

## Advanced Rules:

Stop reading here if you are new to Starbase Jeff. We have included a set of advanced game rules which you only need to learn if you're looking for more complexity in the game.

## The "Capsules":

Around the edges of the cards, you'll see a few halves of symbols. These symbols are called "capsules," and completing them can give you special bonuses in the advanced game. If you aren't playing the advanced rules, just ignore the capsules.

## How to Play:

Everything in the basic game also applies here, so you should be sure everyone is aware that they are playing by the advanced rules.

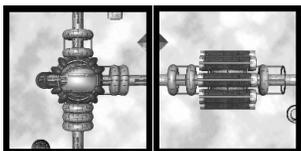
When you complete a capsule, as shown in the example below, you gain a special power, which goes into effect right away. Both cards must be your own color; it doesn't help to finish a capsule on another player's card.

 **Torus (Cash):** When you play End Caps, take two Credits instead of one.

 **Cube (Labor):** You may play two pieces each turn, but you still draw only one card. This means that your hand will shrink by one card each time you use this power. If either of your pieces is deferred, they both are.

 **Sphere (Graft):** When players connect through you, they pay the building cost of each card, not just 1 credit, in connection fees.

 **Diamond (Muscle):** You may choose to win or lose deferral ties, with anyone who does not also have this Capsule. In other words, if you play a piece which is deferred, you may choose to let it be deferred, or play it either before or after the other matching piece.



**A finished Diamond capsule.**  
Both cards must be your color.

## About Cheapass Games:

We here at **Cheapass Games** are aware of two basic facts about games: they cost too much, and they are, at some level, all the same.

If you ignore the clever shapes they come in, the cheap little plastic pawns are an interchangeable part of most of the board games in your house. So are the dice, the money, the counters, and just about every clever spare part. These parts can account for as much as 75% of a game's production cost, and that cost gets handed to you.

If you had your choice, you'd probably invest a little money in one good set of gaming paraphernalia instead of twenty crappy ones, and then just buy the new part of every "new" game. Yet most game companies insist on selling you the whole package every time; it's a little like bundling a can opener with every can of beans.

Cheapass Games come packaged with the bare essentials: boards, cards, and rulebooks. If you need anything else, we'll tell you. And it's probably something that you can scrounge from a game you already have, or buy at a hobby store for less than we'd have to charge you for it.

And, once you've got a collection of pawns, dice, counters, and money, you can use the same ones for every Cheapass game. We've standardized our designs so your gaming toolbox will last.

This free PDF of Starbase Jeff is a duplicate of the original 1998 edition, with the exception of this paragraph. Any errors, poor choices, or lapses in judgement are the fault of our 1998 counterparts.

## Strategy:

It's highly likely that your opponents will be afraid of your capsules, and try to destroy them. In turn, you should probably save your Sabotages to destroy the capsules your opponents make. You will learn, however, that neither of these strategies is infallible.

**Notes:** With the Cube, you **can** force yourself to defer by playing two matching cards at once.

Having more than one of the same capsule **does not** give you extra powers. (Nice try.) 

Starbase Jeff was designed by Jim Geldmacher, with help from James Ernest. Starbase Graphics by Jim Geldmacher, rulebook text and layouts by James Ernest. Additional design by E. Jordan Bojar. Special thanks to the game's namesake, avid playtester and shareware mogul Jeff Vogel. Printed in Seattle by All Color Printing. Assembled by a rice-eating white guy named Toivo. Thanks also to a slowly drifting escape pod of weightless and bewhiskered Guinea Pigs.



A Cheapass Card Game for 2-4 Players

## What You Get:

Starbase Jeff comes with four colored decks of 20 cards. You also get this rulebook, and a handy and versatile white paper carrying pouch.

## What Else You Need:

You will need some kind of money. Use money from your favorite board game, poker chips, or pocket change. We strongly recommend that you don't play for real money. Furthermore, we strongly don't suggest a ratio of a nickel for every credit.

## The Object:

To make the most money. Each round takes about twenty minutes, and you can play as many rounds as you like.

## Before the Game:

Each player takes a deck. The cards in each deck are the same, and include:

**End Caps:** 3x Rec., 2x Doc., 3x Comm.

**Extensions:** 3x Factory, 4x Laboratory.

**Junctions:** 2x Habitat

**Hubs:** 1x Power Station

**Bombs:** 2x Sabotage

Players start with money, as much as they like. There is also a "Pot," a central pool of money which starts empty. If you aren't playing for real money, start everyone with 50 credits.

If a player runs out of money, the game ends immediately and the player with the most money wins. Otherwise, play for as long as you like. Finishing the game with more money than you started with is an honorable goal.

You can learn a lot about a guy when you shoot him into space. A guy like Starbase Jeff.

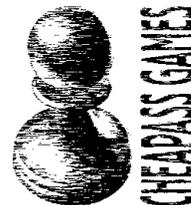
Back home Jeff Tuttle was a humble shareware programmer, content to while away the hours writing code and drawing cute little goblins.

But put him in charge of a deep space construction firm, and look out.

Jeff took to his new job like a lungfish to mud, and pretty soon he was raking in the cash, making shady back-door deals, and swearing like the crew of the Bounty. All in the name of money, sweet money.

What drives a decent human being to such desperate acts of greed? What transforms him from a sweet-natured pussycat into the larcenous, whining, squinting, bewhiskered old coot we knew as Starbase Jeff?

The world may never know.



## Cheapass Fun Fact™:

**Starbase Jeff** was designed by Jim Geldmacher and James Ernest. It's the first time we've ever taken help from the outside!

## To Start the Round:

Each player takes his own deck (all the cards in one color) and shuffles it thoroughly. Then each player draws a hand of five cards from his deck.

## On Each Turn:

To begin the turn, each player puts one card from his hand face down on the table, and then draws another card to replace it.

After everyone has laid down a card, they are revealed together. The cards will now be built (“played”) into the Space Station in order of **rank**. “Rank” is the white number in the black circle; build the higher numbers first.

If two or more cards of the same rank are revealed on one round, those cards are **deferred**, and will be held back until a later round. (See below.)

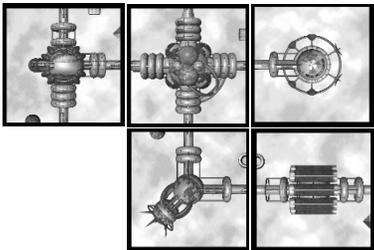
## Building the Station:

Cards are built into a grid pattern, in any orientation, with open ends attaching to other open ends just like you would expect.

The first card of the station must be played in the middle of the table. After the first piece is built, new cards must be attached to open ends of the station; they cannot be played in empty space.

Furthermore, you may not play a card which does not link properly to all the cards it touches.

The building area is theoretically infinite, but you should probably restrict it to the tabletop just to keep your life easy.



### Your game might look like this.

Ignore the little capsules unless you are playing by the advanced rules.

## Building Fees:

When you build a card, you must pay a building fee to the Pot. The fee for each card is printed in the upper left hand corner. For example, when you build a Habitat card, you must pay 2 to the Pot.

End caps are an exception, and actually allow you to **collect** money from the pot. When you build an End Cap (Recreation, Docking, Communication), you withdraw one credit from the pot, if there is any money to be had. If the pot is empty, you're out of luck; you won't be able to collect it later.

## Connection Fees:

You may also be forced to pay a connection fee when you build a new piece. Unless you build next to a piece of your own color, you will pay one credit to every player who stands between your new piece and your nearest existing piece, for every card along the way. You never pay a connection fee when you play your first piece, because you have nothing on the board to connect to.

**Example:** Green builds a Factory. He does not build next to another Green piece, but instead connects to his existing pieces via a trail of Yellow and Blue pieces. There are two Yellow cards and one Blue card along the route, so Green pays a Building Fee of 1 credit to the Pot (for the Factory card), plus a connection fee of 2 credits to Yellow, and 1 to Blue.

**Multiple Paths:** You may choose any connection route between your new piece and your existing pieces, even a longer one than necessary, if you would rather pay your fee to a particular opponent.

## Deferred Parts:

Frequently, more than one player will play cards of the same rank. These cards will not be built right away, but instead get “deferred.” Put these cards aside, leaving them face up in front of you, until you play an **unmatched** card on a subsequent round. You will then play **all** of your tabled cards at the same time, determined by the rank of the new card.

When you come back in, you can play your deferred cards and your new card in any order.

## The Sabotage Card:

When you play a Sabotage, you must destroy one piece of the station, with one exception: you can't remove a card which would break the station into two unconnected pieces. The card you destroy with your Sabotage goes out of play, as does the Sabotage card.

Sabotage has a rank, like any other card. If your Sabotage is deferred, because someone else also played a Sabotage, put the card aside like any other deferred piece, and play it when you are allowed to build again.

## Unplayable Cards:

If you play a Sabotage card when there is no legal target (i.e., the board is clear), the Sabotage card is simply discarded with no effect.

If any other card is unbuildable at the time when you are required to build it (i.e., there is no open end of the station where the piece will legally fit) then the card is set aside as if it were deferred.

## Winning:

The game ends as soon as someone closes off the Station. This can happen as early as the first round. The player who closes the Station will take the Pot, after the cleanup, described below.

Rarely, the Station will never close. The game continues until every player draws the last card from their deck. If the station is not closed at the end of **that** turn, the game ends and the remainder of the pot is divided evenly among all players, after any necessary cleanup. If the pot doesn't divide evenly, leave the remainder for the next game.

## Cleanup:

Before the winner takes the pot, each player must pay one credit to the pot for each unbuilt card he has on the table. Deferred cards, other tabled cards, and new cards not yet built on this round, count as unbuilt. Cards which are still in your hand and deck do not.

After everyone has paid for his unbuilt cards, the pot can be collected, and the game is over.

## Strategy:

There are three distinct ways to make money in this game: Capping, Piping, and Finishing. If you concentrate on building end caps (“Capping”), you will constantly be collecting small amounts of money instead of paying them to the pot. This technique won't work all by itself, however, since you're likely to be connecting through other players whenever you do it, and thereby paying them connection fees. However, it dovetails nicely into the strategy of “Finishing,” in which you try to cap off the entire station and collect the pot.

“Finishing” is best accomplished by making sure that you will play the last end cap. This isn't always easy, since many other players will probably also try to play end caps at the right time. The rank of the cards you play will make a difference, as will the number of end caps you manage to defer, and play at once.

One of the most powerful ways to finish the board is to get a whole string of endcaps deferred, and then get back into the game using a high-ranked card like a Power Station or a Sabotage. You don't need to actually play these higher ranked cards, you just need to use them to jump yourself back into the game, and play out your end caps.

“Piping” means trying to build an extended starbase of your own color, and then forcing each other player to connect through you. In this case, you can actually make money off your building efforts alone, and not even worry about the Pot, but you have to be pretty good at it.

To pipe well, try building away from the rest of the station with a few straight lines, then split the path up to make everyone build through your whole chain. You'll also have to make sure people **have** to build out there, or they never will.

One more thing: If you think that you can't win the Pot, it may help you to keep the station **open** for as long as you can. If the station doesn't close, you will at least get a slice of the Pot. 

