



Okay, I'll admit it. I wanted to love 'the terrain game' the very first time I saw it. The three-dimensional aspects of it really knocked my socks off! It simply looked fun right from the get-go! My opinion is: when a game looks fun and stimulating, it usually is one or the other.

Fortunately, 'the terrain game' wins accolades in both categories. Another category in which it earns my utmost respect and appreciation is quality of components. Granted, 'the terrain game' retails for approximately \$80, but when you consider that there are 90+ cherry wood, multi-sized hexagons, a nicely-crafted, indented hexagon board, and a swell canvas bag to carry it all in, you see where your money is being spent. Besides, the game looks great! Like many fine, wooden strategy games, 'the terrain game' looks fantastic when simply displayed in your home. Not bad when a game can moonlight as a work of art.

The game actually has two phases, the first being more strategy-oriented than the second. The playing field starts empty, with each player alternating placing the wooden hexagons on the board. This is the strategy phase, for each player is attempting to make it as hard as possible for his opponent to traverse the landscape being built for him. His opponent is, meanwhile, trying to do the same. This phase of the game is by no means merely a formality. The building of the terrain is the HEART of the game in my opinion, the phase of the game where there is no element of luck. Each player has only his own cleverness upon which to count.

Of course, when the players are done placing the hexagons, the end result is astounding and unique. The valleys and the mountains that are created really are awe-inspiring. At the end of phase one, each player should study the terrain, not only to appreciate their respective tasks ahead, but also to appreciate their original creation.

Phase two begins with each player starting on one end of the board and trying to make it to a point defined by his opponent. The surface of each hex has a number of pivots on it, determining which directions one can exit from. A die is used to determine the weather, and how far one can move in each turn. A limit is also placed upon how high, up or down, a player can go from one hex to the next. The die does admit a rather substantial element of chance to phase two, but since 'the terrain game' does sort of simulate an actual race, it is to be expected. After all, if you were smart enough to set things up well in phase one, then chance occurrences should be of only the least hindrance.

All things considered, 'the terrain game' is one that I will be playing for a long time. Everyone to whom I have demonstrated the game has been pleasantly taken aback. It should appeal to both the strategy gamer as well as the family gamer. I will admit, however, that I am in the process of developing rules for it that eliminate the weather die. Hey, I am what I am.

'The terrain game' is available from Games With A Twist.

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