

# MOW 'EM DOWN

## A Landscaping Game by Matt Saunders

**Walker**<sup>™</sup>  
Walker Mowers Edition

### The Game

In Mow 'Em Down players represent landscape companies who are trying to build the most profitable business. During the game, players bid to win landscaping contracts throughout sections of an ever-expanding city. As players win contracts, they earn money to purchase more equipment, which allows them to bid on more contracts in future turns. However, contracts can get booted, so players must be savvy with their bids to run a profitable business without standing out as a target.

### Game Components

Each box includes:

- 1 Rule Book
- 1 Earnings and Bonus Tracker
- 4 Large Land Tiles
- 8 Medium Land Tiles
- 12 Small Land Tiles
- 1 Six-Sided Die
- 150 Tokens (22 Bid Tokens of each color and 3 Tracker Tokens of each color which are shaded slightly different or transparent)
- 6 Dry Erase Markers and Sponge Erasers
- 20 Event Cards
- 20 Walker Mower<sup>™</sup> Cards
- 2 Numbered Tiles (#1 & #2)
- 1 Set of Play Money

### Setup

#### Each player begins with:

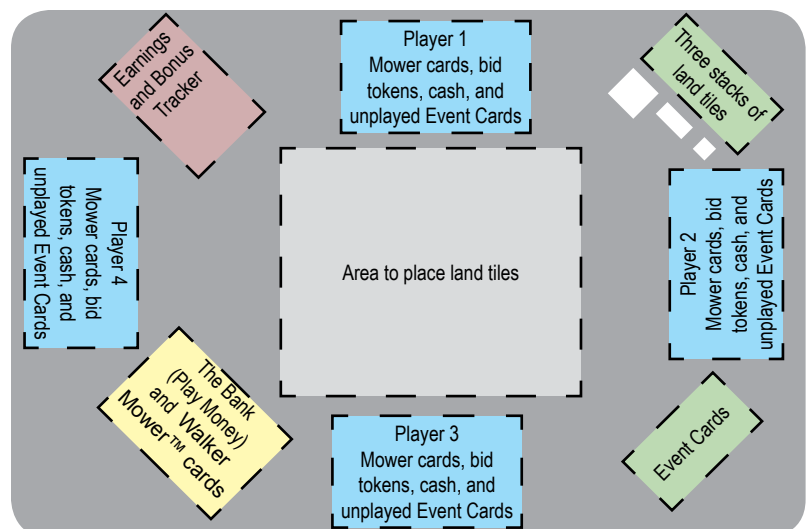
- 2 Walker Mower<sup>™</sup> cards
- 4 Bid Tokens of their chosen color (to represent the "coverage" of their two mowers)
- \$4000 in play money (two \$1000 bills, three \$500 bills, and five \$100)
- 1 Dry Erase Marker and Sponge Eraser.

*All players should leave the remaining bid tokens in their bags but have them accessible when purchasing new equipment.*

#### On the table:

- Leave a large space in the middle of the table for room to build the city using the land tiles.
- Set the Earnings and Bonus Tracker off to the side and place two Tracker Tokens of each player's color on the Earnings and Bonus Tracker (one token to track earnings and the other token to track bonuses). The third Tracker Token is used in the rare instances that additional tokens are needed on the Bonus portion of the Tracker.
- Shuffle the Land Tiles according to size and place face down outside the play area.
- Shuffle the Event Cards and place face down outside the play area.
- Arrange the play money (the Bank) and the Walker Mower<sup>™</sup> cards off to the side.

#### Possible table arrangement for four players:



#### Decide who starts:

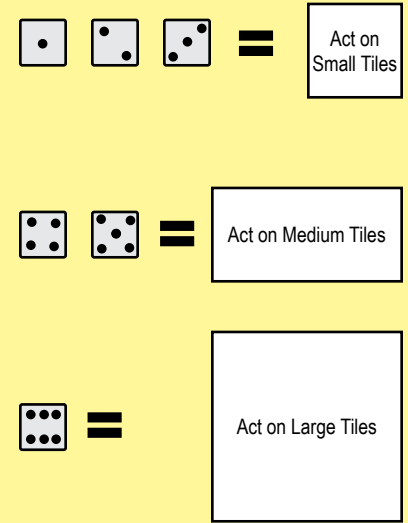
Roll the die to determine who begins the game. Whoever rolls the highest number starts. Re-roll the die if a tie-breaker is necessary. Play moves clockwise around the table.

# Game Play

## Turn Order Summary

During a player's turn, the player will go through these steps:

- 1) Receive earnings from the Bank as indicated by the Earnings and Bonus Tracker
- 2) Purchase any equipment if desired (*receive an event card with the purchase*)
- 3) Roll the die to determine which size of land tile will be acted upon during the turn:
  - **Roll a 1, 2, or 3 = act on small land tiles**
  - **Roll a 4 or 5 = act on medium land tiles**
  - **Roll a 6 = act on large land tiles**
- 4) After the size of land has been determined, the player must decide to do *only one* of the following actions on the size of land indicated by the die roll:
  - **Build:** Draw and place a new land tile to the existing city
  - **Bid:** Open bids on one or two land tiles
  - **Boot:** Remove any player's contract from a land tile (*draw an event card*)
- 5) Adjust the Earnings and Bonus Tracker for all players according to the actions of the turn
- 6) Pass the die to the next player



## Detailed Instructions of Steps

### Receiving Earnings

Players' tokens will be moved on the earnings and bonus tracker according to which actions are taken.

Use the **Earnings Tracker** to determine a player's contract earnings at the beginning of each turn. Whenever a player wins a contract, add this new amount to the previously earned amount and advance the player's token to the new total. For example, if the blue player has been earning \$2200 from previously won contracts and she wins another one for \$900, she would move her tracker token to the \$3100, which is the amount she will earn at her next turn if she doesn't win or lose any other contracts. Similarly, whenever a player loses a contract, subtract that amount from the player's total amount and move the player's tracker token back to the new total. For example, if the yellow player has been earning \$3500 from all of his contracts and his \$1000 contract gets booted, he will move his token back to \$2500.

The **Bonus Tracker** is used to track each player's Gas Savings Bonus (explained on the last page). At the beginning of the player's turn, look where the player's tokens rest on these two trackers and award play money from the Bank in the sum of these two amounts to the player. If there is ever a discrepancy as to what the player earns during a turn, the players can pause the game to add up the values that are written on the bid tokens. The sum of each player's bid tokens should match the amount on the Earnings Tracker for each player.

### Purchasing Equipment

Players may purchase additional equipment at this rate:

- Walker Mower™ Model T GHS - \$12,000 (paid to the Bank)

Each time a player purchases a Walker Mower™, the player receives one mower card and two bid tokens. The two bid tokens represent the "coverage" of the mower. Different sizes of land tiles require different amounts of "coverage," which will be explained in greater detail below.



**Note on Purchasing New Equipment:** *When the player buys a new mower, he or she also receives an event card (see instructions below). Some event cards may have negative consequences that require a player to pay expenses. When purchasing new equipment, it's always a good idea for the player to leave a little cash in reserve to pay these expenses without incurring penalties.*

### Rolling the Die and Choosing What to do After the Roll

As described above, the player must choose from one of three actions after rolling the die. The number on the die determines the size of land tile to be acted upon. If the player rolls a 1, 2, or 3, the player must act upon small land tiles during the turn. If the player rolls a 4 or 5, the player must act upon medium land tiles during the turn. If the player rolls a 6, the player must act upon large land tiles during the turn.

### The Three Actions:

#### Build:

If the player chooses to BUILD, a tile is drawn and placed onto the existing city according to the matching guidelines (see next page). The placement of the tile is solely up to the discretion of the player whose turn it is, and the player may win bonuses by completing lakes or green spaces. *If there are no more tiles to BUILD of the size indicated by the die roll, the player MUST choose to open BIDS on contracts or BOOT a contract of that particular size.*

#### Bid:

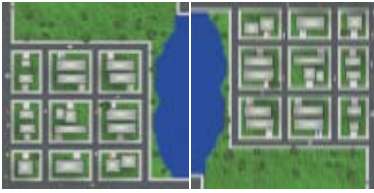
If the player chooses to open BIDS on contracts, the player selects ONE or TWO land tiles of the size determined by the roll of die. This is done by placing the #1 and/or #2 tokens on top of the tiles that will be auctioned. (*See instructions on the next page about BIDS.*) When the auction is completed, adjust the winning players' tokens on the Earnings and Bonus Tracker and complete the turn. *If there are no tiles open for BIDS or there are no eligible players to BID, the player MUST choose either the BUILD action (if available) or the BOOT action on a tile of the size indicated by the roll of the die.*

#### Boot:

If the player chooses to BOOT a contract, the player must select a land tile containing any players' contract (including the player whose turn it is) of the size determined by the roll of the die. The player removes the bid token(s) from the selected tile and returns them to the player who was booted. Adjust the trackers to reflect the loss of earnings and bonuses. *If there are no contracts to BOOT, the player MUST choose either the BUILD action or the BID action on a tile of the size indicated by the roll of the die. In rare instances, a player may find that none of the three actions are possible. If all players agree this is true, the turn simply passes to the next player.*

## If a Player Chooses to Build

When a new tile is drawn, the player who drew it immediately adds it to the existing city. As tiles are placed, roads must match roads, water must match water, and grass must match grass. The illustration on the left is correct. The one on the right is incorrect.



**Note on Placing Tiles:** In very rare instances, a tile may not be able to be placed because no sides match any sides of the existing city. If all players agree this is true, the tile is shuffled back into the stack of tiles of that size and a new tile of that size is drawn.

## One-Time Placement Bonuses

Bonuses may be earned throughout the game by placing tiles to complete lakes and green spaces. Whenever a player places a tile that completes a lake or green space, the player receives a one-time \$2000 bonus. If other tiles that make up the lake or green space have contract owners, award a one-time \$1000 bonus to each of those players for each of their contracts around the lake or green space that was just completed. (The illustration below shows a lake being completed.) **DO NOT** count these bonuses on the bonus tracker. They are earned only once at the time of placement and cannot be earned by winning contracts.

(Example: The purple player places this tile and completes a lake. This player receives a \$2000 bonus and the yellow player receives \$1000.)

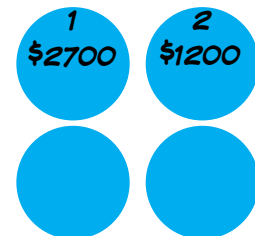


## If a Player Chooses to Bid

Bidding on contracts is the heart of the game and is an exciting and easy process once all players understand a few important rules:

- 1) **The contract is awarded to the lowest bidder** because the property owner wants to pay the least amount to have a landscape company do the work. The only exception is if a player has an event card that allows the player to win the auction because of a good reputation.
- 2) Be careful not to bid too low! Bidding too low each time will quickly slow down a player's progress. A player needs to generate enough income to purchase more equipment in future turns.
- 3) Players need to meet eligibility requirements in order to bid. This is determined by how many available mowers a player has. (Remember, each time a player purchases a new mower, the player receives two bid tokens along with the mower card to represent the mower's "coverage.") Different sized land tiles require different amounts of bid tokens to be placed on them when contracts are won: **Small land tiles require only 1 bid token; medium land tiles require 2 bid tokens; large land tiles require 4 bid tokens.** When bid tokens are placed on the tile after a contract is won, they are unavailable for future bids until that contract gets booted. If a player has enough bid tokens available in his or her company to cover the contract, the player is eligible to bid.
  - a. If two land tiles are being auctioned at the same time, a player may bid on both tiles *if* he or she has enough bid tokens to cover both. For example, if two medium land tiles are being auctioned, a player must have at least four unused bid tokens to bid on both of them.
- 4) The die roll determines the maximum and minimum allowable bids of that contract. Do not re-roll the die for this step. Use the roll that determined the tile size.
  - a. **The maximum allowable bid is equal to 1000 times the roll of the die.** (E.g., rolling a 1 = \$1000 maximum bid, rolling a 2 = \$2000 maximum bid, etc., up to \$6000 maximum bid when a 6 is rolled.)
  - b. **The minimum allowable bid is equal to 100 times the roll of the die.** (E.g., rolling a 1 = \$100 minimum bid, rolling a 2 = \$200 minimum bid, etc., up to \$600 minimum bid for a 6.)
- 5) **Bids in "Mow 'Em Down" are made blindly.** Players must not see what others are bidding, and doing so would be considered cheating.
- 6) The player whose turn it is chooses one or two land tiles to bid on by placing the Numbered Tiles (#1 and/or #2) on the selected tiles. The player whose turn it is runs the auction and may also bid if eligible. The player can say something like, "The contracts are open for bids." Once this is said, eligible players record their bids directly onto a bid token with their markers. If two tiles are being auctioned, the players must indicate which tile the bid is for by writing the appropriate number at the top of their bid token. **Bids must be made in increments of \$100.**

(Example: Two medium tiles are being auctioned, and the blue player wants to bid on both. Since she has four available bid tokens in her company, she can do this. A five was rolled on the die, so her bids must be between \$500 and \$5000. The contract with the #2 token is a little more attractive to her than the one with the #1 token, so she bids slightly lower to be competitive. Here is how she would record her bids.)



- 7) After a fair amount of time, the player running the auction gives a short countdown before closing the auction so all eligible players have a chance to complete their bids. When the auction closes, players reveal their bids starting with token number one, and the winners (see rule #1) are awarded the contracts.
- 8) **If there is a tie for the lowest bid, the tying players can choose one of two options.** The first option is to roll the die to select a winner based on highest roll, but the winner must subtract \$100 from the bid. The second option is for one of the tying players to choose to concede the contract to the other player without the other player suffering a \$100 deduction.
- 9) Keeping the bid token with the bid information intact, the winners of the contracts must place **all required bid tokens** onto the tiles (see Rule #3). The winning players will not have these tokens available for future bids until the contracts are booted.
- 10) **Adjust the Earnings Tracker for the winners of the contracts according to the amount of the bids. Adjust the Bonus Tracker if a player is able to create a contiguous chain of three or more contracts** (see Gas Savings Bonus on the last page). The players will receive this additional income at the beginning of their subsequent turns if their contracts don't get booted.

**Note about the Earnings Tracker:** If a player reaches the end of the Earnings Tracker by earning more than \$10,000 a turn, simply write, "10K" on the token, move it back to the top and add the value on the tracker to \$10,000. If the player loses contracts and earns less than \$10,000, simply erase the "10K" and move the token to the appropriate spot.

## Gas Savings Bonus

If a player can successfully win three or more contracts that are contiguous in the city (they connect on sides), the player earns a Gas Savings Bonus. The contiguous contracts can be of any size (e.g. 1 Small and 2 Medium tiles). This bonus is awarded at the beginning of a player's turn and is added to the regular earnings the player receives. **The contracts must be contiguous at the beginning of a player's turn in order to win the bonus.** Move players' tracker tokens on the bonus tracker whenever they win or lose contracts that affect a contiguous chain. Bonuses are awarded at this rate:

- 3 contiguous contracts = \$500 bonus per turn
- 4 contiguous contracts = \$1000 bonus per turn
- 5 or more contiguous contracts = \$1500 bonus per turn

It is possible that a player may earn two separate Gas Savings bonuses. In these rare instances, use another tracker token to track this additional bonus.

## If a Player Chooses to Boot

A player may want to boot another player's contract if it seems to be earning too much money or if the contract allows another player to receive a Gas Savings bonus. The player may also want to boot his or her own contract if it doesn't seem to be earning enough money, thus freeing up bid tokens to be eligible for larger contracts. While this action appears cut-throat, there is some risk because **the player booting the contract must also draw an Event Card.**

When a player chooses to boot a contract, the player announces which contract is to be booted. If the player being booted doesn't reveal a "Renegotiate a Contract" Event Card, the bid tokens are removed from the selected land tile and returned to their owner. These bid tokens may now be used by the booted player to bid on future contracts.

Since the player whose contract is being booted will no longer receive earnings from this contract, move the player's token back up the Earnings Tracker to reflect the loss of earnings. **IMPORTANT: If a player whose contract is being booted has not yet earned income from the contract (i.e. the player has had it for less than one turn), the player immediately receives earnings for the contract before adjusting the Earnings Tracker.** For example, if the Yellow player's \$1500 contract that he just won is booted, and his turn hasn't come back around, he receives \$1500 for the contract and his token is moved back \$1500 on the Earnings Tracker. If the action also affects a Gas Savings Bonus, adjust the Bonus Tracker accordingly.

## Event Cards

Event Cards add random elements to the game; some are positive and some are negative. A player draws an Event Card after one of the following plays:

- A player purchases a new mower.
- A player chooses to expire a contract.

After the card is drawn, the player reads the card (instructions on the top of the card will indicate whether aloud or silently). After reading the card, the player will either act or keep the card according to instructions on the card. Once a card is used, place it into a discard pile. If the entire stack of Event Cards is used, shuffle the cards in the discard pile and use them again.

Some of the Event Cards require the player to pay money to the Bank. Some of the cards will penalize a player if the player cannot immediately pay the required amount. It is wise to keep enough cash on hand when the player is about to draw an Event Card in order to avoid these penalties. If, however, a player is under a penalty, the player may not draw additional Event Cards until the requirement is satisfied.

## End of Game

The end of the game is signaled in one of three ways: 1) When a player draws and places the last available land tile, even if not all of the land tiles have contracts, 2) when a player purchases enough mowers to run out of bid tokens (this condition is rare, but possible in some two or three player games), or 3) when all of the Walker Mower™ cards have been purchased. When any of these conditions occur, all of the remaining players receive one more turn. The player who signals the end of the game does not take a last turn. After the last turn is taken, players calculate their total value by adding up all their cash, earnings, and equipment.

- Each player receives one final payment, including the player who ended the game. Look at the Earnings and Bonus Tracker to determine this final amount. Any unresolved Event Cards that players are holding affect this final payment.
- Count cash.
- Count equipment and receive \$10,000 for each mower (EXCEPTION: If the game was ended by a player purchasing the last Walker Mower™ card, the player receives \$12,00 for this one mower. All other mowers are valued at \$10,000 to account for depreciation).

## The player with the highest total value is declared the Landscaping Champion!

### Special Thanks

To Sheila, the love of my life, for the support of this crazy dream.

To Vance and Marc for the spark.

To all of my Calgary friends who helped move the spark of an idea into something playable: Hyperion, Jon and Heather, Mark, Lorne and Sheila (and the boys), Chung, Will, Matt and Kristin, Jaime, and many former students.

To all of my Kansas City friends who helped move something playable into something enjoyable: Ben and Sarah, Jason and Valorie, Ed and Karmalene, Fred and Christine, Greg and Susan, Ryan and Betsy, Brad, Pete, Lauren, Connor, Jim, Gary, John, Vicki and many other students and co-workers.

To all of my friends and family all over the United States who have playtested and made suggestions: Mom and Dad, Jack and Laurel, Bart and Susie, Matt and Ann, James and Kyler, Scott and Amy, John and Nina, Dan and Kyle, Shirley, and Sean.

To my Walker Family - Grandpa and Grandma, Bob and Barbara, Dean and Suzanne - for the inspiration of more than just a theme, but of the way to run a business, make a great product, and value people along the way. BIG congratulations on 100,000 Walker Mowers!