SANTA CLAUS IS COMIN' TO TOWN

A Game for 3 or 4 Players

by

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INTRODUCTION

It's Christmas Eve. The little town of Elfenbein is covered with snow. To help Santa find his way in the snow, the people of the town have dug out 'streets' and crooked 'paths' between their houses. Now they are all waiting patiently in their homes for Santa's presents, roasting chestnuts on an open fire to kill the time.

All people, except some naughty kids. They have discovered a new game: Santa watching! Santa enjoys the game too as he is the only one who has discovered the crooked paths. And when everything else fails to escape the kids he can always use some magic...

INVENTORY
Gameboard
6 Closed House Markers
30 Present Counters
1 large Santa Counter and 3 large Kids Counters
1 small Santa Marker and 3 small Kids Markers (for scoring)
These Rules

In addition you need a deck of ordinary playing cards.

PREPARATIONS
Place the game board in the middle of the table.

Decide who will be Santa. Give him the Santa Counter, the Santa Marker and the Present Counters. The other players are Kids and each should take a Kid Counter and Kid Marker in one of the other colours. Each player gets a full suit of the deck of playing cards and places his Score Marker on the Start space of the Scoring Track of the board.

The Kid to the left from Santa places a Closed House Marker on any of the houses on the board. Proceeding in clockwise direction each other player, including Santa, places a Closed House Marker.
Each Marker must be placed on a different house, and must not be placed on a house adjacent (by street or path to another house already containing a Closed House Marker. (The kids living in these houses are on holiday and will get their presents elsewhere). When three play, there will be a second round of placing Closed House Markers, so that six rather than four Markers are placed on the board.

Players determine where they will start on the board. Each Kid places his Counter on any house. More than one Kid can start in the same house. After all the Kids have placed their Counter, Santa places himself on any house on the board and places a Present Counter on this house, unless it is a house with a Closed House Marker on it.

PLAY
The game is played in rounds as follows:

1) Each player secretly selects a card from his hand and places it face down on the table. When all players have made their selections, all the cards are revealed simultaneously.

2) The player who played the highest card determines the order of play. This player tells a player (either an opponent or himself) to go first, a player to go second, etc. The only limitation is that each player must take one, and only one, turn per round. If there is a tie for the highest card played, the player among them with the lowest number of points on the Score Track determines the order of play. If there is a tie for the lowest number of points too, Santa determines which player among them determines the order of play.

3) Each player takes his turn by first moving according to the card he played and then scoring points.

4) If the players have played each of their cards, the game is over. Until this situation has occured, the game continues with another round.

MOVING

How far a player can move on his turn is determined by the card he played. Kids can move only along streets, counting each house as one space. Santa can move along streets and/or paths, counting each house as one space.

A card in the range A to 5 allows a player to move up to two houses. A card in the range 6-10 allows a player to move up to three houses. If Santa plays a court card (J,Q,K), he may fly to any house on the board. If a Kid plays a court card, he makes a jump on his bike. He can move one space in any direction, then from this space, move any number of spaces in a straight line in any direction. (both directions may be the same).

In any turn, a player must move at least one space. No player may retrace his steps in the same turn.

SCORING POINTS

Each time Santa moves onto a house space that does not have a Present Counter or a Closed House Marker, he places a Present Counter on this house. For each Present Counter he places, he scores 1 point. Note that Santa begins the game with 1 point for the Present Counter he placed on the house where he starts, unless this is a house with a Closed House Marker on it.

Clarification: *Santa can leave any number of presents during a normal, non-flying turn. Leaving a present does not require Santa to end his turn.*

When a Kid moves into the house occupied by Santa, he sees him and scores 3 points. If he is the first Kid to see Santa this round, he gets (takes) the Present Counter from that house (unless it is a house with a Closed House Marker). As a consequence he scores an extra point, whereas Santa loses that point (deduct the point from Santa's score).

When Santa moves into a house with a Kid, the Kid sees him and will score 3 points. In addition he will get the Present Counter (+ the extra point) for that house, unless that house has a Closed House Marker on it. If more than one Kid is in that house, Santa decides which Kid will get the Present Counter. Of course, Santa doesn´t score for this house.

Santa may revisit houses from which Present Counters were taken by Kids in a later turn. However, he may place no more than 30 Present Counters (the number of Counters coming with the game) in total.

Players keep track of their points by advancing their Score Markers on the track on the board.

GAME END

After thirteen rounds of play, each player will have used all his cards. The player with the most points is the winner.

Santa Claus is Comin´ to Town was especially designed for Han Heidema´s Christmas Card #9. I feel greatly honoured to have cooperated for this card with the winning team of this year's Spiel des Jahres. A warm *Thank you!* to both.