

The first four Roll & Play games

Definitely Not for the Recycling Bin

There was a lawsuit in Germany some years ago aimed at declaring games boxes as mere disposable packaging. Duales System Deutschland (DSD, the Spanish Inquisition-like company responsible for packaging recycling, i. e. the collection of the mandatory fees from the industry) was suing a games manufacturer and finally lost in 1999. At the Nuremberg Toy Fair 2011 Schmidt Spiele was introducing a new packaging type that – as even DSD would have agreed – is meant to be anything but disposable. The series of four dice games, some old, some new, is called Roll & Play. The plastic box has been designed so that it unfolds into a dice tower – a brilliant idea. At the same time, the complete game components are packed inside the tower, for example, five or six dice, chips, a scorecard or game board and up to six (!) pencils.

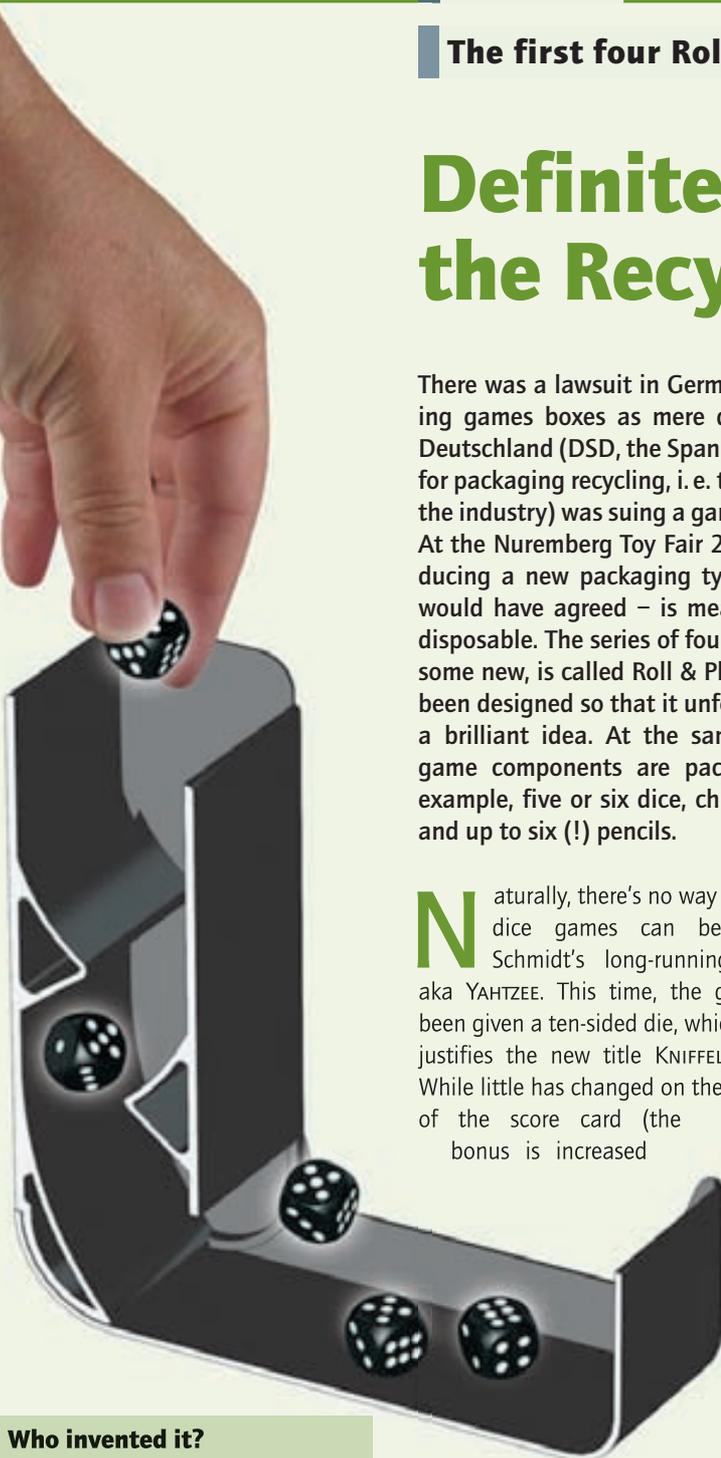
Naturally, there's no way a series of dice games can be without Schmidt's long-running KNIFFEL aka YAHTZEE. This time, the game had been given a ten-sided die, which entirely justifies the new title KNIFFEL EXTREME. While little has changed on the top of the score card (the bonus is increased

but, sadly, not on the score pad.

In his report from the Nuremberg Toy Fair (see *spielbox* 2/2011), my colleague Christwart Conrad wrote in detail about the nice game EXTRA from Sid Sackson, so I can refer readers to the previous issue of *spielbox* for information about this game.

GEIZEN ("To be Stingy") from Leo Colovini packs 130 chips and a small board with score boxes next to the dice. Each player starts with a handful of chips; the more participants there are, the more chips each gets. The goal is to hold on to them as long as possible. For each roll other than 6, a chip must be placed on the corresponding numbered field (sometimes two chips are due). Fortunately, you can roll multiple times if you place at least one of the dice. If the last field of a numbered row is covered, the row can be cleared, and the opponents need to pay penalty chips. Unfortunately, the act of clearing requires good fine motor skills, or else the chips will get mixed together on the small board.

FIESE 15 ("Nasty 15") from Steffen Bennett is, next to the reissued oldie EXTRA, the most interesting entry in the series. 15 cardboard strips show different ways to make six different colored dice add up to 15. The goal is to roll the corresponding



Who invented it?

The dice tower was originally developed by the Romans in order to stop swift handed rollers from being able to control the dice. Dr. Ulrich Schädler, now head of the Swiss Games Museum, presented this discovery in detail in *spielbox* 1/94. The U.S. manufacturer Fundex Games had the idea of integrating a dice tower into a game's packaging. The design suffered, however, because the dice could roll uncontrolled onto the table. Schmidt Spiele therefore developed a separate, larger dice tower/box that also contains a complete game.

and now requires a higher score), there are now more than twice as many combinations as before to roll in the lower part. There is, for example, next to the "Full House" a "Large Full House," and "Small" and "Large Street" (known as "Straight" in English) were expanded to include "Highway." It wasn't only larger combinations that were added, but smaller ones like "10 or fewer," too. Anyone who wants to do away with the ten-sider can, of course, play the classic YAHTZEE. The original combinations are clearly identified separately from the EXTREME ones in the rulebook,



dice to match these demands as closely as possible. A die is valid as long as it does not exceed the value marked in its color. A 6 is rarely asked for, and even a 5 is not frequent. At least one valid die must be selected from each throw, and the others may be rerolled.

A player who stops rolling voluntarily may score the rolled points. If a player continues, but fails to roll a valid result, he writes down the points of the invalid dice colors on the cardboard strips. With luck, this can be more than the supposed jinx he had previously rolled. With even more luck, he rolls five or even six valid dice and collects additional bonus points. This clever game offers material for two variants as well.

Ideal for train, plane or Bistro

The Roll & Play series is the perfect accessory for holiday luggage. The games can be played on folding tables in an airplane or train as easily as at a bistro table, without risk that the dice will fall off. It can be criticized that the dice hiding along the higher edge of the rolling surface are not visible. This may be true, but only if you are sitting across from the game at a big table. Travel games, after all, are intended to fulfill a different pur-

pose.

They should be usable in confined areas and take up little luggage space. For that, the series is absolutely fitting. Therefore, a dice tower will accompany us on vacation as well as - may the manufacturer forgive us - some dice from other publishers. For example, the CATAN DICE GAME or ROLL THROUGH THE AGES, whose somewhat larger and edged cubes roll smoothly through the tower.

If Roll & Play has a fault, then it's the sound. The dice rattle loudly through the tower, a noise that one would not want to expose fellow travelers to for long. Though a responsible person, as this reviewer is, has made provisions and put adhesive velvet on the interior walls of his tower. Now, nothing stands in the way of holiday dice fun. *KMW/sb*

KNIFFEL EXTREME (Schmidt) for 2-4 players, 8+ years. **EXTRA!** (Schmidt) von Sid Sackson; for 1-6 players, 8+ years. **GEIZEN** (Schmidt) by Leo Colovini; for 2-4 players, 7+ years. **FIESTE 15** (Schmidt) by Steffen Bendorf; for 2-6 players, 7+ years. All have a duration of about 20 minutes and price of about 12 €.