

Mississippi Queen + Black Rose Quick Reference

This is a more complete and cleaned up version using the English booklet rules of both games plus posted material from BoardGameGeek members Bernd Wechner (bwechner), Michael Weston (delta1119), Mike Mayer, and Togu Oppusunggu, and, indirectly, a rules interpretation from Jay Tummelson of Rio Grande Games.

Starting

- Choose your boats, set **speed to 1** (Red wheel Right) and **coal to 6** (Black wheel Left).
- Place the start tile on the table.
- Shuffle the river tiles.
- Draw one river tile and place it on the **middle connector** of the start tile.
- The **youngest** player places their boat on starting space 1.
- Clockwise around the table, fill the remaining starting spaces in order:
 - ◆ 2, 3, 4, 5, behind 3, behind 2, behind 1.
- The **Black Rose** is always placed in the last available space.
- If you are starting from behind 3, behind 2, or behind 1, you get **1 free coal** to spend on your **first turn** only to make up for poor starting position.

Ending

- Dock at one of the **middle 3 spaces in front of the landing platform** at the end of the race, after stopping to pick up **2 passengers** along the way.
- Immediately move your boat to the next available landing platform space.

Passengers

You must Dock and pick up **two passengers** before finishing the race.

Players	Boats Per Player	Passengers: Total / Skip*	Passenger Locations
2	2	8 / 0	1 per island.
3	1	8 / 2	1 per island.
3	2	12 / 0	1 on red hut islands, 2 on brown hut islands.
4	1	12 / 4	1 on red hut islands, 2 on brown hut islands.
5-6	1	16 / 4-6	2 per island.
7-8	1	20 / 4-6	2 per island, 2 per coal supply station.

* If every boat picks up its 2 passengers, this is how many passengers may be safely skipped and left on islands throughout the race.

Each Turn

Playing order is decided by:

- Boat on the **furthest tile** downstream.
- **Furthest boat** on the same tile (measured from trailing edge of next tile).
- If tied, then the boat with the **highest speed**.
- If still tied, then the boat with **most coal**.
- If still tied, then the **rightmost boat** (looking downstream).

The Black Rose moves in turn order, as do all other players. She is controlled by the player who **moves last** during the turn.

Each player can then do the following, in order:

- You **may** change your speed up or down by **1** for free.
- You **may** spend **n** coal to change your speed up or down by **n**.
- You **must** move **1 space** per speed point.
- You **may** turn your boat once by 60° at **any time** during your move for free.
- You **may** spend **n** coal to turn **n** additional times by 60°.

If a boat ends its move on the tile furthest downstream:

- **After** its movement, **roll the die** and add a new tile in the direction indicated.
- If the tile placed is the **last tile** in the stack, roll the die again and add the **landing platform** in the direction indicated.

The Black Rose

- Is moved in **normal sequence**, and is controlled by the **player in last place**.
- Has **1 coal to spend** every turn, which **never runs out**.
- Can give **2 coal** to another boat controlled by the same player, if that boat ends its turn adjacent to her, at the same speed, and if both are in open water.
- May stop at passenger or coal stations, but may not remain there next round.
- Never picks up passengers and **never goes out of play**.

No one may intentionally create a situation where the Black Rose requires more than 1 coal to safely maneuver next round. If new tile placement causes such a situation, the controlling player may use **only** enough coal to extract the Black Rose.

Docking

To dock, you must **finish your movement** (or **be pushed**) onto a station at **speed 1**.

You must dock in order to:

- Pick up passengers from red/brown hut islands. Immediately load a passenger (each boat can only claim one passenger per station).
- Load coal from black hut coal supply islands. Set your coal back to 6.
- Finish the game. Park your boat on the next available ranked space.

Pushing

- You may **push another boat** by moving your boat into the space it occupies.
 - ◆ You may place the pushed boat on any adjacent, **unoccupied, non-land space** (open water, a passenger or coal supply station, a sandbar, or floating logs), *except* spaces you have already passed through this turn.
 - ◆ **The owner** of the pushed boat may choose their boat's facing (unless pushed onto a sandbar or into floating logs).
- To **push another boat** costs **1 extra speed point**.
 - ◆ Your speed is not reduced, you just move fewer spaces.
 - ◆ If you do not have 1 extra speed point you **cannot push**, and must move elsewhere. You must **always** spend **all** of your speed points.
- To push a boat onto **floating logs** costs **1 extra speed point in addition to the 1 speed point** needed to push (1 for the other boat, 1 for the logs).
- To Push a boat onto a **Sandbar** costs **1 speed point** (just the 1 for the boat).
- You **cannot** push a boat **into another boat**.
- You **can** push **one boat**, then push **another boat** during the same turn, provided you have the extra speed points to do so.
- You **cannot** push a boat which is already on a sandbar.

Floating Logs

- **To enter** a floating logs space costs **1 extra speed point**.
- If you do not have 1 extra speed point you cannot enter the space.
- At the end of your move, **reduce your speed by 1 point** for every floating logs space you entered this turn.

If you are pushed onto floating logs, you **do not** get to choose your facing (your boat stays facing the direction it was before it was pushed), but your **speed is not affected**.

Sandbars

If you move, or are pushed, onto a sandbar:

- End your movement.
- Set your **speed** immediately **to 1**.
- You **cannot turn** your boat **on a sandbar**.
- You may only **leave by moving directly forwards or backwards** next turn.
- This is the only time in the game a boat may move backwards.
- Backing off **costs no coal**. Move 1 space directly backwards, then choose **any** facing. Your speed **stays at 1**.
- If leaving forwards, move as usual, but it costs **1 additional coal** to do so.

If you are pushed onto a sandbar, you **do not** get to choose your facing (your boat stays facing the same direction it was before it was pushed). You **cannot push** a boat which is **already on a sandbar**.

Exchanging coal

- A boat may exchange **any amount of available coal** with another boat controlled by the same player, which ends its turn *adjacent* to that boat, at the *same speed*, and if both are in *open water*.
- The Black Rose may only exchange **up to 2 coal** with another boat.
- Coal **cannot be exchanged** if either boat is **not in open water** (on a passenger or coal supply station, landing platform, sandbar, or floating logs).

Running out of coal

- If you run out of coal, **remove the black wheel** from your boat.
- If you run aground (onto land or off the board) during your movement, due to lack of coal, you have crashed and are **out of the game**.

2-Player (official Black Rose) Version

- Each player takes two similar boats (red/red, beige/white, or gray/brown).
- **Player 1** starts on spaces **1** and **4**, and **Player 2** on spaces **2** and **3**.
- Only **1** passenger per island (**8 total**).
- **No** passengers may be **safely skipped** if all boats are to pick up 2 each.
- Only 1 of the winning player's boats needs to make it to the platform with 2 passengers. The status of his 2nd boat is irrelevant.

3-Player, 2 boat Variant

A variant of my own creation. This is played exactly like the 2-Player Version, except:

- **Player 1** starts on spaces **1** and **behind 3**. **Player 2** starts on spaces **2** and **5**. **Player 3** starts on spaces **3** and **4**.
- The boat behind space 3 gets **1 free coal** to spend on its **first turn only**.
- **1** passenger on red hut islands, **2** on brown hut islands (**12 total**).
- **No** passengers may be **safely skipped** if all boats are to pick up 2 each.

6-Player (official Black Rose) Version

- The 6th player starts behind space 3.
- That boat gets **1 free coal** to spend on its **first turn only**.
- **2** passengers per island (**16 total**).
- **4** passengers may be **safely skipped** if all boats are to pick up 2 each.

7 or 8-Player Variant

A variant of my own creation. This variant specifically contradicts the rulebook's stated rule: No passengers on coal supply islands. This was the only way to allow for a few extra passengers in the game without causing logjams by crowding 3 passengers onto some of the passenger islands.

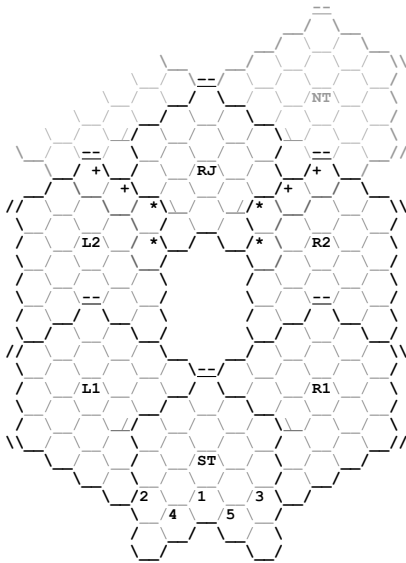
- The 6th, 7th, and 8th boats (starting behind space 3, 2, and 1 respectively) each get **1 free coal** to spend on their **first turn only**.
- **2** passengers per island, **2** per coal supply station (**20 total**).
- **4-6** passengers may be **safely skipped** if all boats are to pick up 2 each.
- At coal supply stations you may refill coal **and** pick up a passenger on the same turn.
- No Black Rose in an 8-player game (the black boat will be used by a player).

6 to 8-Player, Branching River Variant

This was compiled from a [BGG forum post](#) by Mike Mayer. Larger games can cause massive jams which arguably hurt the players moving last. To counter this, you might want to start with a branching river.

- Place the Starting River Tile.
- Connect two tiles to the Starting River Tile -- one tile going left, one going right -- to form two river branches.
- On each of the two branches, place a tile going straight (relative to the start tile). The whole setup should look like a big "U" now.
- Place a tile to re-join the branches. Its bottom two hexes on the left and right go underneath the corresponding hexes on the left and right branch tiles.
- Check to make sure the boats can easily get through the river. If not, select a different Re-Joining Tile.

Boats begin the race already in the water. Each player, in turn, places and orients his boat in **any** river space on the Starting River tile. When the game begins, players may paddle down either branch. Boats move in normal order, based on who is closest to the trailing edge of the Re-Joining Tile. When boats reach the Re-Joining Tile, place new tiles as in the normal game.



This is the layout of the six starting tiles for the Branching River Variant. The Start Tile (ST) is at the bottom. The **4 hexes** marked with **(*)**'s indicate where the Re-Joining Tile (RJ) re-attaches the two branches (L1/L2, R1/R2). The Re-Joining Tile should be placed **underneath** Branch Tiles L2 and R2. Likewise, the Next River Tile (NT), if it angles to the right or left, should be placed **underneath** either R2 or L2, as indicated by the **4 hexes** marked with **(+)**'s.

The "Don't Push In Front Of The Spectators" Variant

This was compiled from a [BGG forum post](#) begun by Togu Oppusunggu.

A comment quite commonly heard is that there is often kingmaking or stalling at game end because of the ability of steamboats to push each other. Games tend to drag on at the end as it turns into an all out brawl at the finish line. To counter this problem, try this variant:

The race organizers have instituted a **sportsmanship rule**. No pushing of boats is allowed in front of the spectators. Boats in the **three finish space** hexes, or **one space away** from the three finish space hexes, **cannot be pushed**.

The "River Tile Selection By Vote" Variant

This was compiled from a [BGG file](#) uploaded by Mike Mayer.

- Each player starts with six cards in hand: Right (x2), Left (x2), Straight (x2).
 - ◆ Make your own or be creative with regular cards.
- When you would normally roll the dice for tile placement, take a vote instead.
 - ◆ Each player selects a card. Cards are revealed simultaneously.
 - ◆ Direction with the most votes wins.
 - ◆ Ties are broken by the player with the boat on the end tile.
- Collect the cards that have been played and set them aside in a discard pile.
- When each player is down to only 1 card left, sort the discards back to everyone.

Rules Clarifications

The following questions/answers were brought up, in one form or another, in the BGG Forums.

- If you adjust your speed, you must do it **before** you begin moving each turn.
- To use a passenger/coal station, you **must move** (or **be pushed**) onto the station **at speed 1**.
- You **cannot** move onto a station at speed 2 (or higher), then adjust your speed to 1 on the following turn, then pick up a passenger/coal, and move away.
- Question: Do you finish the race by docking at one of the three water spaces **in front of** the landing platform, or **on** the landing platform itself?
 - ◆ A [BGG forum post](#) (indirectly) quotes Jay Tummelson of Rio Grande Games as saying that, in both the introductory game and the passenger game, you must dock at one of the middle 3 spaces on the last tile, **in front of** the landing platform, **not on the platform itself**, to finish.
- If a passenger station occupies the same hex as one of the 3 end-of-game water spaces, can a boat pick up a passenger and finish the game on the same turn?
 - ◆ The [same post](#) mentioned above states that Rio Grande's ruling is that, **no**, a boat must stop and **end its turn** to pick up a passenger. On the **following** turn it may finish the race by docking at an end-of-game hex.

These rules were compiled by J.R. Gracen after a careful reading of the Mississippi Queen and Black Rose English Rules booklets, as well as the various rules questions posted in the BGG forums sections of both games.
Version 1.2 (2/26/11).

This document is based off of Bernd Wechner's (bwechner on BGG) [Mississippi Queen.pdf](#) file. I referenced Michael Weston's (delta1119) [Mississippi Queen & Black Rose - Quick Reference.pdf](#) as well.

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