

# The Shortest Straw

The game of... well, *straws*, frankly.

Playable for 3-6-ish players.

## Equipment

- ✓ 1 makeshift board
- ✓ 1 suspicious brown paper bag
- ✓ 1 dice with 6 sides
- ✓ 40 yellow straw pieces, 4 of which are bendy
- ✓ 30 green straw pieces, 3 of which are bendy
- ✓ 20 blue straw pieces, 2 of which are bendy
- ✓ 10 red straw pieces, 1 of which is bendy
- ✓ 2 yellow/green bonus pieces
- ✓ 2 yellow/blue bonus pieces

## Rules

**Before the game begins**, all players draw straws about who gets to start (like, obviously). Whoever draws the shortest straw goes first. Turns then proceed clockwise around the table. **Each player now draws 3 straw pieces** from the bag and places them on the table in front of him/her, such that all players can see them.

The first player now places a straw of any colour touching the centre dot (■) of the board, and then immediately draws another piece from the bag. The next player places a straw touching the first player's straw, etc. **Points are awarded for placing a straw such that it touches an unoccupied dot of the same colour**, thus:

- **Yellow:** 2 points
- **Green:** 3 points
- **Blue:** 5 points
- **Red:** 8 points

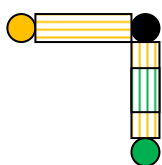
**It is allowed to place a straw on a dot of a different colour, you will simply not get any points for it.** This way, you may sacrifice your turn in order to block a valuable dot from another player, since points are only awarded for unoccupied dots.

**Bendy straws** may be placed either as corners (90° angle) or as straight double-pieces – if a bendy straw touches two unoccupied dots of the same colour as the piece, points will be awarded for both dots.

**Starting on the second round, and at the beginning of every subsequent round, a player must roll the dice.** The outcome determines whether a special Dice Rule is applied to every player for the duration of that round, as per the table on the right.

Dice Rules	
1	Nothing special happens.
2	All red straws on all players' hands must be traded in at the beginning of the round.
3	Black dots now count for 2 points.
4	The player before you in the order gets half the points you earn added to his/her score.
5	Two pieces of the same colour can be used like one bendy piece of that colour.
6	Each player may place two pieces this round.

**Two-coloured bonus pieces can be used as one piece of either colour.** If used with another piece as part of Dice Rule 5, points may be collected for dots of either colour – for example, if a **yellow/green** bonus piece is placed alongside a **yellow** piece, but touching a **green** dot, the bonus piece collects 3 points from the **green** dot, like so:



This combination would award the player a total of 5 points (2 for the **yellow** piece touching a **yellow** dot, 3 for the **yellow/green** bonus piece touching a **green** dot)

**Black dots award no points except when Dice Rule 3 is in effect.** However, **the 4 circled black dots** near the centre dot (●) let the first player to occupy them put down one extra piece in his or her turn (though the player is not allowed to draw a replacement for his/her first piece before the end of the turn).

**The game ends after the first round in which a player has reached 40 points or more.** The player who reached this score wins the game. If more than one player has over 40 points at the end of the round, the player with the highest score wins.

**In the event that the final round ends with a tie between two or more players, the game enters Sudden Death.** In Sudden Death, only the players who are tied for first place will remain in play, the rest get to watch in boredom. The players take turns to lay down pieces and draw replacement pieces as normal, but as soon as a round ends with one player in the lead, that player wins the game. During Sudden Death, the dice is no longer thrown.

#### Optional rule: One dice throw every turn

If you want a little more randomness in your game, you may elect to throw the dice before every player's turn, rather than only throwing it at the beginning of each round. The Dice Rule will then only count for that player's turn, resulting in a significantly less predictable and balanced game.