

Escape from Colditz

Rules Summary and Clarifications

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2-6 players, 12? years and up

INTRODUCTION

Escape from Colditz is a great game, but the rules could use clarification. There were some minor differences between the Gibson and Parker editions, which have been reconciled here. In addition to clarification, a few rules were tweaked to eliminate loop holes and ambiguities.

CONTENTS

Escape from Colditz board; rules of the game and historical background booklet (in some editions these are separate); coloured Legend and Appel diagram; two regular dice; five sets of eight pawns each (blue, red, orange, brown and green); one set of sixteen black pawns; one pack of 5 Personal Civilian Escape Kit cards; one pack of 5 Do or Die cards («3» through «7»); one pack of 27 Escape Equipment cards (4 wire cutters, 5 passes, 6 keys, 12 ropes); one pack of 45 Escaper's Opportunity cards; one pack of 14 German Security cards.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the German player, to minimise (or prevent entirely) any escapes by the Allied players. For the Allied players, to successfully escape with as many of their men (POWs) as possible. The game should be played to a time limit (German victory; first game suggestion is 2 to 2 ½ hours) or until an Allied player manages a target number of successful escapes (Allied player victory; first game suggestion is 2).

PREPARATION

1. Lay out the board.
2. Lay out the Escape Kit and Escape Equipment cards, face up.
3. Shuffle the remaining three decks separately and lay them face down.
4. Give each player the appropriate number of pawns:

<i>Number of players</i>	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Number of pawns (German player)</i>	8 (6)	7 (12)	6 (14)	5 (15)	4 (16)

SET UP

1. The Allied players place their pawns as indicated by the Appel diagram in the Appel zone (white).
2. The German player places one guard per Allied team in the Inner Courtyard (grey), on the black circles. He also places between 2 and 7 guards (inclusive) on the Outer area (tan), on the black circles.

BOARD

The board is divided into areas. These are:

- The Appel. White zone. POWs may not be arrested there.

- The Inner Courtyard. Grey zone, extending from the Appel into the corridors until a solid line (door) is met (e.g. the corridor leading to the Office is included, but the Office is not). POWs may be arrested only if holding Equipment cards.
- The Rooms. Grey zones not part of the Inner Courtyard. POWs may not be arrested there unless a **Search** is played.
- Outer area. Tan, light green, brown and dark grey zones. Any POWs may be arrested there and are also subject to Equipment confiscation.
- Outside. Dark green zone. Any POWs may be arrested there and are also subject to Equipment confiscation. The German player may Shoot to Kill.

CARDS

The players are limited to three Opportunity/Security cards in hand. If they get a fourth, they must discard, play (or give away, in the Allied players' case) their hands down to three by the end of their turn. Allied players may freely exchange or give each other unplayed Opportunity cards during their turns—but not during the German's turn.

The players are limited to the card mix. Once all the Equipment cards of a certain type are in play, no more may be gained.

PLAY

Play begins with the Allied player to the left of the German player and continues clockwise. On his turn, a player throws the dice. If a 3, 7 or 11 is thrown, he draws an Opportunity/Security card. If doubles were thrown, he throws again, adding the scores—this may be repeated indefinitely. (*The expected score in this fashion is $6 \cdot \frac{7}{5} = 8,4$*) For the Allied players, each doubles thrown also allows one POW to exit Solitary (at a cost of one pip). The player then moves none, any or all of his pawns between contiguous circles, one pip per circle. He need not use all his score.

- Pawns may not step through each other (see the tunnel exception below).
- The black circles are the guards' entry and exit points from/to the barracks. POWs may occupy these to prevent guard entry/exit. The barracks circles are holding spaces for the guards.
- Guards may not stop within the grey zone in such a way as to block POW passage, even when intending to arrest. However, they may do so if in active pursuit of an escaper (i.e. the POW has used an Equipment card). Likewise, Guards may enter the Rooms only when in active pursuit of an escaper.
- The white outline circles can be reached from a numbered circle only if that length of rope is used (30 ft = 1 Rope card).
- The circles marked "Pass" or "Key" may be entered by a POW only if he uses the corresponding Equipment card. The only exception is the "Pass" circle leading into the Inner Courtyard—POWs are always freely admitted into it.
- The yellow circles are searchlight areas; the POWs may not stop there—they must stop short or run across.
- The brown offset circles are tunnels. Unless in the tunnel, a pawn may not stop there; it may, however, step through any pawn "in the tunnel".
- The light blue circles are safe zones; POWs may hide there (they may not be arrested nor searched for during an **Appel**). Guards may not step into or occupy these circles.
- When a POW reaches a target (red, white and blue)circle, he has successfully escaped—provided the player holds an Escape Kit.

Guards and the Barracks

The German player may first post guards from the barracks to vacant black circles and move them out. This costs a pip per guard (plus any moves).

He may also recall guards and/or make arrests. Recalling a guard to the barracks is done at a black circle and costs a pip (in addition to the moves required to bring the guard there). **Once a guard has been recalled to the barracks, no more guards may be posted from the barracks. Likewise, once an arrest has been made, no more guards may be posted from the barracks.**

Guards still Outside the castle (dark green) are removed to the barracks once all escapers have been caught or have successfully escaped.

Escape Kits

The POWs' first objective is to assemble a Civilian Escape Kit. This is done by having a POW in each of the rooms bearing the Disguise, Food, Compass and Documents symbols. When these men are in position simultaneously, the Escape Kit card may be claimed. **Escape Kit (Part)** Opportunity cards may be substituted for any or all of the required POWs. Once a player has an Escape Kit, he keeps it for the rest of the game. Possession of an Escape Kit is required for a successful escape, but an escape may nevertheless be attempted without it, perhaps as a diversion or to help another player's escape plan.

Equipment

To obtain Equipment, a player must have two POWs in the same room as the appropriate symbol (not necessarily the same room). Once the card is claimed, the two POWs are placed directly in the Appel zone (white). Opportunity cards can also be used to obtain Equipment.

Equipment is used as required; Passes and Keys are used to step into Pass/Key circles, Rope is used to climb walls, and the Wire Cutters to get through the barbed wire. Once used, the Equipment card is discarded. However, the passage thus opened remains so for the player's entire turn and for the subsequent Allied players' turns, until the next German player's turn¹. In addition to their normal moves, the guards may pursue through the same route as the escaping POWs.

Arrest

To arrest a POW, a guard must reach him. To be arrested, the POW player must hold some Equipment cards if in the grey zone. In the other zones, he may always be arrested (there is one exception, see below). The guard is removed to the barracks; the POW is moved to Solitary (German's choice). An Equipment card is confiscated (discarded; Allied player's choice) if the arrest occurred outside the grey zone, unless a **Hideaway** is played.

A POW may force an arrest by moving onto a guard, even if not normally liable to arrest. The German player may not refuse the arrest, and the pawns are moved as usual.

A POW released from the outer Solitary into the courtyard (tan) is immune from arrest as long as each of his moves brings him closer to the "Pass" circle leading into the Inner Courtyard.

¹ This is a rule change; the original rules require Equipment to be used again should the escaping POW decide to double back.

DO OR DIE

As a last resort, an Allied player may attempt a Do Or Die if he holds an Escape Kit. A single POW attempts to escape over the moat, starting from the grey zone (he cannot start from Solitary or from a tunnel) or from the outer courtyard (tan) if he was on his way back from the outer Solitary². If he fails, he is considered dead and **his entire team is eliminated**.

To resolve the attempt, draw a Do Or Die card. This indicates how many dice throws (augmented by doubles as usual) the player gets. The player does not claim Opportunity cards if any throws of 3, 7 or 11 come up. The POW starts from his current position and may use Rope² to get out of the castle. Guards do not block his path, and he needs no Keys or Passes. He must try to reach any one of the three escape targets³ on the south edge (beyond the moat). (*The minimum distance is 36 and the expected totals range from 25,2 to 58,8*)

CARD MANIFEST AND COMMENTS

German Security Cards

Appel (2) Each Allied player decides whether to send his POWs to the Appel zone (white) or not. The German player then rolls the dice (adding doubles as usual) for his search range; each remaining POW within this range of a guard is sent to Solitary and the guard removed to the barracks. POWs in tunnels, safe zones (blue) and Outside (dark green) are safe from search.

Arrest Key/Pass Holder (1 of each) Send a POW who just used a Key or Pass to Solitary, confiscating (discarding) the card (unless a **Hideaway** is played). No guard need be present.

Search (8) [Guardhouse, Sickbay, Chapel, Dentist, Stores, Kitchen, Orderlies', Showers] Once a guard has reached the room, entering it by any door, send all POWs in the room to Solitary (provided the player holds some Equipment cards) and remove the guard to the barracks. Confiscate (discard) one Equipment card per POW sent to Solitary (Allied player's choice), unless **Hideaways** are played.

Shoot to Kill (1) The German player designates a guard and a target POW (who must be Outside, in the dark green area). The guard must have line of sight², which means there must not be a wall (needing rope) between him and the target —barbed wire is no obstacle. The German player rolls dice and doubles his result; if doubles are thrown, he rolls again as usual to augment his score (*without doubling*). His score is the shooter's range; if large enough, the target is killed and removed from the game. The shooting guard is sent to the barracks whatever the outcome.

Tunnel Detected (1) Once two guards have reached the tunnel, entering it by any circle, all the POWs in it are sent to Solitary. The guards are removed to the barracks.

Escaper Opportunity Cards

Advance Warning (2) These cards must be played in response to a German **Appel** or **Search** card. The player moves his threatened POWs directly to safe zones (blue) of his choice. Equipment cards must be used to reach the zones if needed. Guard do block access but Diversion cards may be used² (but not the Inspection card).

² My addition

³ This is unclear; the original rules can be read to imply the only target is the staff car's target.

- Bribe a Sentry** (5) [3 of one, 2 of two] This card, when played, allows the player to draw one or two (as specified on the card) Equipment cards of his choice from those remaining.
- Diversion** (2) One guard of the Allied player's choice is removed to the barracks.
- Escape Kit (Part)** (4) [2 of each half] These cards can be used to complete one's Escape Kit.
- Hideaway** (5) Prevents confiscation of one piece of Equipment during an arrest or a search.
- Inspection by the German High Command** (1) Two guards of the Allied player's choice are removed to the barracks.
- Key/Pass/Rope/Wire Cutters** (7) [2 of each except Wire Cutters] These cards can be turned in at any time, even out of turn, for the corresponding Equipment card —provided one is available.
- Move Fast** (8) [Guardhouse, Parcels, Dentist, Interview, Kitchen, Orderlies', Officers', Showers] One of your POWs is moved directly to the indicated room. He must not be imprisoned beforehand.
- Release from Solitary** (5) One of your imprisoned POWs is released from his cell, appearing on the nearest free circle outside the cell (counting as if he moved there). This costs no dice pips. A POW released into the Outer area (tan) *may* appear on a circle closer to the "exit" without raising suspicion.
- Sabotage** (1) The German player discards two random Security cards and draws one as a replacement. If he had only one card, he discards it and draws no replacement.
- Staff Car** (1) Once the car is reached (from any of the six adjacent circles), the player rolls the dice six times, throwing again for doubles, to try to reach the escape target through the main bridge. Guards do not block the path. (The distance is 45) In case of failure, the POW ends up in Solitary. The player does not claim Opportunity cards if any throws of 3, 7 or 11 come up.
- Talisman** (1) Played after the German has Shot to Kill and rolled his dice; it reduces his score by the original throw (i.e. he no longer doubles the first throw).
- Tunnel** (3) [Chapel, Canteen, Theatre] If the Allied player can move two or more of his POWs into the specified tunnel, he reveals the card and does so. POWs in the tunnel are immune from **Appel** and **Search**. As long as there are at least two POWs in the tunnel, other POWs may join them, including other players'. The tunnels can only be entered through their starting circle. The tunnel is considered Detected (as if the German had played that card) on the next German player's turn after any POW breaks out of it. Also, if there is only one POW left in the tunnel (or none), it is considered condemned or abandoned and no more POWs may enter it. The lone POW can exit the tunnel back into the room or attempt an escape from the other end.