this file in any way -- that includes reformatting this document and removing or adding to it. You must link to this as a plain text file as the sites listed above do.

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April 19, 2000 [ version 0.5 ]

Original release, weighing in at 25.4 KB. Embarrassing spelling and grammatical errors account for about six KB of that document.

April 30, 2000 [ version 0.7 ]

Most sections were added to or modified in some way. All stage maps are finished, with roughly half of the stages having individual strategies now available. Spelling errors have been squashed. New section on on-line junk. All that is left to do is to add the missing battle strategies for stages 11-24.

June 4, 2000 [ version 0.9 ]

Some minor formatting and editing. Added strategies for half of the missing stages. Stages 15, 17-20, and 24 remain.

October 16, 2000 [ version 0.95 ]

This mini-update is spurred by a reader named Kirk [ [kirk.wagstaff AT cwctv DOT net](mailto:kirk.wagstaff@cwctv.net) ] who offered a couple of really good tips not available in this here guide. Check out the Juggling section in Chapter 2 and Chapter 6's Winning Pushing Fights for his new advice. I went ahead and added some stuff regarding stage 15 and 17, leaving 18, 19, 20, and 24 to be filled in.

October 20, 2000 [ version 1.0 ]

Finished writing the strategies for the four remaining stages.

The Expert Battle Guide is finally complete. I have also expanded the table of contents somewhat so that it is easier for readers to refer to a specific section of this guide.

February 1, 2006 [ version 1.1 ]

Minor update to including a code-based search system along, a note about on-line play, and some minor editing and rewriting.

March 15, 2006 [ version 1.2 ]

Minor editing.

CRN2

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CHAPTER ROMAN NUMERAL TWO

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The Art of Blocking and Juggling

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BLOCKING

[C2BL]

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This is literally the MOST IMPORTANT technique in the game. Much of what is discussed in later chapters refer to the ability to "block," so be sure practice this rather simple move.

Mice and cats follow the path of an arrow when struck. However, when a cat hits an arrow head on, the arrow shrinks in half. After another head on collision, the arrow disappears. Blocking prevents this.

Recall that when mice or cats run into a wall, they turn RIGHT. Thus, if you point a down arrow into a wall such that it is adjacent to the wall below it, then whatever hits the arrow will then run into the wall and immediately travel to the right without affect the arrow in any way. Blocking is an INVINCIBLE technique. You will learn to love it when it benefits you and HATE it when another in the lead is blocking him or herself from being struck with cats. Again, this is the most heavily used technique at high levels of play, and it is IMPERATIVE that you learn it.

Bad ASCII Illustration 1

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Tiles are invincible through "blocking"

```
.....CAT          V
                   ---
```

Cat travels right into waiting down arrow.

```
CAT.....         V
                   ---
```

Cat is sent into bottom wall and "bounces" back to the left (turning right after hitting wall) WITHOUT injuring the down arrow tile.

With this in mind, it can be possible to repel EVERYTHING from touching your rocket should the need arise by "blocking" all available entryways. Although this is quite difficult (even impossible) on certain stages, particular on wide open areas, the technique can be used with great success on the ones which allow it. You can also block an opponent to prevent them from surpassing your lead at the last minute if necessary, though it is considered rude to do nothing but block an opponents rocket for the duration of the match. Since I think such tactics are lame and ruin the competitive fun of ChuChu Rocket, they will not be covered in this guide.

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JUGGLING

[C2JU]

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The technique that allows "blocking" also can be used to tear down an opponent's arrows while trying to chase cats into his or her rocket as well as trapping and holding mice and cats at some point on a given board so that they are of no use to opponents.

Bad ASCII Illustration 2

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Juggling can hold cats and mice from opponents

```

~C8 ~C8 ~C8      _____
                   A   |
                   A < |
                   |

```

Mice run right into corner of stage.

```

_____
A~C8|
A < |
|

```

Mice get trapped in an arrow loop. They will hit the corner, run into the LEFT arrow, run into the two UP arrows, and then repeat the cycle as long as the tiles remain in their position.

Note that NOTHING can be done thanks to the positioning of the arrows. There is NOTHING an opponent can do to interrupt this cycle, meaning that whatever a player is juggling can be juggled (in theory) for the duration of the match. This is a strategy generally applied when a player has accumulated enough mice and believes he or she will win with that amount -- juggling the cat prevents any loss of a lead. The same holds true for mice if two players' scores are fairly close.

Although juggling isn't used nearly as often as blocking, both are important skills you need to develop to stand a fighting chance against experienced players.

As mentioned in the October 16, 2000 update in the Guide Release History, Kirk has an extra tip regarding juggling. He has pointed out that players can juggle cats and mice in open corners of the stages with just two tiles like so:

Bad ASCII Illustration 3

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Juggling in corners with just two tiles



From left to right: the top left corner, the top right corner, the bottom right corner, and the bottom left corner. Any and all mice and cats which walk onto either arrow will be juggled between the two tiles.

This really is a much better method than using three tiles as originally thought to be the only way, by me anyway. While I do make mention of two tile juggling in the individual stage strategies, that requires a narrow pathway and opposite facing adjacent tiles as in stage 17 or 22. Kirk's method allows you to juggle in any open corner and leaves you a free extra tile to do with as you please. It's also much, much easier to set up once you remember which direction the two tiles must face for it to work. The only negative thing I can say about this method is that it gives you very little breathing room to replace the tiles once they fade since the objects being juggled are just hovering in the center, but that's a small price to pay for all the advantages it offers.

CRN3

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CHAPTER ROMAN NUMERAL THREE

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Cats -- What To Do With Them?

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DEFENDING AGAINST CATS

[C3DE]

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Cats are your enemies. One strike from a cat takes one-third of your mice away. The horror! Well... no, not really. At the start of the game, set up your tiles such that you quickly rack up as much mice as

possible. As long as you as stealing mice from other portals, a cat or two this early in the game will not be so bad a threat that you should reset your tiles. If you only have 30 mice and a cat is heading your way, then you will only lose ten measly mice. It takes no time at all to gather ten mice.

Only worry about getting struck by cats after you have collected 100 or so mice. Use your judgment and the other players' mice count to see if you are ready to cancel your mice trail. If you have 60 mice, a cat on the way, BUT also a "50" mouse in pursuit, then it would be well worth taking the cat hit for the bonus mouse.

When it is time that you must start defending against cats, you can either block or juggle them. If you cannot block a cat, then try to juggle it with as few tiles as possible. For example, it is possible to juggle a cat in Stage 2 with only a single DOWN arrow, leaving two extra tiles to continue gathering mice yourself or to interfere with your opponents' plans. Should an opponent juggle a cat WITHIN your blocking position, your only hope is to quickly swap your blocking tiles with ones which will both defend your rocket and destroy his or her "attack block." If you absolutely need to break out as soon as possible, then you can reset your tiles while the cat is moving away from your rocket. Although risky, it can be better than wasting time banging on the appropriate button waiting for your tiles to fade.

When cats are being sent your way, DO NOT become preoccupied with a pushing match. The more time you waste trying to push a cat with away tiles is more time for other players to collect mice and usurp your lead. The keyword is DEFLECT.

DEFLECTING cats onto new paths away from your rocket is the smarter decision. If a cat is being chased to the right headed for your rocket, place an UP or DOWN arrow instead of a left. Cats will eat away at your and the opponent's tiles during the pushing match, and the fighting will waste your time.

DO NOT wait until the cat nears before reacting to it, ESPECIALLY if you are in the lead or in an open area. The MOMENT a cat enters the stage, keep an eye on it. In many ways, the best defense is a good offense. Sending a cat into another player's rocket is one less cat that will find its way into yours.

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ATTACKING WITH CATS

[C3AT]

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Cats are your friends. You can use them to help take down people in the lead or keep other players in check. Since cats also eat any mice they run into on the board, cats can also be used to devour an opponent's "50" mouse before it gets a chance to enter his or her rocket. Learn to use cats and take advantage of them before another seizes the opportunity.

As always, PAY ATTENTION to the cats the MOMENT they are released. Note the path of the cat and predict what its future position will be given the design of the board and the positioning of the arrow tiles. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you take advantage of whatever opportunity you can while playing against an experienced player. A good player

will know how to block and otherwise protect his or her rocket, so the element of surprise is crucial. The warp holes on certain stages -- holes in the border which allow objects to "wrap around" a level -- are a big plus. Players who see cats coming have time to react. Use "stealth" pathways when possible, and attack whenever a player's tiles and focus are being preoccupied elsewhere.

You can also chase cats along walls and into an opponents vicinity by "blocking" the cat into the wall, which will tear down any "away" arrows a player might use to try to stop the approaching cat. Against a player who has blocked cats in some manner, it may also be possible to juggle the cat within his or her "blocking" tiles by dropping one or more arrows.

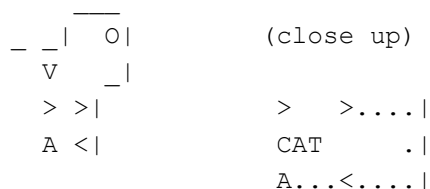
#### Bad ASCII Illustration 4

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Make blocking dangerous with juggling



Opponent drops three tiles in a block formation to prevent approaching cat from striking his or her rocket.



You drop a LEFT and an UP arrow directly underneath the other player's two RIGHT arrows. Not only is the cat now trapped in close to the opponent's rocket, but your tiles will also last longer than your opponent's since they are "fresher."

It helps knowing how skillful your opponents are before play. It can sometimes be wise to attack a "better" player, even if he is just second place, because he is better equipped to block and defend himself. Just be sure you take out the "lesser" leader as well.

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VALUE "50" MICE ABOVE OTHERS

[C4VA]

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The mouse portals release two special mice: the "50" mice and the "?" ones. It is far more beneficial to pick up a "50" mouse than a dozen or so streaming out from a portal for obvious reasons. "50" mice can easily turn the tide of the game over in an instant and are the second largest threat to your victory after cats. By collecting them, you not only increase your lead but also prevent others from quickly gaining or surpassing you in a given match. Since "50" mice are distributed randomly, your only hope is to keep an eye out for them and react as best as you can to capture it or preventing an opponent from gathering it. If you see a "50" mouse heading toward an opponents rocket, you may want to try to first block the "50" mouse from reaching his or her rocket and then sending a cat into the direction. This way you not only kill the threat of the "50" mouse, but you also have sent a cat into your opponent's rocket, likely being lead with his or her own arrows.

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DEALING WITH THE SLOT MACHINE

[C4DE]

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Mice marked with a question mark are triggers for the slot machine. The slot randomly picks one of the following level modifiers:

MOUSE MANIA  
EVERYBODY MOVE  
CAT MANIA  
CAT ATTACK  
PLACE ARROW AGAIN  
MOUSE MONOPOLY  
SPEED UP  
SLOW DOWN

Note that not a single one of these are directly harmful to you. On the other hand, getting a "Mouse Monopoly" can GREATLY increase your mouse stock by as many as 200. Also, picking up a Cat Attack saves you from any possible immediate mice loss. Thus, it is generally a good idea to try to pick up a "?" mouse if possible. Since the bonus triggered is random, always be prepared to react as quickly as possible should the effect be less than desirable.

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LEARN THE MICE'S PATH FROM THE PORTALS

[C4LE]

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Mice always exit the portals the same way on each stage in a given game. Learn what direction they run out and plan accordingly.

Likewise, notice their route along the natural walls of the various stages. If a mouse trail is hitting a wall and turning right into your rocket, there is no need to waste an arrow to "remind" them of what direction they are already moving in. Better to use the "excess" arrow(s) to gather more mice from other portals or interfere with your opponents mouse collecting.

CRN5

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CHAPTER ROMAN NUMERAL FIVE

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Handling Random Events

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MOUSE MONOPOLY

[C5MY]

If you get a Mouse Monopoly, then you should be racing to your rocket before the words have even disappeared from the screen to drop some tiles to block against the cat(s) your opponents will undoubtedly send after you. This would be a good time to juggle the cat or otherwise redirect it as far from you as possible. Since all mice flock to your rocket during a Mouse Monopoly regardless of tiles and the board, you can just sit back and enjoy the five seconds it lasts as long as you remain in a safe position.

If another player gets a Mouse Monopoly, then you obviously will reverse the roles above. Try to sink as many cats into the player's rocket as possible. Mouse Monopoly can increase a player's stock by as much as 200-300 mice depending upon how many "50" mice get sucked into the rocket. It is a powerful event which can alter the balance of the game in a matter of seconds.

In either case, the three opponent players will likely join forces during the Mouse Monopoly since there is nothing else they can do during the time. If you're the attacker, then try to anticipate and assist the others with sending cats into the lucky player's rocket. If you're stuck defending yourself against three others, then you should concentrate on either blocking, juggling, sinking the cat into closest player's rocket, or just stalling the cat. Once Mouse Monopoly ends, most players will return to their usual mouse gathering and somewhat lessen their desire to bomb you with cats.

MOUSE MANIA

[C5MA]

Mouse Mania is the most common level effect encountered. Lots of mice start streaming from the portals for eight seconds, usually with several "50" mice showing up among the masses of regular mice. Most players will drop tiles as quickly as possible to route mice into their rockets. In order to maximize the number of mice streaming into

your rocket as well as reduce the threat of several "50" mice running into your opponents' clutches, you should always be looking for ways to steal from more than one portal.

Be aware that some "?" mice may show up during a Mouse Mania event. Most people will have set up their arrows such that it leads straight into their rocket, making it an unfortunate time for another "?" mouse to trigger a Cat Mania.

If you're already in the lead, then you will likely want to focus on juggling the mice for the duration of Mouse Mania. Once the event ends, a cat will show up sooner or later and can be used to kill the threatening mice.

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CAT MANIA

[C5CA]

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Like Mouse Mania, Cat Mania floods with screen with cats for eight seconds. "Flood" is a bit of an overstatement since only four cats may be on screen at any time.

The cats will be entering from the portals -- one each -- and ALL mice will vanish from the board. You immediately should either plan to block if possible, attack, or divert the cats as far away from you for the duration of Cat Mania. Since arrows remain on a board for ten seconds before vanishing and Cat Mania only lasts about eight, blocking at the start of the Cat Mania event will keep you safe.

If you are in the lead, chances are that the players will unite to sink you with the cats. If you are unable to block your rocket from the cats, your main objective will be to deflect the cats away from their waiting tiles and sink any other rockets to buy more time. Remember that once a cat strikes a rocket during Cat Mania it will regenerate in one of the portals. If your opponents have built an indestructible path to your rocket, just be ready to take advantage of the newly generated cats to seek revenge while their arrow tiles are being preoccupied with your destruction.

If you are not in the lead, then you would be advised to attack the one with the most mice as soon as possible. If you are on a board in which it is possible to block, then setting the tiles such that blocking cannot be implemented take priority over getting the cats heading toward the player.

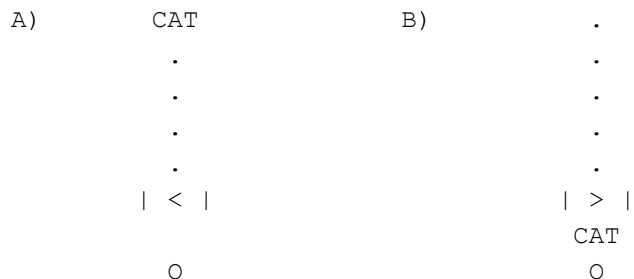
Bad ASCII Illustration 5  
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Attacking with "blocking" tiles

```
      .  
      .  
      .  
    CAT
```

| |

Cat travels down to opponent's rocket.



Note that placing a LEFT arrow blocks the cat from the opponent's rocket as shown in example A. Placing a RIGHT arrow in position (example B) instead not only counter's his or her ability to block but also keeps the cat on a path to his or her rocket.

SPEED UP

[C5SP]

Speed Up is simply a speed modifier. The game moves at about double the normal pace, and it can be very difficult to plan your moves during this event ESPECIALLY with the lag. This is why I advise for a defensive posture during the Speed Up event since you will have too little time to react.

If you feel relatively safe, then you may consider using the opportunity to attack other players. At this speed, it will be very difficult to win a push tile fight, and a spare arrow here or there can send one or several cats into a player who wasn't in a position to see or stop them in time.

SLOW DOWN

[C5SL]

The other speed modifier, Slow Down slows the game's running speed by half. This gives people more time to not only plan their moves but also check yours out and react accordingly. The only real advantage of the speed decrease is that it makes it much easier to handle routing a single mouse or cat however you wish. Unfortunately, it also gives other players more than enough time to counter your moves, and tile pushing fights can last "forever." Consider this a break and just take advantage of the extra time to check out your opponents and other activity on the board. Slow Down is easily the least useful of the random events.

EVERYBODY MOVE

[C5EV]

Depending on what your current position on a board is, Everybody Move can either be a life saver or the worse possible event in the game. Many stages have positions -- rocket locations on a board -- which are more advantageous than others. This either is the result of the stage design itself or whom you are closest to on the map. Being next to a lesser skilled player in a quick and easy mouse routing area makes winning far easier than, say, playing next to a more skilled person in a position which allows for easy interference from others. Of course, you cannot control when the randomizer chooses Everybody Move, and it is just one of the risks associated with the "?" mouse.

The only real strategy is to be able to play from any position as best as possible. If you are in a great position and do not want to give it up, then you may consider trying to rid the board of any "?" mice you see via holes or cats.

When the positions are switched, be ready to adjust your arrows as appropriate. If you had set up your arrows to receive mice in your prior position and see a cat entering that trail, then you may want to hold off on resetting those tiles until the cat strikes the opponent's rocket. Likewise, if a "50" mouse is heading to your former tile route, quickly reset your tiles by dropping three "meaningless" tiles to vanquish the older ones.

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#### CAT ATTACK

[C5CK]

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Three cats (one cat per rocket) attack your opponents or your rocket if another player collected the "?" mouse instead. There's nothing that can be done to prevent this other than collecting the "?" mouse yourself. As stated in "Gathering Mice," there is nothing DIRECTLY harmful incurred to the player who collects the "?" mouse. Collecting the "?" both increases the chance of gaining a Mouse Monopoly and avoiding getting struck with a Cat Attack.

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#### PLACE ARROW AGAIN

[C5PL]

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Place Arrow Again resets all tiles on the board. It is up to you to replace your tiles in a position which is most advantageous to you. If you were fighting over something with another play, then this is a good time to make a better path to your rocket. Likewise, if a cat is threatening your area, you can quickly mount an immediate defense without having to reset the tiles manually.

CRN6

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SPEED OF MICE AND CATS

[C6SP]

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The game moves at a rapid pace, but not all characters move at the same speed. Mice travel approximately 30% faster than cats do. How does this bit of knowledge benefit you? If a "50" mouse is circling the board, you can judge whether or not it will run into a cat (and subsequently die). If you can see that the mouse will commit suicide by the time it nears your rocket, then it would be wise to not bother attempting to capture it when all you will receive is a cat. Of course, the ideal choice would be to redirect both the cat and mouse in your favor, but this will not always be an option depending on the outside forces (other players' tiles and random events) affecting the game board at the particular time.

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PORTALS ARE IMMUNE TO TILES

[C6PO]

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It is impossible to set a tile directly on a portal. This can be of some benefit during a cat pushing match. You can buy extra time to reset your dead tiles by sending a cat back and forth over a portal. This is a useful tactic on wide open stages in which it is impossible to block.

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ANALOG VS. DIGITAL CONTROL

[C6AN]

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I personally play with digital control since I tend to dislike analog control in video games. I find the analog control in ChuChu Rocket to be too "jumpy" and imprecise compared to digital control. That said, learning to play with the analog controller can make players SIGNIFICANTLY better. There is no disregarding the speed advantage of the analog controller, which moves the pointer at DOUBLE the rate digital control does. Even if you are stubborn like me and just cannot adjust to the analog control, you can always turn to it for those moments when your pointer has to travel a great distance in as short as time as possible and swap thumbs with the digital pad once the pointer gets there.

I cannot stress enough how VALUABLE analog control is in this game. You WILL get beaten by a player using analog of equal standing since he or she will be able to implement his or her strategy before you so much as move your pointer. Players will effortlessly guide cats to your rocket, tile by tile, while you race to keep up with their movements. You will find that you are stuck REACTING to a good analog player most of the time instead of focusing on your own strategy, always moving two steps behind no matter how well you can plan or how much better your strategy is. LEARN ANALOG CONTROL IF AT ALL POSSIBLE!

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You will occasionally get in a "pushing match" -- a fight between to players and their tiles. Pushing matches are a waste of time and banging on the controller does not guarantee you will win the fight.

Instead, dupe your opponent by rerouting the mice (or cats) on an alternate path. Remember that you can have only three tiles present on the board at once, and use that to your advantage. Set up your first and second new tiles so that the other player's arrow will push the mice onto the first tile, redirecting the mice on a new path. Plan for an outer route, and when you drop your third tile to aim at your rocket, the mice will be released from the "pushing" tiles and on their way to your rocket thanks to your opponent.

If you see someone start to do this, plan to interrupt his or her scheme from the first new tile dropped. You can take advantage of an opponent's letting go and intercept if you catch him or her setting up a new alternate route.

This does take a bit of time, so be sure what mice you are fighting for are worth it -- do not fight for mice when you can gather more through the standard portal collection.

As mentioned in the October 16, 2000 update in the Guide Release History, Kirk has an extra tip regarding push fighting. He notes that sending a "?" mouse into another rocket with the two free tiles is a smart move that will often reset all mice and cats on the board. I think that's a great tip when in a pinch since both Mouse Mania and Cat Mania will remove all mice on the board. However, it is still a risky move since Cat Attack, Mouse Monopoly, or Everybody Move can really hurt your chances of winning, especially the first two if you are forced to send the "?" mouse into another player's rocket. Take note of what you're fighting for, everyone's scores, and the time remaining, then use with caution.

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Each game lasts three minutes. Warnings are given at two minutes, one minute, and 30 seconds. At the two minute warning you should be focusing on attacking the leader if you have a good chance, but not at the expense of your mice gathering. When there is just a minute left, start looking for ways to attack players with cats that are in the lead or are close enough to threaten your win. With half a minute left, you should be in the lead and concentrate on retaining your lead.

You want to make sure to attack while you still have enough time to hurt those who block. Arrows take ten seconds before disappearing, so you will need at least 30 seconds to get a cat into position and try to disable their blocking position. Of course, all this is easier said

than done, but the sooner you try the more likely you will succeed.

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ARROWS DIE QUICKLY

[C6AR]

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The arrow tiles last for ten seconds. If you are already in a blocking position and Cat Mania is activated, then be sure to reset and block again if possible since your tiles may not survive through the eight seconds of Cat Mania.

Also, consider setting up brief, temporary routes if you are currently sending mice into your rocket but need to replace the tiles. Drop a new arrow or two to continue feeding from the portal, and THEN reconfigure to the setup you were using before. This prevents mice from slipping through while you adjust, important for when the game decides to release a "50" mouse.

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LIMITS PLACED ON MICE AND CATS

[C6LI]

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There can only be one cat on a screen at a time save for Cat Mania in which four roam the stage. Similarly, there is a limited number of mice which can be present on screen -- approximately fifty mice. It is possible to slow down and even stop the portals from releasing mice by juggling as many as you can. It is difficult to suggest to actively juggle mice for this affect, though, because sooner or later a cat will strike your rocket or devour the mice.

Nonetheless, this is important to remember if you or another is involved in a pushing match. If you see two players fighting over mice and slowing down the portals as a result, it may be in your best interest to see that the push fight is settled as quickly as possible. End it quickly by ending a cat into the blob of bunched up mice and resume your gathering.

CRN7

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CHAPTER ROMAN NUMERAL SEVEN

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Understanding the Stages

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STAGE MAPS AND TIPS

[C7ST]

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The following is a list of stage maps in order to help plan better playing tactics. These are provided because it is often difficult to get a good sense of the board thanks to the frantic pace of the game.



Notes accompany each stage map for key tips on using the play field to your best advantage.

KEY:

- B = Blue rocket's starting position
- R = Red rocket's starting position
- Y = Yellow rocket's starting position
- G = Green rocket's starting position
- A = Portal from which mice/cats travel upward
- V = Portal from which mice/cats travel downward
- > = Portal from which mice/cats travel to the right
- < = Portal from which mice/cats travel to the left
- | = Indicates position of a horizontal wall
- = Indicates position of a vertical wall
- H = Indicates location of hole

NOTE: Maps are only as accurate as the ASCII character set allows. In particular, horizontal walls underneath other objects (such as those under the portals and hole in stage two) are difficult to map.

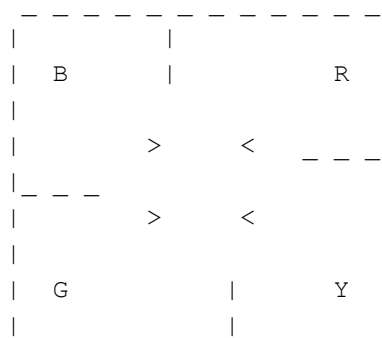
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STAGE 1

[C701]

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In this stage, the red player has the best position. Note the layout of this stage, particularly the direction of the top-left portal and positioning of the four short walls. Mice will circle red once, then circle green, then yellow, then red AGAIN, before finally getting to the blue rocket. For this reason, it could also be said that the blue rocket is in the worst position.



Of course, these are a somewhat minor advantage and disadvantage once the game starts and players start dropping tiles. Still, it does mean that the red player gets more traffic than the others, especially the blue player, although this could be a potential cat problem as well. Thanks to the red and green players' "roomier" position (given their distance from the walls), they also have more time to react to circling mice and more room for traffic.

The best immediate strategy is to drop two tiles directly in front of the portals closest to your rocket and guide the mice in with the proper arrow. Other players will attempt to interfere with you siphoning mice from two portals, but you should always be looking out to take advantage of that if possible.

Juggling is possible in the corners of the four short walls using three tiles. Since it does take all three tiles to juggle cats or mice, make sure you have established a comfortable lead. Also, try to juggle as far away as possible to give you time to react should the cat escape before you have time to replace your tiles.

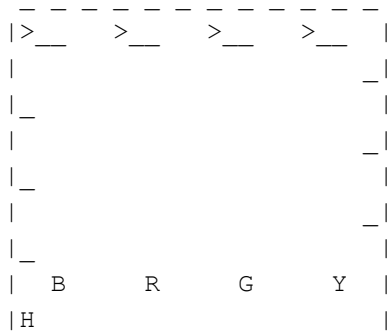
When it comes time to defend against several cats, try using the portals as part of your blockade, especially if you are in the red or

green positions which have a wider entryway. This is a weak defense, though, and you would be far better off juggling or attacking with the cats if possible. This is a very open stage, and it probably among the most difficult.

STAGE 2

[C702]

Note the hole, the bottom-left wall adjacent to the blue rocket, and the position of the leftmost portal including its surrounding walls. Its these features which give the blue player the advantage on this stage. The wall and hole allow the blue rocket to COMPLETELY shield itself from cats, an advantage unique to its position.



Also, it is possible to juggle in the top-left corner with a single tile, and while any player can do that, the blue rocket's arrow is likely to be in a better, closer position to do so.

Yellow is the second best position since its only immediate threat is the green player. Both the red and green players will have to fend off against more people being trapped in the middle, although it also means that they can quickly steal mice from both sides of the room. Of course, a good player will not allow mice to be stolen from him or her so easily, and when a cat comes into play both the red and green players may find themselves being attacked from both sides.

It is possible to juggle anything with a single DOWN tile in the top left corner, two UP tiles in the top-right corner, and three varying tiles along either side wall. Be quick to take advantage of all these opportunities should you need to prevent mice or cats from walking along the board.

As in any stage, you should be trying to take from as many portals as possible. ALL four run straight to yellow's side, so be sure to use the openings in the top wall to break into the mouse stream before other players do. A DOWN arrow can be used to release the mice while other arrows can be used to block mice from their natural path. For example, a single DOWN arrow next to the far right portal will block all mice from exiting through the right opening.

This is a rather open stage, and unless you are the blue rocket it will be difficult to defend against cats. Deflecting cats into a neighbor works best, leading a cat near your rocket and then setting it straight into another. Since all rockets have little space between them, your opponents will have almost no time to react unless they have already protected against the threat.

Bad ASCII Illustration 6

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Defensive and offensive posture for stage 2

.  
.  
.  
CAT

0 0 0

Cat travels down to your rocket (center).

V < (or) > V  
0 < 0 0 0 0 > 0

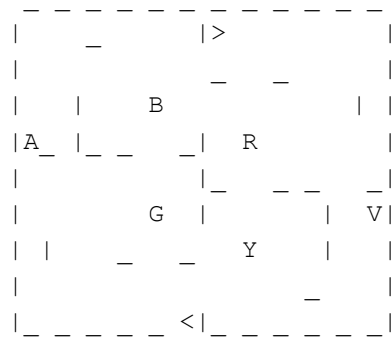
Tiles are set so that not only your rocket is shielded from the threat of the cat, but should the cat get close enough, it is directed to either opponent..

If you end up in a cat pushing match between your and an opponent's rocket, then consider deflecting a cat to the bottom wall when you replace your arrow, block the bottom entrance to your rocket with a DOWN arrow, and try to hit the closest opponent. Since the cat will turn right when hitting the wall, you will want to strike the closest opponent to your left. Unless someone else pulls such a reversal maneuver, you will likely never have to worry about cats striking you from the rear although the threat still exists.

STAGE 3

[C703]

The red and green rockets have the best position on this stage. It is much easier for them to gather from their portals while monopolizing another player's portal. For example, the green player can place an UP arrow next to the bottom portal while dropping a DOWN arrow directly above the leftmost portal and a RIGHT arrow to guide the down streaming mice into your rocket. The technique for red is similar.



This benefits those players because there is no walls obstructing their rocket from their closest portals like the ones blocking the blue and yellow players. While it IS possible for the blue and yellow players to gather from two portals, the mice will have to travel a MUCH great distance, giving the victim more time to counter your theft. Note that in the above example that green can also steal from blue using a RIGHT arrow instead of the DOWN tile, but by having the mice travel through the portal gives blue one less available space to interrupt the stream.

This is the first level with a lot of walls, so be sure to use them to conserve tiles. The blue player could steal from the top rocket with a DOWN arrow to the right of the portal and a LEFT tile below it, but it

makes MUCH more sense to use a LEFT arrow instead -- the mice will enter blue's area the SAME way with a two available tiles instead of one.

Juggling opportunities exist not only in the corners, but also against the portals and the small adjacent walls as well (which works since no player can drop a tile on the portal). The blue and yellow also have an extra juggling spot in the "inner corner walls" next to the portals located along the side of the board.

There are too many entrances to completely block your rocket, but cats should no prose too much of a problem given the somewhat lengthy distance between entryways. If you see a cat heading your way, then you should have little troubling blocking the closest possible route or juggling it if necessary. If a cat is circling your rocket, then you may want to take advantage of the vertical space between the two left and right rockets to dump the cat into an opponent.

Mice flow clockwise on this board thanks to the placement of the walls. While the arrow tiles will likely disrupt the flow somewhat, always be aware that of the natural path along the board. If your neighboring opponent has a "50" mouse in his or her vicinity, then you may want to use your tiles to prevent the mouse from entering his or her rocket while allowing it to "naturally" flow into your rocket's surrounding area.

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STAGE 4

[C704]

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The walls in this stage are placed such that all mice and cats are "funneled" into the hole at the center of the board. This hardly ever happens since most mice are gathered by the time they have a chance to enter the hole (since it is a rather long path). Each player has his or her "own" portal to draw in their closest corner, but then no one should ever concentrate on just one portal.

```
  - - - - -  
|> _ _ _ _ _ V|  
|   _ _ _ _ _ | |  
|           |   |  
|         B _   R   |  
|           H       |  
|         G     Y   |  
|           |     _  |  
|   |           _   |  
|A|_ _ _ _ _ <|
```

Stealing from your neighboring opponent's portal is VERY easy to do on this stage thanks to the walls that litter the board. However, mice will have to travel a somewhat long distance to reach your rocket, giving the victim more time to counter. Instead of "obvious" theft -- such as placing an arrow directly in front of an opponent's rocket where the mice are being fed -- try using the walls for the element of surprise. When players see opponents' pointers near their rocket, then they will not only INSTANTLY know who is trying to steal from them but also have time to counter or seek revenge on the offending player(s).

So, if the blue player wanted to steal from the red player's portal, try using a LEFT arrow directly underneath the portal. This will block" bounce the mice against the wall to the left with a single tile instead of, say, having to use a UP arrow to interrupt and a LEFT arrow to direct the mice over to the blue rocket. Likewise, if a

player to your side keeps stealing your mice, you may want to bounce mice from your own portal to increase their distance from a greedy opponent.

Every player except green can instantly juggle with two tiles in their respective corner using the walls and portals. While the green player CAN juggle with just two tiles (back and forth against the two small walls), he or she must use an extra tile to route from the portal if needed. The green player must also act quicker since there is no "dead" portal space for the mice or cats to walk through), but it ultimately is just a small inconvenience albeit one you should be aware.

On the plus side, the green player has an invincible block opportunity underneath his or her rocket (RIGHT arrow into the bottom wall). NO ONE is completely safe, however, so try to take care of cats before they make themselves dangerous to your position. NOTE THE HOLE in the center of the stage and USE IT. If you are winning, you can use the hole to dispatch cats and "50" mice as needed. If you need to kill a cat, try to send it in from the opposite side along the horizontal walls to lessen the risk of having it redirected into your rocket. For destroying "50" mice, try to do it from your side since you will only risk one opponent grabbing it instead of having to keep two players in check.

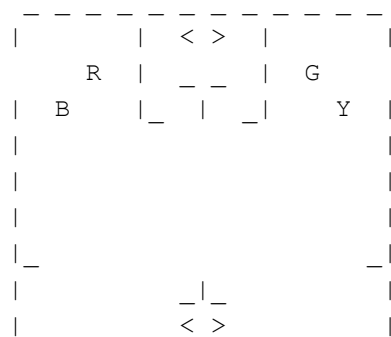
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STAGE 5

[C705]

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There are two things worth noting about this stage that most people overlook: the portals at the bottom and the "warp holes" near the top of the board. It's amazing how many people will freak out when someone starts juggling a cat in top "portal room" while there will be plenty of mice being released at the bottom of the stage. If someone begins doing that or if everyone is fighting over the top mice, by all means help yourself to the ones at the bottom.



While there really is no great advantage among the rocket locations for gathering mice, the red and green players are in a better position to block against cats. For example, if red was in the lead and about to be threatened by a cat directly, he or she could easily drop three tiles such that they all aim at the blue rocket horizontally from wall to wall. It's a great defensive and attack maneuver only available to them.

The red and green players only defensive weakness come from the warp holes at the top. If the red player was blocking as in the above example, the only chance to strike the red rocket would be to lead the cat over to the other side and send it through the hole for a surprise hit. Unfortunately, those on the other side are more likely to think you are trying to attack them instead and interfere with your plan. The holes are best used for redirecting cats away from harming your rocket and getting a surprise attack launched at the other side's

rockets in the process.

Cats and mice can be juggled either in the bottom corners of the board or in the top portal enclosure. Juggling at the top is not only much easier to do but will also kill all mice streaming from the top two portals to prevent others from gathering from them and passing you up. The only disadvantage is if a "50" mouse comes out from the bottom portals, you will have to release the cat "that" much closer to your rocket in prevent an opponent from taking it if needed.

Although the bottom portals look as though they are much further from the rockets compared to the portals at the top, there really is little difference between the two. The greatest advantage for gathering at the bottom is because both portals can be monopolized with just two tiles while the upper ones require all three arrows. It is generally easier to collect from the bottom than the top (especially since most players ignore the bottom portals), and the slight extra distance give you more time to react should the portal release a cat or several cats.

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STAGE 6

[C706]

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It is annoying how easy it is to block in this stage. Not only can everyone block his or her own rocket without fear of retaliation, but the close proximity of the other players means it is THAT much more likely that another player will completely block your rocket in an attempt to steal your cats. Another aggravating feature of this board comes from the layout of the walls and portals, which are more confusing then normal.

```
      - - - - -  
      |           H__         |  
      |B__         |  _  _  <| | | |
      |           |_  _  |  <|  
      |Y__         | |  _  |  |  
      |__  |       |_  _  |  |  <|  
      |           |  _  |  _  |  |  
      |R__         _  |  _  |  |  <|  
      |           |           |  |  
      |G__ _ _ _ _ _  |_ _ _ _  |
```

Note that the top portal is NOT the one which runs into the blue player's rocket. Thanks to the positioning of the walls, the "order" of the portals does not correspond to the location of the rockets. Counting down along the right side, it can be determined that:

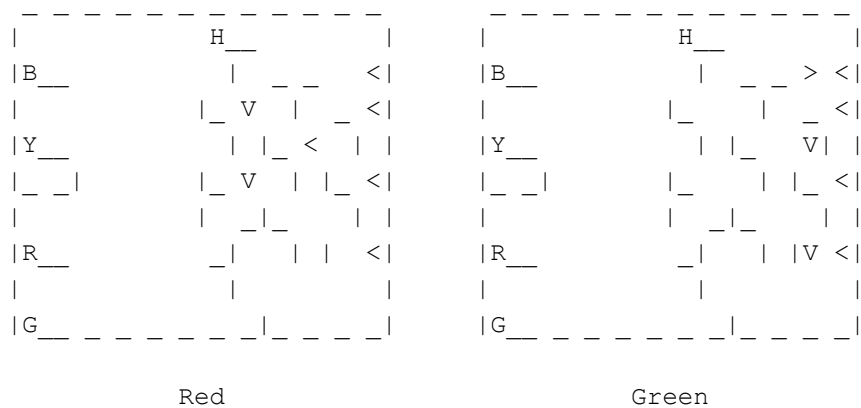
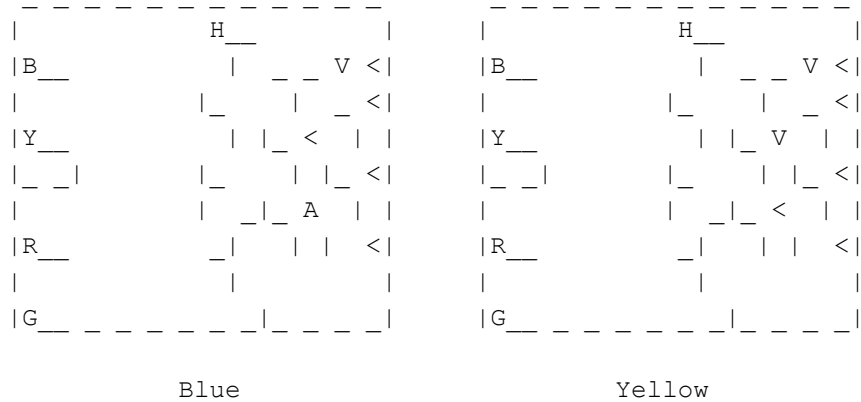
- 1) The first (top) portal's mice and cats will be lead into the red rocket. There are 17 steps (blocks) on this pathway.
- 2) The second portal feeds into the bottom green rocket. This is the longest route at 22 steps.
- 3) The third portal flows at an upward diagonal to the blue player. The blue player is tied with the yellow player with the shortest route distance at 15 blocks.
- 4) The last portal is also directed at an angle up to the yellow rocket. As stated above, this route is only 15 blocks long.

It would appear that the green player has the advantage on this stage despite the lengthy distance which must be traveled. The green player can monopolize ALL of the portals easier than the other players given his or her position. There are several locations where three DOWN tiles can be placed to steal the opponents' mice. Typically, players only begin stealing from the halfway point on the board. HOWEVER, ALL players CAN monopolize ALL portals if they know how to use the

ignored half of the stage to their advantage.

### Bad ASCII Illustration 7

Using walls to monopolize in stage 6



Although green may have more opportunities to monopolize all portals, ALL players can.

Of course, stealing from all four portals exhausts all your available tiles. You can expect for the other players to interrupt and fight over the mouse stream as long as you maintain it. Like anything, it is something to try and do as often as possible but don't expect too much prolonged success. The MOMENT someone interrupts the stream, reset your tiles as soon as possible. There's no reason for you to help other players win the game.

It may be better to just steal from one extra portal to be both less inconspicuous and to increase reaction time. It is better for the blue player to steal from the green portal, for example, because he or she will not immediately see it because of the odd portal arrangement, and because the pointer will have to travel a bit farther from its location to retaliate.

The blue player is probably in the best overall position. Not only does the rocket have the shortest distance from the portals overall, but it is also close enough to make use of the hole to kill cats if necessary. In addition, being at the top edge of the board means that the blue players can deflect most cats away with a DOWN arrow just as green can use an UP arrow. The two middle players are more prone to cat threats, although the red is slightly disadvantage due to the

extra two blocks of travel distance over yellow.

Learn to use the walls to block players from gaining mice if they threaten your lead, and try to send them along the right wall into the hole. There are a great many juggling spots available, with some on the right half requiring only two tiles. Be sure to juggle cats inside of a player's blocking tiles if he or she has taken the lead. If your rocket becomes blocked by another player's tiles, be sure to block his or her rocket as well. Hopefully, the player will remove the tiles for the retaliation -- otherwise, you're out of luck.

Practice the stage off the network to work on taking advantage of your position and learning more strategies than just sandwiching a LEFT tile between two interrupting tiles. This is a difficult stage to react as quickly and as efficiently as possible without having a good understanding of the board's odd layout.

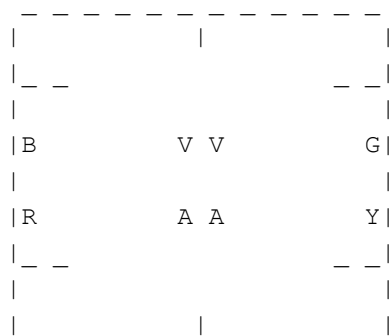
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STAGE 7

[C707]

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As you can see from the diagram, anyone who drops two arrows in between the four portals can easily monopolize all of them. This somewhat benefits the blue and yellow players since they can do the above without needing a third tile to redirect the mice. At any rate, this advantage is short lived since the other three players will be sure to interrupt the greedy player.



Any player can drop two tiles above or below the portals to gather more mice so long as there are no middle tiles (as described above) in the way. Most of the game will be a battle for that middle area, but the danger of that approach is that the player above or below you can easily and quickly intercept the trail of mice. If you see a player taking advantage of the middle area, be sure to steal as soon as possible, and remember that the mice can be sent through the portal blocks to save time (there is no need to go around the area).

The blue and yellow players have the advantage of an invincible blocking position with three vertical UP or DOWN arrows. If you're in the red or green players' location, try to take advantage of your neighbor's blocking position with two similar supporting tiles. If for whatever reason you cannot implement such a block, you'll have three positions to defend. Try to claim the middle area between yourself and your opponent first and drop a tile so that it faces his or her rocket. Put up some barrier in front your rocket and deflect any cats if needed.

There are eight locations where you can juggle cats or mice if needed: four in each corner of the stage, and four in the center along the horizontal wall using the short protruding wall. Make use of that short wall since any cats and mice released will be aiming toward either side.

Should another player block you to try and steal all your mice, it may

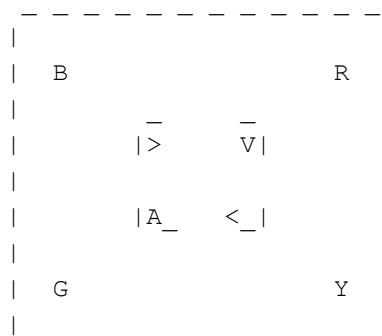


be best to block and deflect the mice away from your opponent. If you engage in a push fight that close to his or her rocket, chances are that the block will continue with the opponent hoping to win and gather all of the bunched up mice. Deflecting the mice away from both your rockets should make the opponent reset the tiles since no possible good will be accomplished by maintaining the block in front of your rocket.

STAGE 8

[C708]

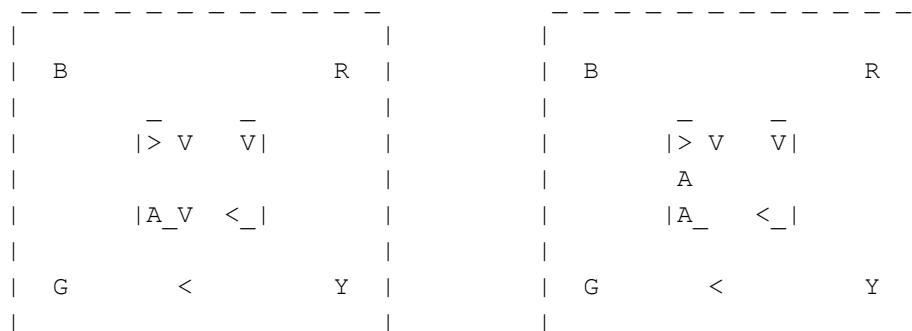
With no places to block and a mostly even layout, this stage is among the most "fair" boards in ChuChu Rocket. It will be rare to see more than two people feeding from the portals at any given time, so expect lots of "push fighting" on this board, requiring quick thinking to devise alternate routes. Your goal here will be to try and maintain possession two portals, switching paths every so often to keep your opponents from interfering too much.



It is best to send the mice up or down from the enclosed area instead from the sides. Your closest opponent will be the one above or below your rocket, so it is in your best interest to put as much distance as possible between him or her. While the player off to the side will have an opportunity to steal your mice, chances are he or she won't since the gaps in the horizontal walls are wider meaning the player can gather his or her own mice. It's not a guarantee, of course, since all players act and respond to situations differently, but by not cutting off his or her flow of mice, you give the player one less incentive to steal yours.

Bad ASCII Illustration 8

Gathering mice in stage 8

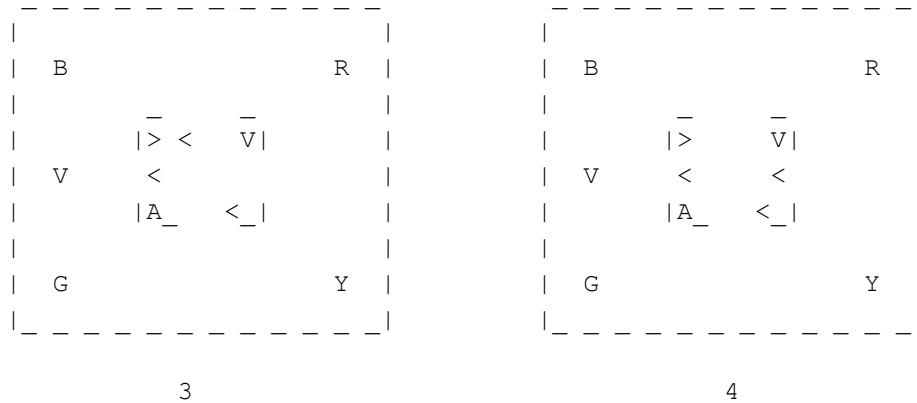


1

2

The tile placement in scene two has an advantage over the first method because it blocks off all immediate entryways to the blue player, making it more difficult for him or her to interrupt.

This is useful with the red player is using a tile to close off the top gap, otherwise blue might intercept the trail through the top.



The main advantage three has over four is that it will be less likely that you encourage the other three players to interrupt you. The tiles in scene three keep the battle focus on the blue player, and one player is much easier to handle than three players.

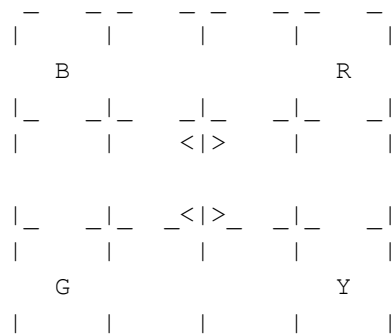
There are lots of other methods, but the examples above show some alternate ways of collecting along side two of the most common stage strategies (shown in examples one and four). Remember to use the walls as well if they can benefit you -- facing a tile in front of a portal pointing to the opposite direction will send the mice counter-clockwise, which can be useful while gathering. You may also find it helpful to purposely send mice into the outer wall if another player's tiles are in the way. When enough have hit the wall, you can drop a tile against the wall as they run around right into it.

Note that you CAN juggle stuff in this stage within the enclosed area. It's ridiculously easy to trap cats and mice since they will run right into your juggling tiles. As far as blocking, just do your best to juggle cats before they have a chance to threaten you or deflect and attack as best as possible.

STAGE 9

[C709]

This is one of the few completely "fair" boards as far as layout and position advantages go. It will be very difficult to monopolize the two closest portals since an opponent can easily and quickly send the mice through another opening in one of the "rooms." You should also take account that all the "warp holes" make your opponents much closer than they appear. The blue rocket, for example, is just two squares away from the red and green players.

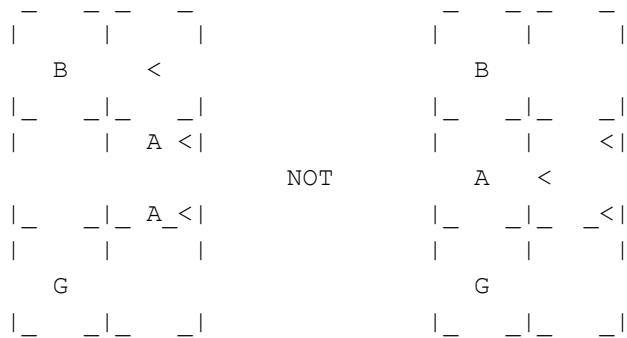


While you may have a tendency to steal the mice horizontally, planning a vertical route to your rocket minimizes interruption from other players by having your tiles not only adjacent to the portals but also blocking two room openings as well.

Bad ASCII Illustration 9

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Opening move for stage 9



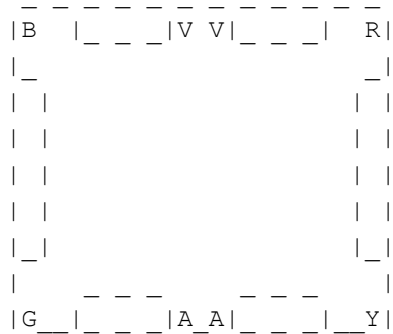
Even though mice can be collected from both portals with the method at right with only two tiles, the top (or bottom) player could easily set up the left formation and cut off your mouse supply.

There are two ways to react to the above strategy. The green player in this instance could use two DOWN arrows -- one to the right of the blue rocket and one below it to steal the mice. Otherwise, the player could use two UP arrows to send the mice through the warp hole above the blue player straight into the green rocket. Using the warp holes has the advantage that it is more difficult for the blue player to react and block the mice from entering your rocket, and the less time you spend "push fighting" the better.

Again, remember that you will basically be RIGHT NEXT to two of the other players on the board thanks to the warp holes. Use this to your advantage to steal mice (particularly "50" mice) and send cats their way without their knowing. Likewise, always remember that unless a cat is positioned diagonally from your rocket across the board, it will pose a threat.

It is impossible to juggle on this board and quite difficult to block (and even then you can only block one entryway to your rocket. Focus on sending cats through the warp holes if you are in danger of being struck. If an opponent is only a warp hole away from your rocket and he or she is attacking you with a cat, take advantage of his or her own rocket's defenseless state and divert the cat through the corresponding hole. Unless you are being double teamed or the attacker is in the opposite location, cats should not be too difficult to handle.

Both the blue and yellow rockets have the advantage on this stage since it only takes them two tiles to feed mice from their two closest portals. This is because the mice will turn RIGHT into their rockets, while the red and green players must use a third arrow to point them in the right direction. While it is a good advantage for the blue and yellow players, don't expect the other people to sit idly by and let this continue.



The main goal of all players is to monopolize the two portals closest to their rockets. Although blue and yellow CAN gather from two portals with just two tiles, it is advised those players also drop another in front their rockets to avoid having other players block their entryways in a fight over the mice.

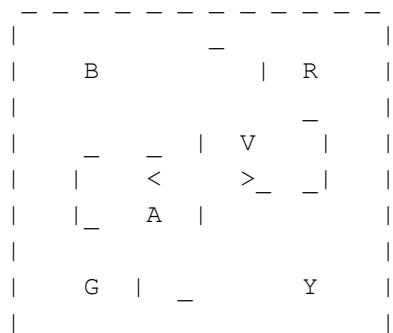
Do note how easy it is to block on this stage. All players can make an impenetrable barrier with three well positioned tiles. The only places juggling (at least so that no one can interfere) is possible is at the top and bottom of the stages against the portals. Depending on how the tiles are placed to juggle, there IS a chance that a cat may come out the portal one of your arrows will be facing. At worst this will just shrink the tile before the cat begins to circle in place.

This is a pretty simplistic board as far as strategy. Expect to engage in lots of "push tile fighting" in the large open area, mainly near the portals and close to the rockets. Remember to use your opponents tiles to lead the mice on an alternate path to your rocket and you'll be fine.

STAGE 11

[C711]

The positioning of the walls cause the mice to stay contained within the center of the room moving in the plus-like shape. Note the portals aiming UP and DOWN on the stage; the mice exiting from them will stream away from the rockets they are closest to, putting the green and red players at a bit of a disadvantage. Also, the verticle walls to their sides will also pose an inconvenience when trying to gather mice from their poorly positioned portals. The blue and yellow players' efforts will make trying to gather any mice a bit more difficult, especially if they don't mind collecting from just their own portal while redirectly all the other mice away from the opposite players.



This stage is mainly a battle of who gets to the portals first. The first tile to drop should be the one blocking the entryway pointing to your rocket. For example, when the green player drops a LEFT tile

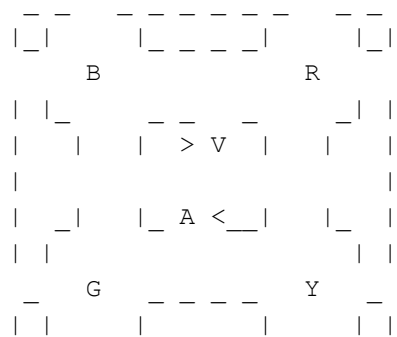
to the right of the left portal and a DOWN arrow to the left of the same portal with the remaining tile guiding the mice into the rocket, the green player has effectively cut off all of the blue player's immediate entryways. Whoever misses that opportunity will have to take some time to interrupt and reroute all of the mice around to his or rocket. It pays to be first, so this is a good incentive to begin the game with the analog controller, switching after the spot is maintained if desired.

There are many juggling positions on this stage, the easiest and best one being within the two walled-in "C" shapes on the far sides of the stage. Green and red also have a better blocking position since the small wall to their side gives them an extra invincible blocking position.

STAGE 12

[C712]

This stage is a slight variant of stage nine, notable for its warp holes and enclosed center portals. Most players will try to take control over the enclosed area with the portals by seizing the side entrances and using a third arrow to point to his or her rocket. You can either fight with such players or instead take control over the portals by using a technique few players seem to be aware.



The side exits are NOT the only methods to collect from the portals. By dropping two tiles in the center of the enclosed area, a player can gather from the two up and down portals and possibly a third if another has set up the afore mentioned typical gathering method. This slightly benefits the green and red players since they will only need the two center tiles since the wall will automatically direct these mice into their rockets. The green player, for instance, should drop a LEFT tile underneath the down portal and a DOWN tile above the up portal. This will send mice from both portals through the up portal down into the wall and right into his or her rocket.

If you see a player really racking up mice and/or about to get a treasured "50" mouse, then remember to take advantage of the warp holes. If you're the red player and the blue player has a nice stream of mice flowing into his or her rocket from the bottom, dropping a LEFT tile underneath his rocket and another LEFT arrow to the left of the rocket will send all of the mice straight into your rocket through the hole in the wall. Another LEFT tile to the right of the bottom left tile can completely cut off the blue player's ability to do a quick reroute without blocking him or her off. The only threat here would be from the green player sending the mice down into his or her rocket before they move through the hole.

The important thing to always remember to pay attention to all players all of the time since you are only four spaces away from most of your opponents at any given time thanks to the warp holes.

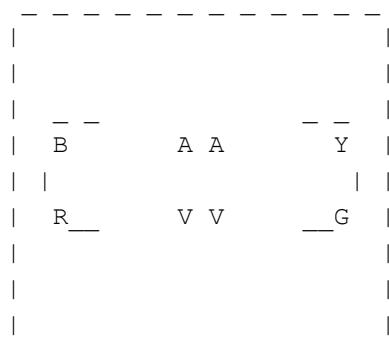
Juggling is only possibly within the fat part of the path along the left and right edge of the board, but none of them are invincible. The best way to occupy cats and mice is to really just keep them tied up within the center enclosed area, keeping them flowing in a clockwise motion.

Blocking is as difficult as it is on stage nine, since each rocket is open from all directions. Try to focus on a specific side by dropping a two tile wall to block cats traveling along the outer edge of the enclosed area, with a third tile used to plug up any other nearby opening. Be wary of an opponent juggling within your block wall, though, especially if it is right next to your rocket. Try to build your wall as far as possible. Also, be wary of surprise attacks through adjacent warp holes as the cat you're leading to an opponent can easily be directed around your target straight into your rocket.

STAGE 13

[C713]

The blue and green players have the advantage of completely invincible blocking positions. This gives them an edge on this stage, depending on how successful you are at using and defending their monopolizing positions. All rockets can gather from a maximum of two portals in a normal battle game environment. Most players will be vying for the two closest paired portals on this stage.



The red and yellow players have I think the best method to monopolize since it leaves more room to react and set up a new path to their rockets. The red player can quickly and effortlessly drop two LEFT tiles under the two down portals and aim a RIGHT arrow at his or her rocket as the mice are sent right along the wall. Any attempts to interfere by the blue player can easily be countered since there is bound to be enough spaces to interrupt, plus a greater chance that the red player will unintentionally block the blue player while interrupting.

The blue and green player are at a disadvantage in that regard since since it is easier for opponents to steal from and block them. While they ARE able to gather from either pairs of portals, it will be a short lived advantage. For instance, the blue player will want to place a LEFT arrow above the top right portal, a DOWN arrow under the top left portal, and a LEFT arrow underneath the top left portal, which will send all mice toward the wall into his or her rocket. The disadvantage is that the red player can EASILY direct the mice with a single DOWN arrow.

Nonetheless, keep in mind these monopolizing positions and utilize them whenever possible. There will be A LOT of close in fighting on this board, so make use of all three of the entrances to your and your opponents' rockets as best as possible.

As stated above, the blue and green players will have an invincible

blocking position available to them. The blue player should use a LEFT arrow to his or her rocket's immediate left, an UP arrow to the right of the rocket, and a DOWN arrow to send any cats hitting it into the opponent's rocket. Likewise, if you're the red player look for ways to interrupt this ability. A REALLY good, really EASY way to both block and attack available to everyone is to line two UP or DOWN arrows so that they point to a LEFT or RIGHT arrow aimed at your opponent. This does your farthest side open to attack but still makes for a great technique to exploit.

Uninterrupted juggling is only available in the four corners of this stage. If you want to tease and threaten an opponent, consider juggling right within the enclosed area so that the only way to deflect the cat would be to send it into his or her own rocket.

STAGE 14

[C714]

This is a stage in which it is VERY IMPORTANT that you make your moves as FAST as possible. The six large blocks in the center of the room REALLY LIMIT the available playing space.

This means that there will be NO ROOM to counter someone's position with an alternate route. The best you will be able to do is block the mice from

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their rockets and wait until a cat disrupts them or for their tiles to fade away and take over. I STRONGLY suggest using the analog stick for this board, because the opening move is really that important, and the analog stick provides for a superior speed boost.

Your first priority in this battle is to take control over the bottom or top portal, whichever is closest. Mice and cats spewed from the top and bottom portals will circle the center area. Drop two tiles at the intersection in parallel so that mice stream into your enclosed area. Both of the top players and both of the bottom players will be fighting for the SAME EXACT spots on the board -- only the positioning of the arrows will be different. Your secondary goal is to seize control over one of the side portals, most likely the one closest to your rocket. You will have three opportunities to direct those side mice into your rocket; either aim them into the opening to the area surrounding your rocket or along the path to either of the arrows from the first part.

While there is a danger of sending a cat your way, you'll have more than enough time to react to it. This does, of course, reset your tiles and forfeits the best position. Thankfully, each player has an infinite blocking position which requires only two tiles, leaving you an extra tile to spoil the fun of the opponent who just took over your favored spot.

When beaten to the punch, your only recourse is to block the mice from entering your opponent's rocket while waiting for a cat to come out from one of the portals. Quickly throw the cat into the player's arrows to either damage the mice tally or force him or her to reset

the position. Assist the cat until the opponent forfeits the position.

Cats should not be a threat much at all thanks to the invincible blocking available to all (use the closest "big block" and the two "small blocks," placing your tiles in the gap between them). There is also plenty of juggling positions, either the familiar circular pattern to horizontal and vertical "bounce" juggling, created by placing two opposite facing tiles side by side along the corridors between the big blocks.

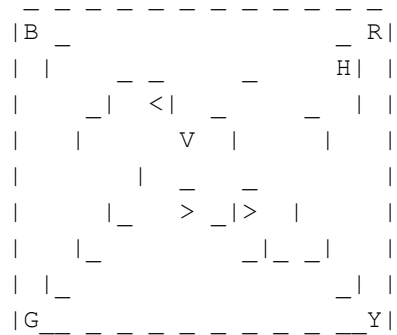
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STAGE 15

[C715]

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Asymmetrical boards such as this and stage six can make planning on the fly quite difficult. The layout of the portals and walls benefit the yellow player the most since he or she will have the easiest time monopolizing the the most mice on this board. The down facing portal and the two right facing ones are easily within the yellow rocket's grasp. The blue player will have the most difficult time trying to gather any mice while the red player will probably find that hole to be a nuisance which can easily jeopardize his or her efforts despite being in a somewhat favorable position.



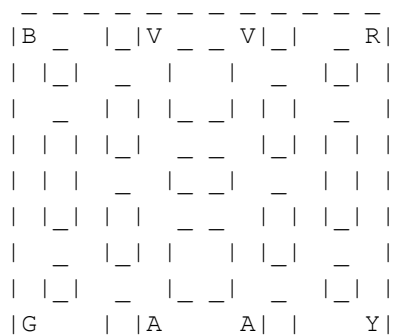
Look for unorthodox paths to keep your opponents guessing. Sure, the red player can fight the yellow player over the two right facing portals, but it is much easier to drop a single UP arrow underneath the down facing portal and let the mice run themselves into your rocket. The green player can take control over the two center portals with two DOWN tiles and a LEFT arrow sending mice through the bottom center portal into one of the DOWN arrows. Sending mice backwards through the portals and using the outer walls to guide them into your rocket is key to taking control of this stage. Keep an opponent guessing with different paths, and you'll reduce the time it takes him or her to absorb everything that's going on and interrupt your plan.

On defense everyone is equal with an invincible blocking position of their own. Be wary of such blocking during normal play, though, since each rocket has a side in which an opponent can juggle a cat within your block with a single tile. For example, if the green player blocks to the right, a single DOWN tile to the right of the green rocket's UP arrow will make that cat a constant threat. The only difference on defense among the players lies in the red rocket's hole, which can both aid and hinder the red player. If you see the red player about to receive a "50" mouse, it doesn't take much to sink it into the hole.

There are a few juggling spots available on the board. You can hold mice and cats along the bottom left walls with properly placed, opposite facing and adjacent UP and DOWN tiles, or you can juggle in that "U" partition near the bottom left portion of the stage. As mentioned above, you can juggle in the corners, but that requires blocking yourself or an opponent.



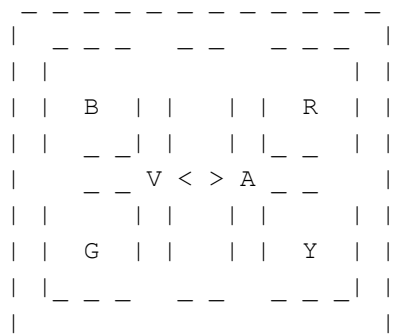
Consider this stage a variant of stage 14 since both are rather cramped and require the same strategy more or less. In fact, it's easier here since you will only have to concentrate on one location -- either of the two bottom or top portals. The blue and yellow players have a bit of an advantage on this stage since they will only need two tiles to direct traffic into their rockets, but it is advised to place a third "reminder" tile anyway to avoid having an opponent block you.



Because there are no side portals as in stage 14, it is even MORE IMPORTANT to be as fast as possible with your opening move. Once an opponent takes control over a pair of portals, there is NOTHING you can do other than block the mice from entering his or her rocket. If a cat gets sucked into their tile vacuum, be sure to fill in the gaps to make sure the cat strikes the opponents before they have a chance to reset their tiles and counter. Unlike stage 14, there will be little time to react given the close proximity of the portals to the rockets. Try and use such opportunities to gain control of the portals.

Everyone has an invincible blocking position, but be careful to not block right by your rocket. If, say, the green player puts an UP tile to the right of his or her rocket to defend against an incoming cat, a quick thinking opponent can place a DOWN arrow to its immediate right, juggling the cat with only a single tile. If you find yourself in such a situation early in the game, it would probably be best to go ahead and let the cat strike since it will be difficult to repel the cat with it being so close. Time is lost mice in this game, so try to waste as little time as possible fighting the unavoidable.

You want the two center portals. Those are the only two which can both be gathered from at the same time. The basic strategy for that would be to place an UP or DOWN arrow to bounce the mice traveling away from your rocket through the portals to your location, and use two more arrows to route all of the mice into your rocket. Since this is another stage in which your first move really is a "make it or break it" kind of thing, I'd STRONGLY suggest using the analog stick to secure those two center portals post haste.



Unfortunately, smart players will be more than ready to interrupt your mice stream. It takes a full three tiles to gather from the two center portals, which leaves you defenseless. There will be a single square gap between the UP or DOWN facing tile and the LEFT or RIGHT facing one, and your opponents will use it to divert your mice away from your rocket. While this can be easily corrected by dropping another tile in your rocket's direction (since the mice will circle the squared area before exiting, dropping that corrective tile will reset the first one you dropped to hoard all the center mice. This isn't as awful as it sounds since you'll still be successfully gathering from a single portal, but that's not being greedy enough to win the game.

Note that while you can bounce the vertical streaming mice through their portals, you will only be able to gather from one or the other since it takes all three tiles to set up the path to your rocket. This is only worthwhile if, say, you're the blue player but currently have no control over the last three portals. You can bounce the down streaming mice away from the green player to at least collect from one portal while the others fight over the rest.

All players are basically on equal footing during this stage. All have an invincible blocking position thanks to the enclosed walls surrounding each rocket. Blocking will take up all three available tiles: one will deflect to the right and placed inside the square while the other two will create a path just outside the other entryway to push cats into the hallways and bounce block them away to the right.

Bad ASCII Illustration 10

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Completely blocking cats in stage 17

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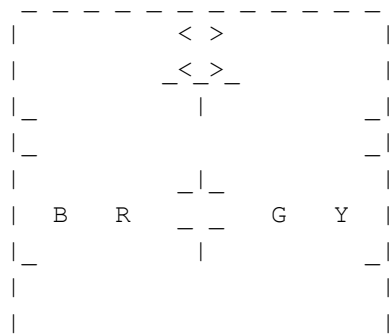
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All players have invincible blocking positions, each set up similarly. Above shows the blocking method for the blue and red rockets.

Juggling can be done in the corners using Kirk's two tile method. Juggle along the narrow pathways with flipped adjacent tiles. Remember that the portals themselves are invincible, so be sure to take advantage of them by juggling across them to eat up time if needed. This stage has the longest possible juggling distance in the center of the board (cats travel eight squares per cycle) in addition to the paths found in each of the stage's corners.

The main you'll want to remember to do on this stage is to redirect the mice streaming from the portals away from your rocket toward your area whenever possible. If you're the blue or red player this means dropping one or two LEFT or DOWN arrows to the right of both of the right facing portals and vice versa for the other rockets. Both the red and green players have the advantage on this stage precisely because they get first dibs on the mice spewing from the portals above..

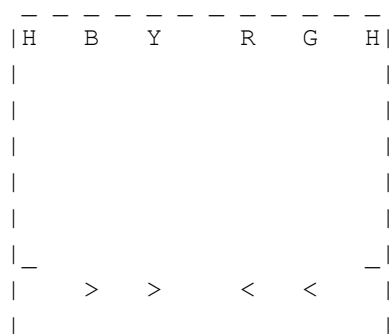


You will always be stealing from your neighbor and your neighbor from you on this board. If the red player has mice traveling down into his or her rocket, then the blue player should drop two LEFT tiles and a DOWN arrow in a half circle formation similar to what's shown in the stage 2 strategy. The fighting with your neighbor is complicated by the fact that you almost have to work as a team to keep as many mice as possible on your side of the play field. Note that while the red and green players do get most of the traffic, they also have two neighbors to worry about having their mice stolen from than the side rockets. No one ever thinks to use the gap between the red and green players for stealing.

Mice basically slither down to the bottom of the stage at which point they will circle around and around until someone picks them up. Don't focus so much on the portal fighting so that you neglect these scraps. Every mouse counts, and it only takes one UP arrow to gather those on the bottom. If a player has redirected both your portals to the opposite side, then you can either try to get them back through the gaps in the fence down the center or just juggle them in place at the top of the stage.

This is an open stage and defending against cats is all about juggling and deflecting. If you can't juggle them then be quick to block your most vulnerable side while sending the cats into your opponent as in stage 2. Juggling is only possible in the corners and that gap between the red and green players. You may be able to tie up cats and mice at the source if an opponent has dropped the right UP or DOWN tile next to the portals.

This stage is sort of like a flipped stage 2 with the main difference being that the mice stay put at the bottom of the screen. The blue and green are by and large in the best position since they only have to contend with one neighbor since their other side is flanked by a hole. The hole itself also proves to be useful for sinking any threatening cats.



The blue player is in an even more favorable position since mice sent to the top wall will funnel right into his or her rocket. While this is true of every player, the blue player will not have to fear his or her neighbor dropped a LEFT tile and siphoning off his or her mice stream.

The mice are trapped at the bottom until someone drops an UP tile, then the fighting begins. This is basically an open war, and you'll have to constantly keep your opponents guessing to ward them off. It is not likely that you'll be able to simply let the mice stream into your rocket since your opponents will be quick to steal them, so it is in your best interest to focus on a single grouping of mice at a time if you keep getting interrupted. Juggle some mice at the bottom and then send them up on a quick but shifting path to your rocket. Since everything is in season for all players, be sure to capture as many "50" mice as possible -- there is no reason for you to avoid going after them on this stage.

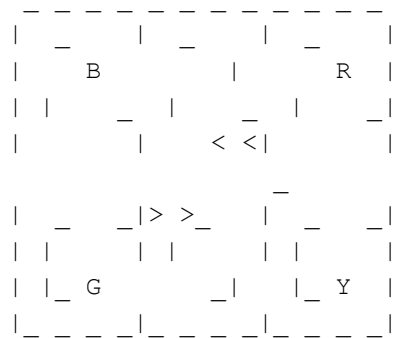
Juggling can be done in either of the bottom corners of the stage and along the top of that small wall on the right near the bottom. If you get a lead consider just tying up the mice by juggling them until the timer ticks down. The portals are set up so that the mice will just run straight into the corners to be juggled. The same works for cats, so Cat Mania really shouldn't be too much of a threat if any.

The blue player also has the best defending position, with two invincible barriers to the side: an UP tile to the right and a LEFT to the left. Of course, the bottom of the rocket is still exposed just like the other players'. Focus on diverting cats and using the half circle pattern in stage 2 to both defend and attack when needed.

STAGE 20

[C720]

All mice lead to the green rocket. Any scraps in the center will just funnel straight into the green rocket, and green player is in a pretty good position. Although the board looks a bit confusing and off balanced, most players except red have an equal number of advantages and disadvantages. That said, I prefer playing from the yellow rocket's position since I find it is much easier to work from.



The blue player is in a pretty nice position, able to easily take advantage of either row of portals. The top row will automatically make a pass near the blue rocket, and wooing in the mice only requires a single LEFT tile aimed at your rocket. The bottom row can be had by dropping a LEFT tile to the right of the right most portal and bouncing the mice left through the portals. This means that the blue player can monopolize all four portals with just two tiles which is a very good thing. Of course, it won't last, and you can be sure that the other players -- especially the green player -- will be quick to siphon off your mice stream. Still, it makes for a good opening move and something to abuse whenever possible. When playing from the blue

rocket your main focus should be the top row of portals. Expect the green and yellow players to be fighting over the bottom row, perhaps so much so that it's not worth the hassle. The red player is in a worse position to take control over the top portal row; just drop two LEFT tiles in front of them and a LEFT arrow to guide the mice in, and you'll have all the mice from the two portals all to yourself.

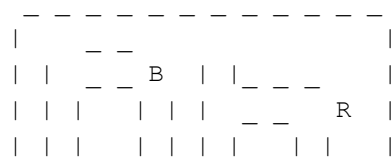
The red rocket is the loser position on this stage. The blue player can easily prevent the red rocket from getting any mice from the top portal row, and the bottom row will be occupied by both the green and yellow players. The red player must be quick and drop a RIGHT arrow in front of the top portal row and then use RIGHT and UP arrows to funnel the mice into his or her rocket. The main problem with that is that it is reasonably simple for either the blue and yellow players to interrupt the stream and steal or divert the mice. The red player is primarily a scavenger on this stage, since the poor position of the surrounding walls and location from the portals makes it more difficult to gather mice with any regularity. You will always be reacting to other players' gathering instead of being a leader.

Yellow and green are the easiest positions to play from thanks to the placement of the walls. Both can steal from the top row of portals if needed; a DOWN tile for green and a RIGHT tile for yellow. The yellow player can monopolize all four portals with just two tiles just like the blue rocket while the green player requires three, bouncing the bottom row through the portals, up into the waiting DOWN arrow, and then back down into a LEFT guide tile. Both the yellow and green players will spend nearly all three minutes just fighting for control over the bottom row of portals, and things are set up so that interference from the above players are kept to a minimum. Any attempts from the above players to steal can easily be countered by sending the mice through that middle gap and down into your rocket.

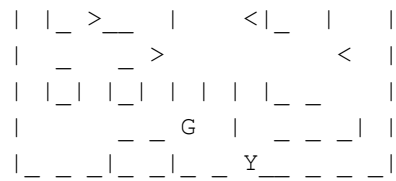
Although it's not the most useful thing in the world, that center warp hole can come in handy to get around other players' tiles littering the board. While the holes aren't something to rely on for a sure win strategy, they can be useful for diverting or attacking with cats or getting that "50" mouse to your side of the board. The holes won't see much traffic thanks to their poor placement and having all the mice run around in the center of the board.

With only two entryways, the yellow rocket is the only rocket with an invincible blocking position. The other players, particularly those at the top of the stage, will have to focus on diverting or juggling cats to defend their rockets. Juggling can be done with two tiles in any of the corners or in that "C" formation next to the bottom two rockets. Since that's not practical during play since all traffic remains in the center of the board, focus on diverting cats as soon as they enter the stage.

Without a doubt, THE position on this board belongs to the green player. The green rocket has quick access to all of the portals and the easiest time



monopolizing them as well. Most of the green player's tiles will be blocked from interference from other players as well. The red player has the absolute worst spot on the board, although it IS possible to play from it reasonably well.



What are the green player's advantages? Well, it is one of the two rockets which have an invincible blocking position, but you will not spend the duration of the stage blocking. Green's strength lies in the variety of mice stealing strategies available to the player. Steal from the blue portal with a couple of well placed RIGHT arrows. The portal above the yellow rocket can be had with a LEFT and a DOWN tile. Take control over the red player's portal with two LEFT arrows. In fact, all portals are aimed at the green player already, so it may be possible to steal using only one tile if nothing is blocking the path of the mice (ie., mice from the blue portal travel down to the green rocket on their own thanks to the wall). Green also has the shortest distance from his or her portal, making it the only rocket which has a path from its portal completely protected from interference.

The second best position belongs to the blue rocket, which has its own portal mostly protected from other players other than green. Block that bottom exit with an UP tile to gather from your own portal. If someone drops a LEFT or DOWN tile in front your portal to bounce the mice around the other way, the wall will guide it back to your rocket as long as you put a RIGHT arrow by the top exit. Concentrate on stealing from the green and yellow players' portals. An UP tile in front the green portal and a LEFT in front the yellow portal will bring the mice to your rocket and waiting LEFT tile to guide them in.

The yellow player is in a similar position as the green player but has too much distance between the rocket and portals to be as effective. Use a RIGHT tile on the portal above the yellow rocket to bounce mice in. Steal from the red player with LEFT and DOWN arrows or from the green portal with a RIGHT tile or a couple of UP and RIGHT arrows. The blue portal is too far away to worry about, so just focus on stealing from your neighbors, swapping as they counter your theft.

The red player should always have an UP tile in front of his or her own portal. Steal from the yellow portal with two RIGHT arrows. Try bouncing blue's mice around the top wall if he or she is being distracted in a push fight or something. If the path above the green rocket is open, use a couple of UP tiles (one to block blue from the side) to send some mice your way. The red player really is too far from the portals and is in too open a position compared to the others on the board. You will have to fight and claw your way through this match, mainly terrorizing the yellow player below you.

The best juggling spots are between two horizontal or vertical walls closest to your opponent. Threaten green with a cat to his or her immediate left using an UP and a DOWN tile. The blue player is particularly susceptible to such tactics. While the green and yellow players have invincible blocking positions, blue and red do not. Still, the abundance of walls should make defending against cats fairly easy as long as you focus on the most threatening side. Just watch out for something dropping a tile and juggling within your block formation.

Note the trapped position of all the players, making it very easy for you or another player to block your rocket. While it is great to be able to do an invincible block on this stage, it is TOO easy for another person to block off your rocket in an attempt to steal your mice. Be wary of this, because it can and will happen during this board, forcing you to collect through the more difficult rear entrance.

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The blue player has an advantage on this stage precisely because any mice set up into the top wall will pass behind his or her rocket first. If you are in the blue position and someone has blocked you off, then you can just redirect the trail of mice to the top of the stage and collect them from the rear. If you are in another position, then you can still do the above but risk losing them to the blue player, or you can try sending them through the pathway above your rocket, which will require an extra RIGHT arrow.

You should try to steal from three portals as often as possible. Drop a RIGHT arrow in front of the portal facing your rocket, and direct two other portals into that arrow with a couple of UP or DOWN tiles. Expect someone to intercept soon enough, and adjust your tiles to avoid your opponents' arrows if possible. While you COULD do the above but drop the arrows directly in front of your opponents' entryways instead, that just seems rude to me. If someone does that to you, then you can either block their rocket or redirect all mice into the holes at left so that no one benefits.

The holes at the left of the stage are VERY valuable. Once you have taken the lead and are winning by a good margin, you can redirect ALL of your opponents mice into the holes. You can cause much confusion with this action while increasing the number of tiles it takes for your opponents to collect mice. Their only hope is to fight for your free portal or attempt to send the mice around your arrows.

When the time comes to defend, you will find that blocking and juggling is quite easy on this board. A DOWN arrow to the left of your rocket and a RIGHT tile behind it will ensure that no cat can threaten your mice. It's a good idea to drop two DOWN tiles side by side to ensure a longer barrier. Anything can be juggled in the space between each rocket with just two tiles. You can also make use of the holes to kill anything if needed, especially handy when a "50" mouse is headed towards an opponent.

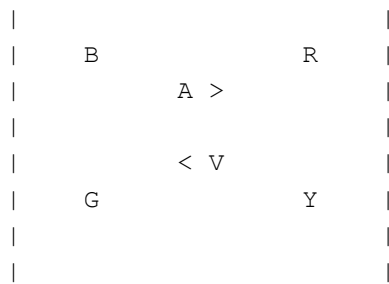
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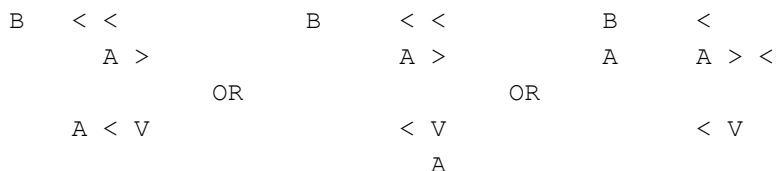
portal with just a single tile, or you could drop three in parallel and make sure no one interferes. The main disadvantage with that method is that you only collect from one and put yourself at greatest risk to exiting cats. It would be fine during Mouse Mania, but then you should really be trying to monopolize more than one portal in that or any case.



You can monopolize two portals at best, and do so will require three tiles. You will gather from the portal closest to you and ANY other available portal. Remember that you can steal from opposite portals by sending the mice back through the portals.

Bad ASCII Illustration 11  
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Borrowing from an opponent in stage 23



All players can steal from any opponent. Mix it up as they interfere.

Because of the close proximity of the portals, expect a difficult battle to try and maintain a single portal let alone another one. You may use the outside wall if needed to send mice around tiles and gather them from the outside as they travel around.

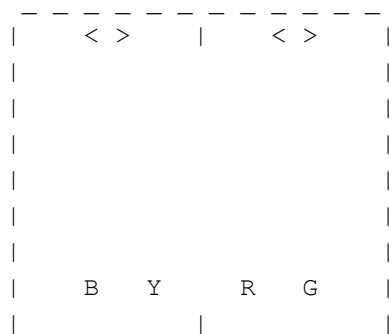
This is a very difficult stage since every rocket is vulnerable with no real advantage. There is no way to block, and juggling is only possible inside the four corners of the stage. Hopefully you will be skillful enough to deflect cats and win the push fights which dominate this stage.

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STAGE 24

[C724]

The final stage is another free-for-all similar to stages 2 and 19. As always, while the blue and green players on the sides only have to contend with one neighboring opponent to worry about, they also get less traffic than the others. The mice exit from the portals and circle each half of the stage until they are captured, and the positioning of those little walls means that the





yellow and red players can pick off virtually every scrap mouse on the board, assuming that the other players don't get to them first.

Try to increase traffic around your rocket by bouncing opposite running mice through their portal. If you're the blue player, then this means having a LEFT tile right in front that second portal. The green player should have a RIGHT tile in front the third portal and vice versa. Also, the moment that you see a player trying to send mice straight down into his or her rocket, you should divert the path your way. No one should be able to collect mice easily on this stage, and letting another player win without interference is just dumb.

One nice advantage the green player has is the ability to send everything to the right, let the mice run down along the wall, and pick them up from the sides. You not only keep the mice moving toward your rocket, but the wall also makes a much larger and easier target to focus on instead of having to aim straight down into your rocket like everyone else. Note that the blue player can do a variation of this as well although it requires an extra tile to route the mice down (since they will travel up when striking the left wall) and therefore isn't as effective.

On defense use the half circle tile placement outlined in stage 2 to defend yourself against cats. No one can block any part of his or her rocket except the bottom entrance, so be sure to divert and juggle as needed. You can juggle in the corners and against the small walls protruding from the top and bottom of the stage. It is easier to juggle at the top so you may want to redirect cats to the top instead of trying to juggle below if your rocket is in the area.

CRN8

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CHAPTER ROMAN NUMERAL EIGHT

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On-line Gameplay Abnormalities

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ON-LINE PLAY UPDATE

[C8ON]

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Unfortunately, Sega's Dreamcast ChuChu Rocket server have been shutdown, making on-line play impossible as of this update. I leave the following intact should Sega ever release the source code to allow for player run servers.

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LAG, ON-LINE GAMING'S UGLY STEPSISTER

[C8LA]

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Generally, the lag (time it takes for a dropped tile to register on screen during on-line play) is only a second or two. Initially,

this may seem awkward, but the lag is not so long so that it becomes impossible to play the game well. Players just have to accustom themselves to planning ahead to keep up with the lag. As long as you stay one step ahead of the game, you should be able to play with the lag and reduce it to a slight inconvenience.

A slow Internet connection on yours or an opponents' Internet service provider can increase the lag by as much as 20 seconds. Sometimes the lag will dramatically increase during the game, too. There are two things to remember in case lag becomes too much of a problem:

- 1) Keep track of your opponents lag time. If you see a pointer near your rocket, tiles, or mouse stream, then chances are that it is dropping some arrows of its own to hurt you but have yet to register. If possible, try to predict what tiles were dropped and change your strategy accordingly (i.e., set the mice on a new path) before the tiles show up.
- 2) If lag becomes greater than five seconds, then you can probably give up attempting any real strategy. When there is no time to react, don't bother to react since whatever action you take to counter will show up long after you initiated it. Instead, it may be best to just set up a trail from a portal to your rocket and hope for the best.

Sometimes your lag will be greater than your opponents. There really is nothing you can do to even the playing field.

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THE CAT GLITCH

[C8TH]

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The "cat glitch" is what is referred to when a rocket is impervious to cats. There are three possible explanations for it:

- 1) It is a bug in the game.
- 2) A result of lag.
- 3) The player is cheating.

Sometimes both mice and cats will not affect a rocket. Sometimes this glitch is caused when a person gets disconnected, which would make sense since his or her ISP was unable to relay the information to the other players. Other times someone get struck by a cat and not have the loss show up for a minute if not more, which could be attributed to lag. Also, it could also be a bug in the game, one which certain players have found out how to take advantage.

If you notice the cat glitch affecting a player, then do not waste anymore time sending cats to the rocket since it is immune. That, ultimately, is the worst thing about the glitch; you waste precious game time trying to bomb another player with cats, only to find your efforts were useless. While you COULD block their rocket, be careful since the player may not be aware of the glitch and think YOU are cheating for someone else. Just try to play normally, and instead of bombing the suspect's rocket with cats try to prevent it from gathering mice. You may want to use the taunts ("What!?" ) to try and

clue the other players in on the situation.

While being afflicted with the "cat glitch" does not guarantee a win, it certainly helps and makes for an unfair game. If you play the same person in another game and encounter the same problem, then consider just avoiding him or her.

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DOUBLE AND TRIPLE TEAMING

[C8DO]

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While it is not known for certain if the cat glitch can be controlled and used to cheat, there is no question that double or triple teaming is cheating. There is a difference between having other players loosely unite during a match to knock you from a large lead, and having a team of two or three players conspire to make sure you lose the match.

Try preventing this from happening by using the X button to check and see if a team (a single name showing up as two or three people) is waiting in a game room. While some teams do play fair, it may be a precaution well worth using. Of course, this does not prevent you from getting teamed by members of a ChuChu Rocket clan or by friends who play with their own accounts. If a player is blocking your rocket for no apparent reason, then you really have no chance to win. Simply make sure not to play people who block your rocket for the duration of a match so another can win.

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ChuChu Rocket: Expert Battle Guide  
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