



Friedemann Friese

FELIX

The Cat in the Sack

Goal

With their mice, the players attempt to grab the famous cat in the sack. In the sack, there are both good and bad cats. Each player can also put a dog or rabbit into the sack instead of a cat, allowing players to bluff one another. At game end, all positive cats and mice count plus points, but negative cats count minus points.

- **50 cards** (5 sets with cats: -8, -5, 3, 5, 8, 11, 15, rabbit: 0, dogs: large, small)



- **4 mouse cards** (2, 3, 4, 6 »mice«)



- **1 card »cat in the sack«**



- **1 start player marker**

- **76 »mice« money** (68 x black worth 1, 8 x green worth 5)

Preparation

The following are the game preparation and rules **for 4 and 5 players**. The modifications for **3 players** are at the end of the rules.

Each player takes a set of 10 cards. Each player's left neighbor takes one card from the player and discards it unseen back into the box.

Additionally, each player takes **15 „mice“** (1 x 5 and 10 x 1) money.

The remaining „mice“ money becomes the bank: use 33 mice money for 5 players and 27 mice money for 4 players. Return the rest of the mice money to the box.

Place the **mouse cards** in a row in **numerical order** on the table in easy view and reach of all players. In games with 4 players, return the „3 mice“ card to the box. It is not used. Place the „cat in the sack“ card to the left of the „2 mice“ card.

Now **place mice money** from the bank **on the mouse cards** based on the number of the card (e.g. 6 mice on the 6 mouse card).

Return cards for players not playing (5th player in a 4 player game) to the box.

Playing the game

The game runs for 9 rounds. In each round, a group of face down cards (the cats in the sack) are auctioned to the players.

Beginning with the start player, and then continuing clockwise to all other players, each player selects any one of his cards, which he puts face down in the middle of the table. The start player puts his card completely to the left directly under the card „cat in the sack“, the next player puts his card on the right of the start player's card under the 2 mouse card, etc., so that a row of cards is created. **This row is the cats in the sack, which are now sold.**

The following is such a layout for 4 players:



start player **player 2** **player 3** **player 4**

After all players have placed one card each, the **start player turns over his card** (the first card in the row). The **start player begins the auction** by bidding any amount of mice money (not 0) and placing this amount on the table in his play area (the area before him), or he may pass. **Afterwards, the next player must bid more mice or pass.**

If the bid comes again to a player who has already bid, he must increase his bid by adding more mice or pass.

Whenever a player passes, he takes back all the mice he has bid so far this round and **takes the mice on the lowest valued mouse card** still in the row. The passing player cannot bid any more in this round.

Example: the first player passes, takes his bid back and the 2 mice that are on the first mouse card in the row.

Each time a player passes, the players **turn over next card** of the row, so that the players have more information to help them decide whether they want to buy what is in the sack or not.

When all the cards are turned over, there is now just one player who has not passed. **He pays his bid to the bank** and he gets contents of the sack: all cards (with positive and negative values) and puts them face down in his play area. The player places his **won cards separately** from those in his hand. He also takes the start player marker.

If there was exactly one dog (large or small) among the face up cards in the row, he will scare one cat away, before the sack will be taken. If the large dog is in the row, the cat with the highest positive value and this dog are returned to the box. If the **small dog** is in the row, the cat with the highest negative value and this dog are returned to the box.



Example: the small dog chases the -5 cat away and the player receives 11 points. With a large dog, the player would receive -5 points, as the dog would chase the 11 cat away.

Note: with more than one dog in the row, the dogs rush about without effect on the cats and are returned to the box. This also occurs if small and large dogs are together in the row.

Finally, the mouse cards are filled again with the appropriate number mice and the second round is begun with the selection of cards and the auction, according to the rules above.

All further rounds run the same way.

Game end and scoring

The play ends after the ninth auction, because **no one has any cards in their hands left**. The last winning bid must still be paid to the bank and the winning player takes the cards from the row as in the other rounds.

Now all players add the points on the cats they won at auction (the yellow numbers are positive and the red numbers are negative). To this, they add the mice money they have left

(each mouse is one point). The Rabbits are worth nothing and the dogs are out of the game.

The player with the most points is the winner!

At a tie the player with more points in cats is winner.

Rules for 3 players

Use only the **3 and 6 mouse cards**. Place the „cat in the sack“ card to the left of the 3 mouse card. Put **mouse worth 21** in the bank; the rest are returned to the box.

Take a **fourth card set** and shuffle it face down. Remove one card randomly and place into the box without looking at it. Place the remainder of the fourth card set face down under the „cat in the sack“ card.



At the beginning of the auction, before the start player begin bidding, turn over the **top-most card of the fourth set**.

After a player passes, the card of the start player is turned over, so that the two remaining players will see two face up and two face down cards. When there is just one player left, turn over the last two face down cards in the row.

Special Cases

- If at the beginning of the auction **all players but the last pass**, turn over the last card (with 3 players, the two last cards), so that the last player can see the entire row and **buy the cats for 1 mouse**, if he chooses.
- If the last player also passes, remove all cards from the row and begin a new round with the same start player, **but no mice on the cards**.
- If a **large dog** chases a cat from the row and there are no positive cats in the row, he chases the lowest-valued negative cat from the row. If a **small dog** chases a cat from the row and there are no negative cats in the row, he chases the lowest-valued positive cat from the row.
- Players may make change with their mice money with the bank at **any time**.
- If, at the end of a round, there is **not enough money in the bank** to distribute money on all the mouse cards, **no mice are placed** on the cards at all. In this round, only the player winning the auction gets something: the cats on the row. All player who pass,

get nothing from the mouse cards.

- Players keep their **mice money secret** during the game.

A tactical note

If a player passes as the last player, he receives 6 mice. This can often be worthwhile as it allows a player to have cash he may want for a later auction. Additionally, these 6 mice are also 6 points. If a player spends all his money on an auction, he will have to pass immediately on the next and will receive only 2 mice when he does. Thus, this is likely not a good idea. If all players (except one) bid high amounts, that player could win without ever winning an auction.

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