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COMPETITIVE ROAD BUILDING AND TRAVEL GAME

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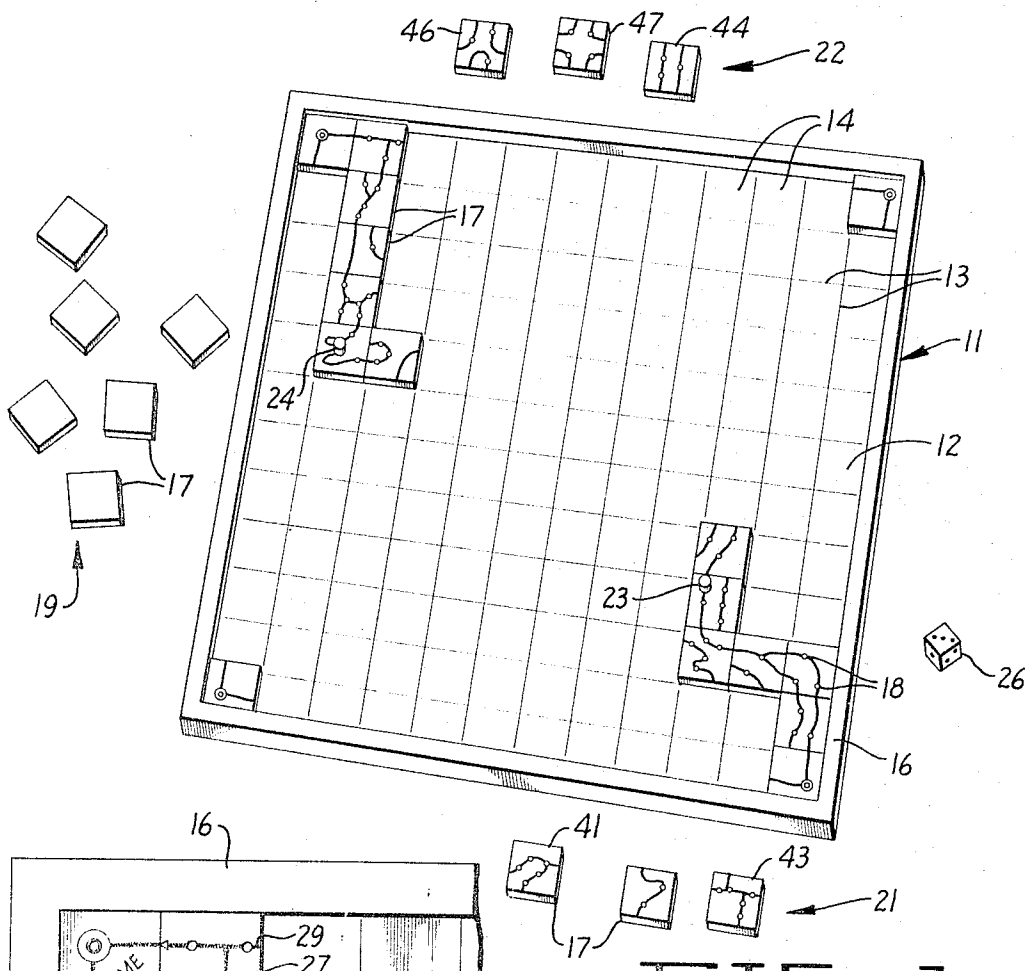

FIG. 1.

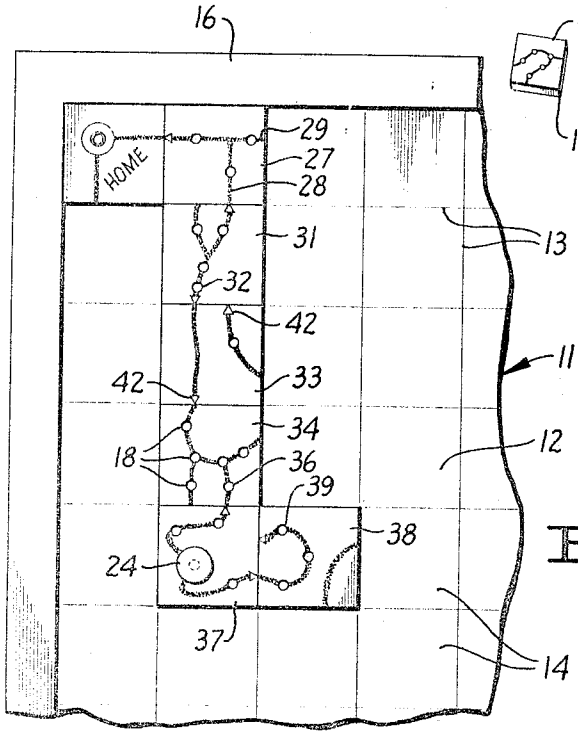

FIG. 2.

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COMPETITIVE ROAD BUILDING AND TRAVEL GAME

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The present invention relates to improvements in a road game, and more particularly to a road game which is played on a playing board with indicators to show movement from one position to another along the road.

Games which utilize a playing board having a particular layout are well-known, and many forms of play have been developed for such games which have provided many hours of entertainment and amusement to the players. As a general rule, such games are played with indicators to mark the progress of each player, and the players proceed by taking turns in regular rotation until the game is completed. Usually the particular move to be made by the player is determined by chance by means of dice, spinners or other means of providing arbitrary numbers by lot.

While games of this nature have been immensely successful, there is still room for improvement in forms and variations. For example, the winner is often determined by a pure chance factor and once a player gets far ahead of his opponent, there is little likelihood of the opponent winning the game. In fact, in some of these games, the chance factor absolutely determines the move which may be made so that the winner is determined completely by chance. Such games soon cause a lack of interest so that the players quickly get tired of them.

Other games are known in which the element of luck is eliminated as completely as possible so that the game is almost completely determined by the skill of the player such as games of chess, checkers or the like where the moves are determined completely by the judgement of the contestants. These games also tend to cause a loss of interest because one player often wins all of the games with the result that the competitive interest is seriously reduced.

However, games which combine the factors of luck and skill such as various card games have been immensely successful, because the less skillful players will still win their share of the games. The present invention is directed to a game which combines the elements of chance and skill by giving each of the players "move" possibilities determined by lot together with the opportunity of positioning various playing pieces in accordance with his best judgment within the framework of the rules of the game.

Specifically, the game of this invention utilizes a playing board adapted to receive suitable tiles or other playing pieces carrying various indicia in the form of road layouts that must be played in accordance with the game rules together with an indicator for marking the progress of the players as they move from one position to another over the board. The degree of movement and the ability to make "special" moves is indicated by chance while the abliity to determine the road layouts utilized in a particular game is determined by the players. The actual layout is obtained by the build-up of specific parts thereof by the players as they select their moves from certain choices available to them.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a game which combines geometric skill of the contestants with the elements of chance.

Another object of this invention is to provide a road game in which the player who is behind retains a substantial chance to win until the very last play is made.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game of the character described which is suitable for various ages of players, the complexity being determined by the skill of the player.

Another object of the invention is to provide a road game of sufficient complexity and variation in play that the game will give many hours of amusement to the player through the presentation of novel modes of play for each game.

Further objects and adavntages of our invention will be apparent as the specification progresses and the new and useful features of our road game will be fully defined in the claims attached hereto.

The preferred form of the invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawing forming a part of this description in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view illustrating a typical game as it appears during the early stages thereof;

FIGURE 2 is an enlarged fragmentary view of a portion of the game board shown in FIGURE 1 illustrating in greater detail a typical road layout and the manner in which the road is formed.

While we have shown only the preferred form of our invention, it should be understood that various changes or modifications may be made within the scope of the claims attached hereto without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Referring to the drawing in greater detail, there is shown a typical game board **11** having a playing surface **12** marked off with guide lines **13** to designate a plurality of squares. As here shown, the playing board is substantially square shaped and is divided into one hundred and forty-four squares **14** by the lines **13** and the border **16**.

The game also comprises a plurality of tiles or playing pieces **17**, which are preferably thin squares of any suitable material. The tiles are of matched size to the small squares **14** of the playing board, and are all of the same size and shape. The face of each tile is used to make roads and the rear side is blank or otherwise similar to the rear side of all the other tiles so that when this side is up, it is impossible to see the road configuration contained on the face of the tiles.

On the face of each tile, indicia are provided to show at least one road segment extending between two different positions on the perimeter of the tile. Usually the ends of the road segment will extend from a given edge of the tile to a different edge thereof, but in exceptional cases the road may terminate on the same edge of the tile as that on which it began. Each tile usually contains a different road configuration from that shown in each of the other tiles, but the road configurations may be classified into various groups of similar road configurations. Thus, it is possible to make a considerable number of different road parts by combining the tiles so that matched segments of roads from each tile will combine to make complete roadways containing curves, crossroads, dead ends and road junctions.

In the preferred form of our game, we prefer to have the roads begin at a position one-third of the length of the side away from any one corner of the tile and terminate at a different position a similar distance away from that corner or a different corner of the tile. Where a junction or a crossroad is provided, all roads ends will terminate in such a position on the perimeter of the tile. In this way, two tiles may be placed on adjacent squares and oriented so that the beginning of one road connects with the end of another.

Since there are two possible positions for the road to begin or end on each side, the end of a given road segment may or may not line up with a road on another tile

terminating at the common side between squares. Therefore, it is a feature of the present invention to provide indicia for classifying each of these two side positions. With this construction, opposite indicia will always match and provide alignment. This marking assists the players in determining the manner in which each road segment may be fitted.

The effective length of the road is determined by a plurality of stops **18** rather than the true length thereof and each player advances the number of stops allowed by a chance determination on his turn. Thus the rate of forward progress of a player's indicator as he proceeds to cross the board is determined by chance while the road over which he travels is determined by the placement of the tiles **17** during the progress of the game.

While many variations of games are possible using the factors of our inventions, a preferred game will be described in detail to illustrate a preferred form of play.

In such a game the tiles are all placed face down to form a boneyard from which tiles are selected as they are needed to form the players' hands. Each player selects three tiles from the boneyard to form his hand and retains three tiles in his hand at all times by replacing tiles from the boneyard as his tiles are played.

The game may be played with from two to four players, however, it is preferred to have either two or four persons play to attain symmetry. In the game shown in FIGURE 1, two players are in progress with the players having hands **21** and **22** at opposite sides of the board.

Each player is also provided with a marker such as markers **23** and **24** shown in the drawing. At the beginning of the game each player places his marker at a corner or "Home" position and proceeds from there to advance his marker across the board to the opposite corner or "Home" position. Preferably, where two players are competing, each will proceed from his own starting position to his opponent's starting position. In this way, certain obstructions of the play at the home position will result as well as opposition at the mid-point of the game to add confusion and further interest.

In the game illustrated, a die **26** is used which is a standard cubical die having indicia from 1–6 on the six faces thereof. To begin, the player casting the highest number will proceed first. On his turn he will cast the die and then move his indicator a number of stops shown by the number thrown on the die making his roadway as he proceeds from the tiles in his hand.

Thus, as best seen in FIGURE 2, the player has moved his indicator **24** from the "Home" position along the road which he has constructed with the five tiles over 12 stop positions. In this way, each player proceeds to move his marker toward the finish position. In order to make his road, each player places a tile on the end of the road on which he is moving as it is needed. Each tile played to the board is replaced in the player's hand by taking a tile from the boneyard during the turn so that the player keeps three tiles in his hand at all times. For example, if a player starts from the home position shown in FIGURE 2 and casts a five, he may place tile **27** as shown. However, since there are only two stops on this tile, he will obviously proceed beyond the played tile and may replace the used tile with another tile from the boneyard. However, he should move his two stops on the played tile before drawing from the boneyard, so as to commit himself as to whether he will proceed down road **28** or road **29**.

Once he has selected road **28** and replaced the used tile, he will place tile **31** in position on the board and move down to stop **32**. At this point his turn is completed, and with a fresh tile drawn to replace tile **31**, the play passes to the next player. At his next play, our player having rolled a four, may play tile **33** in the manner shown, but it will be noted there are no stops on tile **33**. Accordingly, he may draw a replacement tile from the boneyard and play another tile onto the end of the roadway continued by tile **33**. Thus, with tile **34** in place he will again proceed to move his playing piece four more moves until he has reached stop **36**. On his next play, say he casts a three and adds tile **37** so that his move will bring his marker **24** to the position shown.

Although it would be possible to continue the game in this fashion, we have found that considerable interest may be added to the game by providing one or more special plays. Thus in a preferred game, casts of one and six are "special" and allow the player to make additional moves as well as advance his man either one or six stops as the case may be.

For example, in our preferred form when a one is cast, the player may not only move his marker one stop, but in the event that he will move over onto another tile, he may select this new tile from any tile on the board as well as from a tile in his hand. Note, however, that this special play only arises where the marker is ready to move onto a new tile before the die is cast.

The other special move relates to special advantages which accrue when a six is cast. By providing special advantages for six, it is possible for a player who is considerably behind to gain a considerable amount of lost ground on his opponent so that by casting sixes near the end of the game, a person who appears to be hopelessly behind may still win the game.

When a six is cast, a player not only gets to play the six but also receives another turn. However, if he throws another six, he will not obtain a third turn on this particular play. In addition to the extra turn, the person casting the six may also make a special play before he moves his man which play allows him to move any tile from anywhere on the board (except a tile on which a marker is located) to add on to either his road or the road of one of his opponents. In this way, he may turn his opponent back so as to direct him in the wrong direction or possibly provide a blocking play by constructing a dead end on his opponent's road. Dead ends can be in the board, as shown, or against a side thereof. In addition, our player also moves his own man six spaces. Instead of blocking an opponent, the player throwing a six might utilize a special tile to advance his own cause particularly where he is near the home position and may be able to win immediately by ignoring his opponent and playing himself home.

An example of a suitable six play that may be made where a certain special type tile is available to be played is illustrated in FIGURE 2. As there shown, tile **38** has been placed on our player's road and this tile has a dead end road automatically resulting by turning back on the side from which it originates. Thus, with this blocking tile in his way, our player with marker **24** must cast a six in order to solve his problem.

This solution may occur by either casting a six immediately allowing him to take tile **38** away from in front of his marker and either playing it on an opponent or casting it back into the boneyard or by throwing a six after he has moved on to tile **38**. For example, if our player next casts a four he must advance his marker **24** until he reaches stop **39**. Then on each successive turn, he will be unable to use the turn until a six is cast. When he does cast a six, he removes tile **37** from in front of him and either plays it on an opponent or throws it away and proceeds by building his road in front of him.

Generally the game will have only one tile similar to tile **38** so that the blocking play there illustrated is not always available. However, tile **41** or a similar tile may be used to both turn the opponent around and provide a large number of stops on which he must move. This of course, also has a delaying effect.

It is also possible for the player to have his road lead him to the edge of the board and thereby cause him to be blocked. When this occurs, he must advance his marker until the next move would cause him to move

on to the border, and then wait until he casts a one. When a one is cast he may rotate the tile on which he sits and proceed from there through any opening which either exists or which is made by casting a six.

Another situation which arises is that in which the player can only make a play which is undesirable. When this occurs, he must make the undesirable play or the least undesirable of a plurality of undesirable plays. For this reason, players may as well show their tiles during the course of play because any time a person is unable to move, he must show his tiles to prove his inability to move to his opponent. In the event that the player is unable to move, he will cast all his three tiles back into the boneyard and draw three others, the price of this exchange being a loss of a turn. In the event that he cannot play when his play is to begin, he makes the change immediately and loses that particular turn. However, when the inability to play occurs during the middle of a turn, he makes the swap and completes that particular turn but is forced to give up the next regular turn that he would otherwise have.

As indicated above, it is preferred to utilize tiles in which the road configurations terminate at the sides one-third of the distance from a corner. With this arrangement, there are two possible termination points on each side which will match with the opposite termination point of a similar tile. For example, proceeding clockwise from the corner all terminations exactly one-third of a side clockwise from each corner (this includes four possible terminations) will be marked with one specific identifying indicia such as a color or in the case shown in the drawings, no marking at all. The other four termination points, those being two-thirds of a side distance clockwise from each corner or one-third of a side counterclockwise from each corner will be marked with some other common indicia such as triangle **42** as shown in FIGURE 2. Thus any of the triangularly marked terminations will match with any of the unmarked terminations as shown in FIGURE 2. With other types of markings, the opposite markings are brought together in all cases to make a match, and this is important in assisting the player to determine what possible plays are available to him.

Obviously, certain changes may be made in the game herein described and still be within the ambit of the invention. For example, a variant in the construction of the game which may be used is provided by making a marker having a pin on the lower surface thereof and providing matching holes at the stop positions. With this construction, the marker is inserted in the hole and its position remains secure in the event that the board is bumped or the marker inadvertently jarred by one of the players.

Although we have shown a square board utilizing square tiles, it will be appreciated that other geometric configurations might be used if desired. However, we find that the game here shown is particularly desirable. The size of the game may also be varied so as to provide a simpler game with say 100 squares for younger players and larger boards that might have say 225 square for more mature players.

The number of tiles provided should be sufficient to complete any possible game that might be played. Thus, with the 144 square game illustrated in FIGURE 1, in which the four corners are already provided with tiles, it is seen that 140 tiles would completely fill up the rest of the board and would obviously be enough. However, we find that less than half of the total squares are usually covered during the course of play and sixty or seventy tiles are sufficient. While sixty or seventy tiles may be sufficient to play a game, it is important to provide various classes of tiles and have fairly sparse distribution of certain special types. For example, a game in which sixty-five tiles are furnished, one tile of the nature of tile **38** is sufficient because too many of these tiles would unduly slow the game. In addition, we find that two tiles of the nature of tile **33** where a free pass is obtained is sufficient to prevent the game from becoming unduly speeded up. The other tiles which contain road junctions such as tiles **31** and **27**, cross roads or double road junctions such as tile **43** and tiles with two, three or four roads such as tiles **44**, **46** and **47**, respectively, are provided in any suitable number, In addition, a reasonable number of winding roads with a fairly large number of stops such as tile **41** should be provided.

From the foregoing description, it is seen that we have provided a game in which the elements of luck and skill have been combined to obtain an extremely interesting game in which novel situations and different plays are possible to provide an unlimited number of different games. In this way, interest and amusement are retained at a high level through many hours of play and enjoyment. In addition, it is found that a desirable balance of the factors of luck and skill are included so as to make the game interesting for players of different ability. Moreover, the chance elements present such extreme possibilities that the game may only be considered concluded when it is actually finished.

To recapitulate briefly, the playing equipment consists of a conventional die, a playing board, a multiplicity of road building tiles, and differentiated markers for indicating the progress or position of the respective players.

The object of each player is progressively to build, and step-by-step to traverse, with the markers, the road constructed as the player goes from a point of beginning to a definable goal.

The playing board has a large playing area which is marked off into a multiplicity of regular polygonal areas of identical size and shape.

Each tile corresponds in size and shape to any one of the polygonal sub-divisions of the playing area of the board, so that it may be fitted onto any one of said subdivisions. Each tile is marked with at least one road segment or pass, which begins and ends at terminal points lying in the perimeter of the tile. Every terminal point is located in a side or edge of a tile at unequal distances from the ends of such sides or edge, but each terminal point is located at a uniform predetermined distance from the nearest corner or vertex of the tile.

The tiles differ among themselves in the following particulars:

(a) Some have only one road segment while others have more than one. In those having more than one, the segments cross on some tiles, while on others they do not cross.

(b) Some road segments have both terminal points in the same tile edge or side, others have their terminals in adjacent tile edges, and still others have their terminals in non-adjacent tile edges.

(c) Some terminals are spaced clockwise from the nearest tile corner, while others are spaced counterclockwise from the nearest corner.

(d) On some tiles, all segment terminals are measured clockwise from the nearest corner; on other tiles, all segment terminals are measured counterclockwise from the nearest corner; and on still others a mixed relationship occurs.

(e) Most, but not all, of the tiles are marked with stations or stops along the road segment or segments, the number of marked stations varying from zero to five or even more, so that the number of steps required to traverse the tile is subject to substantial variation.

The markers are desirably made of small enough horizontal dimensions to occupy one station at a time without covering and concealing adjacent stations.

We claim:

1. A competitive, combined road building and travel game comprising, in combination, a playing board having a substantially square playing surface marked into a plurality of smaller squares and having starting and fin-

ishing positions indicated thereon, a plurality of thin road building tiles having a square-shaped surface and matching size to said smaller squares of the playing surface and adapted to be positioned successively on the board to define sections of a roadway thereon, each of said tiles containing indicia on one square face thereof to define at least one segment of a roadway extending between two different positions on the perimeter of the tile, each road segment being formed to terminate in one of the eight positions one-third of a side distant from the nearest corner, with each road segment terminating at a different position than its start, and at least some of the tiles having two road segments terminating on the same side, said road segments being provided with stop positions, and indicators representative of the respective players and adapted to be placed selectively on the stop positions of the road segments of the tiles.

2. The game defined in claim **1**, in which road segments terminating one-third of a side clockwise from the nearest corner have a similar mark and road segments terminating one-third of a side counterclockwise from the nearest corner have another similar mark.

3. A competitive, combined road building and travel game comprising, in combination, a playing board marked into a plurality of squares and having starting and finishing positions indicated thereon, a plurality of thin road building tiles having a square-shaped surface and matching size to said squares of the playing surface and adapted to be positioned successively on the board to define sections of a roadway thereon, each of said tiles containing indicia on one square face thereof to define at least one segment of a roadway extending between two different terminal positions on the perimeter of the tile, each road segment being formed to terminate in one of the eight positions one-third of a side distant from the nearest corner, with the roads terminating one-third of a side clockwise from the nearest corner having a similar mark, and all roads terminating one-third of a

side counter-clockwise from the nearest corner having another similar mark, said road segments being provided with stop positions, and indicators representative of the respective players and adapted to be placed selectively on the stop positions of the road segments of the tiles; said plurality of thin road building tiles being characterized by containing different configurations of road segments, with some of the tiles containing a plurality of non-contacting road segments, some of the tiles containing road segments which form junctions, some of the tiles containing road segments which cross, some of the tiles containing a single road segment, at least one of the tiles containing a single road segment which does not contact any other road segment and has its terminal positions on a common side of the tile; said road segments being different in length and shape and carrying varying numbers of stop positions with at least one of the road segments on one of the tiles having no stop position, some of the road segments having one stop position, some of the road segments having two stop positions, some of the road segments having three stop positions, some of the road segments having four stop positions, and some of the road segments having five stop positions.

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