

AQUA SPHERE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the research team on the mission to *AquaSphere*, an underwater research station. Your task is to recover and analyze a novel kind of crystal, as well as to conduct further research. You have been granted a limited amount of time in the station. In order to succeed on your mission, you will be provided access to the latest models of research bots. Program these bots according to the task at hand and use them efficiently in the various sectors of the station.

You will be assigned a lab with basic equipment - if the available capacities do not suffice, feel free to expand your lab. Keep in mind, your team is not the only one present. If you don't recover more crystals, place more bots in the station, and gather more data than your competitors, your research contract may not be extended.

Finally, some advice: your presence will attract octopods, which may break into the station. Remove them promptly; otherwise they may interfere with your bots and obstruct operations.

Good luck!

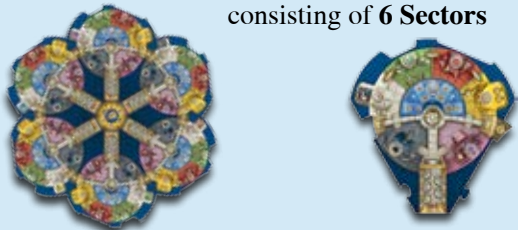
GAME IDEA

Each player leads a research team consisting of an Engineer and a Scientist, which move on 2 different game boards, as well as a group of bots, which carry out actions.

In the Headquarters, the Engineer programs the bots and, thus, determines which action will be carried out. Meanwhile in the Research Station, the Scientist determines where the bots will carry out the action. Over the course of 4 rounds, the teams will use their actions to gain as much knowledge as possible.

COMPONENTS

1 Research Station (also referred to as "Station")
consisting of **6 Sectors**



1 Headquarters



4 Player Boards



6 Center Tiles



38 Time Markers



7 Programming Tiles



6 Base Labs



41 Research Cards



3 Setup Overviews



7 Program Cards



30 Lab Expansions



20 Crystals



15 Octopods



1 Scientist 1 Engineer 6 Submarines 16 Bots 2 Counters



(in each of the 4 player colors)

1. GAME BOARDS (see pages 4/5 for details)

- Put the 6 Sectors of the **Station** ① together in any order.
- Place the **Headquarters** ② next to it, but not too closely.
- Leave some space for the **general supply** ③.
- Each player chooses a player color and takes the wooden playing pieces of that color and a **Player Board** ④.
- Randomly determine a Starting Player.



2. HEADQUARTERS

- Shuffle the **Program Cards** ⑤ and place 4 of them in a stack next to the Headquarters. Put the remaining Program Cards back into the game box.
- Place the **Programming Tiles** ⑥ on the appropriate spaces in the Headquarters (see example below) as indicated by the topmost Program Card. Then put the topmost Program Card back into the game box.
- The Starting Player (here: Red) places one **Bot** on the first space of the Play Order Track ⑦. Then, in clockwise order, each other player places one Bot on the next free space of that track.
- Each player places one **Counter** on space “0” of the Knowledge Track ⑧ and the other one on space “0+” of the **Full Circle Counting Track**.
- Each player places one **Engineer** on the Starting Space of the Programming Section ⑨.



4. PLAYER BOARDS

Each player places

- 14 Bots

and

- 6 Submarines



on the corresponding spaces of their Player Boards.

- Each player receives 1 **Base Lab** at random, and places it next to the Player Board.

The letter on the tile indicates that player's **Starting Sector**.



3. GENERAL SUPPLY

- Place the following items next to the Station as the general supply: the **Crystals**, **Octopods** and **Time Markers**, as well as the shuffled stacks of face-down **Lab Expansions** and **Research Cards**.



- In games with 2 or 3 players, also add the Submarines of the unused colors to the general supply.



5. STATION



a) Center Tiles

- Take the appropriate 4 **Center Tiles** according to the number of players (as indicated by the symbol below the light bulb).
- Place the tile with a 5 in its light bulb in the middle of the Station.
- Then place the tiles with a 4, 3 and 2 on top of it (in that order), each with a random orientation.

b) Take the appropriate **Setup Overview Card** corresponding to the number of players.



The upper block indicates the components that populate each player's Starting Sector (see c). The rows on the bottom indicate the components that populate the remaining sectors (see d).

c) According to the Setup Overview Card, place in your Starting Sector

- 1 **Octopod** in the purple area near the Octopod Symbol
- 1 **Crystal** in the black area near the Crystal Symbol
- the leftmost **Submarine** from your Player Board in the blue area on the space depicting 1 Time Marker
- 1 **Scientist** somewhere in the blue area
- 4 **Time Markers** on the appropriate space in the yellow area

d) Now, set up the other Sectors

Randomly select one of the remaining Base Labs and place the following components in the Sector indicated by the letter on that tile:

- 2 **Octopods** in the purple area and
- 1 **Crystal** in the black area

Randomly select another Base Lab and place it in the corresponding Sector:

- 3 **Octopods** in the purple area and
- 2 **Crystals** in the black area

Only in a 2-player game:

- In the blue area of each of the remaining 2 Sectors, place a neutral **Submarine** on the space depicting 1 Time Marker.

Only in a 3-player game:

- In the blue area of the remaining Sector, place 1 neutral **Submarine** on the space depicting 1 Time Marker.
- Place 1 neutral **Bot** in the **Loading Station** (see below on page 4) of each of the 3 Sectors that are not the Starting Sector of a player.

Note: The playing pieces of the unused colors are considered "neutral".

e) In each Sector

- Draw 1 **Research Card** and place it face up next to the red area
- Draw 1 **Lab Expansion** and place it face up next to the green area

f) Each player whose Starting Sector is adjacent to a "0" lock gets 3 Time Markers. Each other player gets 4 Time Markers.

g) Determine the color of the **Programming Space** in the white Area of your Starting Sector. Place your remaining Bot on the corresponding **Program Symbol** of your Player Board.

DETAILS ON THE GAME BOARD

HEADQUARTERS

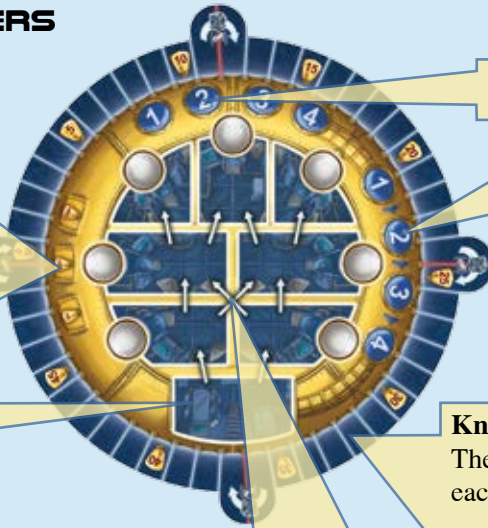
Full Circle Counting Track

Whenever your Counter completes a full circle around the Knowledge Track, move your Counter on this track 1 space forward.

Pass Order Track

Turn Order Track

Starting Space

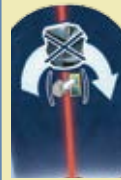


Knowledge Track

The track around the Headquarters keeps track of each player's **Knowledge Points (KP)**.



Knowledge Points are symbolized by the light bulb symbol.



Special Rule: Whenever you would move past a red line, you **must pay 1 Crystal!** If you cannot pay, you **may** choose to return an already programmed Bot to your supply instead. If you don't, your Counter must stop in front of the red line. Remaining points are lost!

*Note: During the Final Scoring, the red lines are ignored and you do **not** have to pay any Crystals.*

Programming Section

The Programming Section consists of 7 spaces, each of which contains a Programming Tile, and the **Starting Space**, on which you place your Engineer at the beginning of each round. The Programming Tiles are redistributed among the spaces every round according to the topmost Program Card.

During the course of a round, you move your Engineers from space to space along the arrows and, thus, choose the program for one of your Bots. Each round you can move your Engineer 3 times in this fashion. When you pass, move your Engineer to the **Pass Order Track**.

STATION

The Station consists of **6 Sectors**.

The Sectors are identical except for the letter on their central **Control Space** and the type of the **Programming Space** next to the white area (*here: black*).

Action Areas

Around the Control Space (*see below*), there are **7 colored Areas**, each depicting a distinct **Program Symbol**. Each such area provides a different action (*A detailed overview of all available actions can be found on page 8/9*). In general, most actions are: "take whatever is on or next to the area".

Control Space

Here you place the Bot **carrying out the action**. The player whose Bot is on the Control space "controls" the Sector, which matters during the Scoring at the end of each round (*see page 10*).

Locks

The 6 Sectors are connected with each other via Locks with values ranging from 0-2. These values indicate the time it takes your Scientist to move from one Sector to another.

Loading Station

This area collects the Bots that are removed from the Control Space (*see "Place the Bot" on page 7*). The permitted number of Bots per Loading Station depends on the number of players:

2 players: 2 Bots, 3 players: 4 Bots, 4 players: 5 Bots

Whenever the number of Bots in a Loading Station exceeds this limit, each player must remove **all but one** Bot from that Loading Station.



PLAYER BOARD

7 Program Symbols

Bots must be programmed before you can carry out the corresponding action in the respective Sector (see “*Course of a Turn - Option B*” on page 6). Indicate that a Bot is programmed by placing it on a Program Symbol on your Player Board (see page 8/9 for an overview of all the Program Symbols and their corresponding actions). A Program Symbol cannot be occupied by more than one Bot.

You may have a maximum of 2 Bots on your Program Symbols at any given time. When placing a third Bot onto a Program Symbol, you must immediately return one of the 3 Bots to your supply (and receive 2 Time Markers - see page 7).

Icons explaining the Program Symbols (more details on pages 8/9)

Overview of options A and B of a turn (see page 6/7)

If you return a programmed Bot to your supply, you receive 2 Time Markers (but not, if you return a Bot for crossing a red line).

Overview of Intermediate Scoring (see page 10)

Overview of Final Scoring (see page 11)



Supply of Bots and Submarines

You will program **Bots** to carry out actions in the Station. (see “*Course of a Turn – Option A*” on page 10).

Submarines are important during the Intermediate Scoring (see page 10).

They can provide Time Markers and Knowledge Points.

When taking Bots and Submarines from your supply, take them from left to right. When returning Bots to your supply, place them on the highest visible number.

LAB – PERSONAL SUPPLY

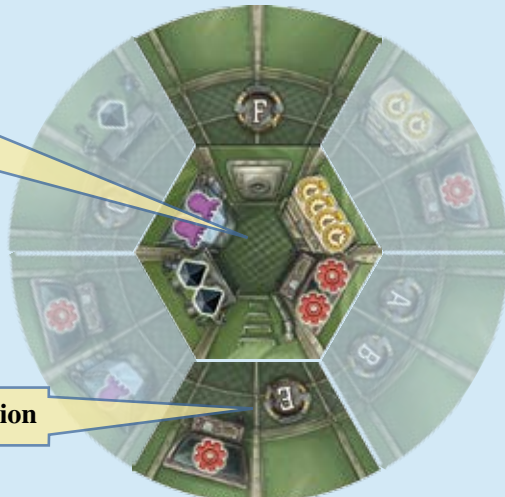
During setup, you received a **Base Lab**. The symbols in your Lab indicate how many of each resource you may keep in your personal supply, i.e. **the overall capacity of your personal supply is limited by the size of your Lab!**

You may **never** exceed your capacity, even if we do not mention it explicitly every time it matters.

If you wish to increase your capacity, you will have to add Lab Expansions to your Lab (see “*Expand the Lab*” on page 8).

Base Lab

Lab Expansion



Limited Resources:



Research Cards:

For each such symbol, you can keep 1 Research Card (at the start: 2).



Crystals:

For each such symbol, you can keep 1 Crystal (at the start: 2).



Octopods:

For each such symbol, you can catch 1 Octopod (at the start: 2).



Time Markers:

For each such symbol, you can keep 1 Time Marker (at the start: 4).



Also, most of the Lab Expansions have a **letter**. Every time you acquire such a Lab Expansion, you **may** place 1 Bot on the Control Space of the corresponding Sector if you wish.

COURSE OF PLAY: SHORT OVERVIEW

- The game is played over **4 rounds**.
- Beginning with the Starting Player, you take **turns** (*see below*) in the order indicated by the Play Order Track until everyone has passed.
- Then, there is an **Intermediate Scoring** and the **next round** is prepared. The next round will be played in the order you have passed in the previous round.
- After the fourth Intermediate Scoring, there is a **Final Scoring**. The player with the most Knowledge Points after the Final Scoring is declared the winner of the game.

COURSE OF A TURN

On your turn, choose 1 of the following 3 options:

A: Program a Bot

B: Carry Out an Action with a Programmed Bot

C: Pass



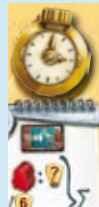
COURSE OF A TURN IN DETAIL

A: PROGRAM A BOT

When programming a Bot, take the next available Bot from your supply and place it on an available Program Symbol on your Player Board. **Reminder:** *You may not have more than 2 programmed Bots at a time!*
There are **2 ways** to program a Bot:

- 1.** Move your **Engineer** in the Headquarters 1 space forward along an arrow. Each space in the Headquarters has 2 outgoing arrows. The Programming Tile where the Engineer ends up indicates the Program Symbol on your Player Board on which you place the Bot. This Bot is now considered “programmed” to carry out that action.
Note: *If you have Research Cards that activate on entering a specific space in the Headquarters (see Appendix on page 12), you may use them now.*

- 2.** **Once per round**, you may pay **3 Time Markers** to place a Bot on any unoccupied Program Symbol. Place one of the Time Markers you paid on the Time Marker symbol in the right upper corner of your Player Board to indicate that you have used this option.



B: CARRY OUT AN ACTION WITH A PROGRAMMED BOT

This option consists of **3 steps** that must be **carried out in the given order**.

1. DETERMINE WHERE TO CARRY OUT THE ACTION

- 1a)** Optional: Move your Scientist to another Sector. Pay the depicted number of Time Markers for each Lock the Scientist passes through (*0-2 per Lock*).
- 1b)** Place your Scientist in one of the colored Action Areas for which you have a programmed Bot on the corresponding Program Symbol of your Player Board.

Example: *Red moves a Scientist to the action area shown, paying 1 Time Marker to use the Lock.*



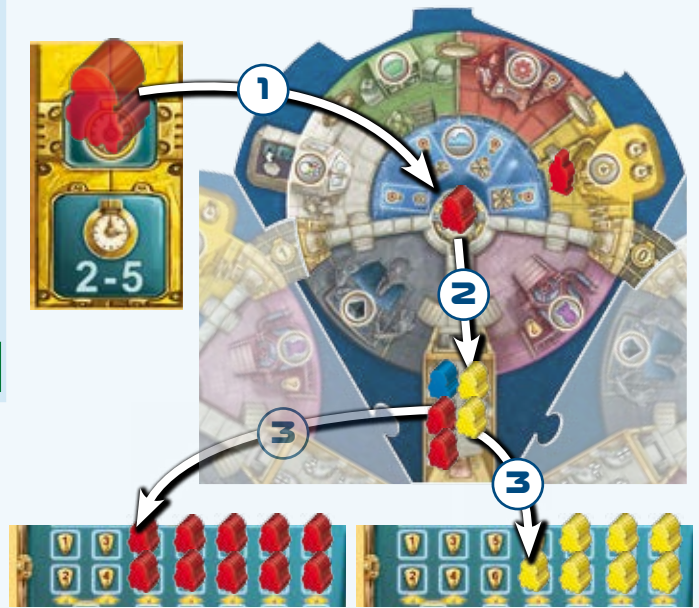
2. PLACE THE BOT

Move the Bot from the corresponding Program Symbol to the Control Space of the Sector your Scientist is currently in. If the Control Space is occupied by another Bot, move that Bot to the Loading Station of the Sector. If the number of Bots in the Loading Station now exceeds the permitted number, each player must return all but one Bot from that Loading Station to their supply.

The permitted number of Bots per Loading Station depends on the number of players:

2 players: 2 Bots, 3 players: 4 Bots, 4 players: 5 Bots

Example: Red moves a Bot from a Program Symbol onto the Control Space of a Sector (1), displacing the yellow Bot, which is moved to the Loading Station (2). In a 3-player game, this causes the Loading Station to be overcrowded. Therefore, Red and Yellow must each remove 1 of their Bots from that Loading Station (3). Blue does not remove a Bot because each player keeps 1 Bot in the Loading Station.



3. CARRY OUT THE ACTION

You **may** now carry out the action of the Action Area that is occupied by your Scientist (see pages 8/9 for details on the actions).

Note: If you have Research Cards that activate on carrying out a certain action, you may use them now.

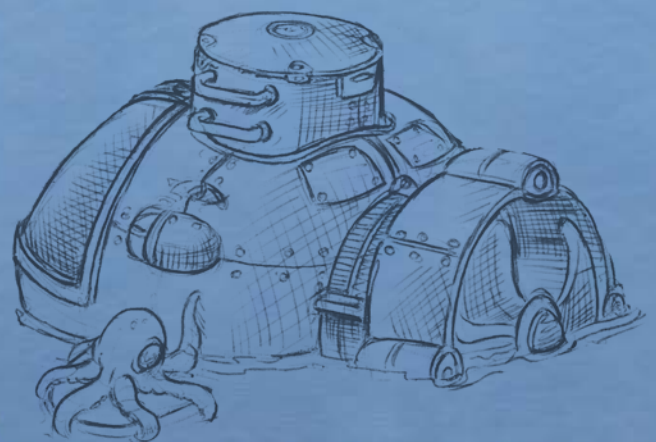
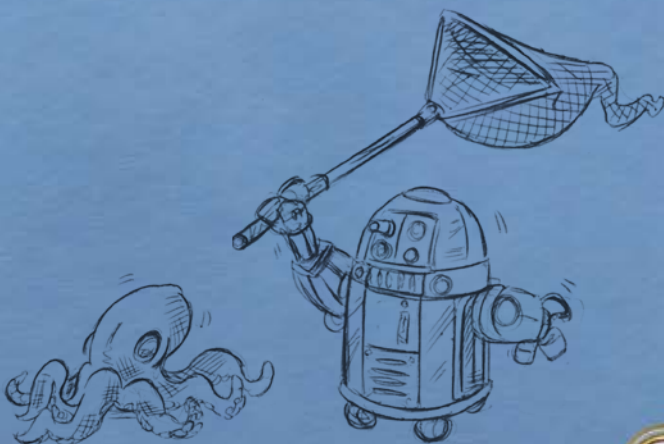
C: PASS

Move your Engineer token in the Headquarters onto the next free space of the **Pass Order Track**. This terminates your round.

Note: Your Engineer can only leave the Programming Section from one of the depicted spaces. It does not make sense to pass earlier anyway.



At any time during your turn you may return an already programmed Bot to your supply to get 2 Time Markers from the general supply. You don't get any Time Markers, if you return a Bot for crossing a red line.



ACTIONS



EXPAND THE LAB

1. Take the topmost Lab Expansion from the Sector and place it next to your Base Lab (at any position).
2. If the Lab Expansion shows 1 or 2 letters, you **may** place 1 Bot on the Control Spaces of each of the corresponding Sectors. If the Control Space is occupied by another Bot, move that Bot to the Loading Station of the Sector. If the number of Bots in the Loading Station exceeds the permitted number, each player must return all but one Bot from that Loading Station to their supply. The permitted number of Bots per Loading Station depends on the number of players:

2 players: 2 Bots, 3 players: 4 Bots, 4 players: 5 Bots

After completing your Lab (adding 5 Lab Expansions), you may not take another Lab Expansion. A completed Lab is worth 5 Knowledge Points at the end of the game.



Example: By adding the depicted Lab Expansion, you increase the number of Crystals you can store to 3. Also, you may place a Bot from your supply on the Control Space of Sector "C".



TAKE TIME MARKERS

Take the Time Markers that are lying next to the yellow area. If you did not get at least 2 Time Markers, take additional Time Markers from the general supply, until you have received a total of 2 Time Markers. If you cannot take all of the Time Markers (due to your Lab capacity), only take as many as you can accommodate in your personal supply and leave the remaining ones in the Sector.

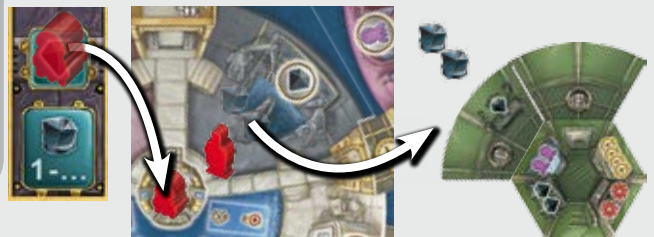
Example: You would get 5 Time Markers, but your Time Marker Capacity is only 4 and you already have a Time Marker in your supply. Therefore, you only get 3 Time Markers; your Lab is full now.



TAKE CRYSTALS

Take as many Crystals from the Sector as you can accommodate in your personal supply. Leave the excess Crystals in the Sector.

Example: You receive 2 Crystals. Your Lab has capacity for 3 Crystals, so you can only hold 1 more.



CATCH OCTOPODS

You catch maximum as many Octopods in the Sector as indicated by your Lab. You get Knowledge Points for that according to the following table:

# of caught Octopods	1	2	3	4	5	>5
# of Knowledge Points	1	3	6	10	15	21

Return the caught Octopods to the general supply.

Example: According to your Lab, you may catch 2 Octopods. You get 3 Knowledge Points for that. The third Octopod remains in the Sector.





PLACE A SUBMARINE

You may only have 1 Submarine in each Sector!
If you have not already placed a Submarine in the chosen Sector:

1. Take the next Submarine from the left of your Player Board and place it on the next available Submarine Space in the Sector.
2. Pay as many Time Markers as depicted on the space.
3. You get as many Knowledge Points as depicted in the light bulb on the current Center Tile.

If you have placed all 6 of your Submarines in the Sectors, you will get a bonus of 5 Knowledge Points at the end of the game.



Example: You place a Submarine in a Sector. You pay 2 Time Markers and get 3 Knowledge Points.



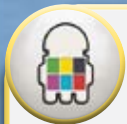
TAKE A RESEARCH CARD

Take the topmost Research Card from the Sector and place it next to your Player Board. You get as many Knowledge Points as depicted in the light bulb on the current Center Tile.

For details on all the Research Cards: see Appendix, page 12.

Note: You may only take another Research Card if you can accommodate it (according to your capacity). You may not discard Research Cards even if they already served their purpose!

Example: You place the Research Card in your personal supply and get 4 Knowledge Points. Until you increase your capacity, you cannot gain any more Research Cards.



PROGRAM A BOT

Take the next Bot from your supply and place it on the Program Symbol of your Player Board matching the depicted symbol in the white Action Area of the Sector.

Note: If the Program Symbol is already occupied, take 2 Time Markers instead and leave the Bot in the supply.

Example: The Programming Space of the Sector is the green "Expand Lab" action. Place the next Bot from your supply onto the green Program Symbol of your Player Board.




INTERMEDIATE SCORING

When all players have passed, there is an Intermediate Scoring.

TIME MARKERS

You get 1 Time Marker per Submarine you have deployed in the Station. Return any Time Markers from the top right corner of your Player Board to the general supply, if any.

If you have any Research Cards with the  symbol, you may use them now.

In the example on the right: Pay 1 Time Marker and place the next Bot from your supply on the depicted Program Symbol.

Note: Each player may decide individually in which order to carry out these two steps mentioned above.



Example: Yellow receives 3 Time Markers, then uses a Research Card to spend 1 Time marker to place a Bot on the red Program Symbol.

KNOWLEDGE POINTS

Add up the total number of **Knowledge Points (KP)** for each player individually, before you adjust the Counters on the Knowledge Track.

Reminder: To cross a red line you must pay 1 Crystal. If you have no Crystals, you may choose to return a Bot from one of your Program Symbols to your supply (without receiving any Time Markers). If you do not pay a Crystal or return a Bot, then your score marker must stop at the red line - additional Knowledge Points are lost.

1. Majority on the 6 Control Spaces:

Who has the most Bots on Control Spaces?

A player with more Bots on Control Spaces than any other player gets 6 KP.

If two or more players are tied for the most Bots, they each get 3 KP.

Example:



1. Yellow and Red each control 2 Sectors, Blue controls one. Therefore, Yellow and Red each get 3 KP.

2. Bots in Play:

In the Bot Supply Section of your Player Board, determine the highest number in a column with no Submarine that is not covered by a Bot. You get a number of KP equal to that number.

2. Yellow gets 5 KP, Red gets 6 KP.



3. Crystals in Your Supply:

# of Crystals	1	2	3	4	5	>5
# of Knowledge Points	1	3	6	10	15	21

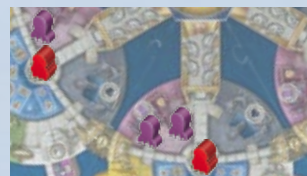
3. Yellow has no Crystals, while Red has 1. Therefore Yellow gets 0 KP and Red gets 1 KP.



4. Negative Points for Leftover Octopods:

In each Sector with one of your Bots on the Control Space, you lose a number of KP depending on the number of leftover Octopods in that Sector.

# of leftover Octopods	1	2	3	4	5	>5
# of Knowledge Points	-1	-3	-6	-10	-15	-21



4. Red loses a total of 4 KP: 3 KP for the Sector with 2 Octopods and 1 KP for the Sector with 1 Octopod.

Special case: In theory, you could lose points during an Intermediate Scoring. In this case, you cannot fall back behind a red line (this should happen very rarely).



Yellow should get 8 KP, but cannot pay a Crystal (or return a Bot), so only gets 7 KP instead. Red pays a Crystal and gets 5 KP.

PREPARING THE NEXT ROUND (only after rounds 1-3)

STATION

- Draw 6 **Research Cards** from the draw pile and place one in each of the Sectors *(on top of already existing Research Cards, if necessary)*.
- Draw 6 **Lab Expansions** from the draw pile and place one in each of the Sectors *(on top of already existing Lab Expansions, if necessary)*.
- The topmost **Center Tile** indicates what additional components to place in each Sector:
 - **Time Markers:** Remove any leftover Time Markers from the Station. Then place new Time Markers in each Sector according to the Center Tile.
 - **Crystals:** add them to the already existing ones, if any.
 - **Octopods:** add them to the already existing ones, if any.



- Neutral Submarines *(in 2- and 3-player games):*

There may not be more than 1 Submarine of each color in any given Sector.
If you cannot place a neutral Submarine in the indicated Sector due to this rule, place it in the next legal Sector in clockwise order, in which it is possible.

- Put the topmost Center Tile back into the game box.

Tip: To speed up things, one player should handle the Research Cards and Lab Expansions, and another player should handle the Center Tile.

HEADQUARTERS

Rearrange the tokens on the Play Order Track so that they match the Pass Order Track. This will be the play order during the following round. Return the Engineers from the Pass Order Track to the Starting Space of the Programming Section. Rearrange the Programming Tiles as indicated by the topmost Program Card. After that, put the topmost Program Card back into the game box so that the next Program Card becomes visible.

FINAL SCORING AND THE END OF THE GAME

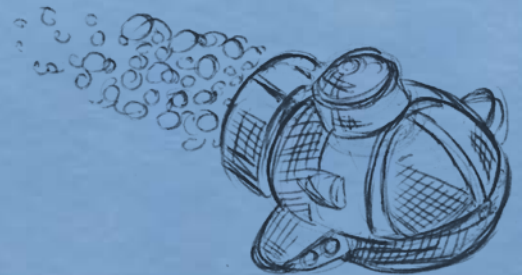
Immediately after the 4th Intermediate Scoring, proceed with **the Final Scoring**.
During the Final Scoring, you do not have to pay Crystals for passing red lines.

You get **Knowledge Points (KP)** as follows:

- KP for **different letters** in your Lab:

# of different letters	1	2	3	4	5	6
# of Knowledge Points	1	3	6	10	15	21

- 1 KP per **Time Marker** left in supply
- 5 KP if all **6 Submarines** are in the Station
- 5 KP for a **completed Lab** (5 Lab Expansions)



Example: Yellow gets...

- 15 KP for 5 **different letters**,
- 2 KP for 2 **Time Markers**,
- 0 KP for **Submarines** and
- 5 KP for a **completed Lab**



The player with the most Knowledge Points wins the game.

- In case of a tie, the player with more Bots on Control Spaces wins.
 - If still tied, the player with more Crystals wins.
- Otherwise there are multiple winners.

APPENDIX: RESEARCH CARDS

When gaining resources via Research Cards, always consider your Lab Capacities!
You may not discard any Research Cards. You keep your Research Cards until the end of the game.



Cards that you can use any number of times per round:



Every time you move your Engineer in the **Headquarters** onto a space with the depicted Programming Tile, you get the depicted reward:
2 Time Markers, 1 Crystal, or 4 KP.
Here: You get 1 Crystal for reaching the red Programming Tile.



Every time you catch at least one **Octopod**, you get the depicted reward:
2 Time Markers, 1 Crystal, or 3 KP.
Here: Every time you catch at least 1 Octopod, you get 3 KP.



While moving, you may pay 1 Time Marker to place your Scientist on the opposite side of the Station. You may do this at any time in addition to normal movement.



You get 1 KP for each **Bot** (except for your own) that is removed from a Loading Station because of you.



For the remainder of the game, you do not have to pay Time Markers when moving your Scientist through the Lock with the "2".



Every time you place a **Submarine**, you pay half of the depicted Time Markers (rounded down).



Cards that you can activate at any time but only once per game:



When moving your Engineer, instead of moving according to the arrows, you may move **sideways** in the Headquarters.
Note: In the round you activate this card, your Engineer will move 4 spaces in the Headquarters.



Cards that you can use during an Intermediate Scoring:



If you pay 1 **Time Marker**, you may place 1 **Bot** from your supply on the depicted Program Symbol.



Cards that you have to use immediately:



Take 2 **Time Markers** and place 1 **Bot** on the depicted Program Symbol.
If this Program Symbol is occupied already, take 2 additional Time Markers instead.

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