

# LA SERPIENTE MULTICOLOR

A game by Esther Berdión & Jaime Munárriz

## Translator note

This game was given as an insert of “EL EUROPEO” magazine in 1993. The original Spanish rules of the game have a literary style and a cycling ambiance I have not tried to match. I am just trying to translate the rules so that the game can be played.

## Goals of the game

The first rider to reach past the finishing line is the winner of the race . Winning the race is fine, but there are other goals in the game, like trying to win as many standings as possible. There are three independent standings: mountain, sprint and team standing. Fighting for second or third position also makes sense.

## Stage races

Stage races bring the game to a higher strategy level. It is recommended to play races which consist of three to five stages, though it may take some days.

## The board

The different types of field are represented by different colors.

Green = Flat (“Llano”)  
Red = Uphill (“Ascenso”)  
Yellow= Downhill (“Descenso”)  
Blue = Sprint zone

Riders move ahead or diagonally, never to the sides or backwards. They cannot pass through occupied squares. If the squares through which they wanted to pass are occupied, riders will have to stop or else take another path.

On the borders of the road there is a dotted zone which marks turn preference (see below).

## Tracks

The four board modules can be interconnected in different ways to create different tracks. Some examples are provided but you can make your own. On the provided examples you will find the finish line location and the number of energy units (“esfuerzos”) points and cards (“cartas”) to be dealt for each track.

## **Riders**

Each team consists of four riders: the team leader (white cap), a climber ("escalador", red cap), a *rouleur* ("rodador", yellow cap) and a sprinter (blue cap). Thus, the colour of the cap matches the type of road in which the rider is a stronger. The team leader is strong in all types of road.

With four players, the game is faster if each players discards a riders and the teams are of three riders. In this case each player chooses which rider stays out of the race.

## **Cards**

There are 50 cards which represent some kind of advantage. Cards are mixed before the race and dealt to the players, who will keep them *face up* (all players can see the cards). The number of cards ("cartas") to be dealt to each player is marked on the side of the example tracks and is the same than the number of energy units ("esfuerzos") necessary for that track. The different advantages given by each card are explained below.

## **Banners**

We have banners which represent sprints, mountains ("montaña") and the finishing line ("meta"), which should be placed on the road. If you are using one of the tracks given in the examples, the location of each banner is marked. As a rule, sprint banners are always at the end of blue zones and mountain banners are always at the end of red zones.

## **Team sheets**

Each player receives a team sheet on which he will write down the names of the riders in his team, During the race he will write the points scored and the energy units spent by each rider. Each team sheet is prepared for four stages, but of course you can play shorter or longer races.

## **Race sheet**

You need one for each race. In it you write down the winners of the different sprints and the standings after each stage. At the end of the race you will write the names of the winners on the podiums.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAME**

### **Turns**

The riders move in the order of the race (riders ahead move first). At the beginning of each turn the players check which riders are ahead of the packs, and thus are spending energy.

### **Packs**

A pack is a group of riders separated of the others by two or more empty squares. (A rider of a group placed further back would have to move at least three squares to reach the square where the last rider of the pack is). Riders with only one empty space between them are considered to be in the same pack. A pack can be formed by just one rider.

Packs are an important concept in the game. Riders in front of each pack spend energy at the beginning of each turn, and some movement cards mention the relative position of riders in the pack.

### **Spending energy**

Each rider has so many energy units ("esfuerzos") for a race. On the tracks given in as examples, this number is marked. If we make our own track, we count the number of squares necessary to complete the track (by the shortest path), and we divide it by eight (rounding to the closest integer).

When the rider is in front of a pack at the beginning of a turn, he spends an energy unit, which will be noted on the team sheet. That is why a rider who is always in front of a pack or who breaks away too soon in the race will run out of energy before the finishing line.

At the beginning of each turn players check carefully each pack to determine which riders are in front of each pack. There can be more than one rider in front of a given pack.

When a rider has spent all his energy units he is exhausted. It will be placed backwards on the board to remember that he is exhausted, and he will only move one square at a time until the end of the race. In a stage race, a rider that has exhausted all his energy units in one stage will start the next stage with one energy unit less, since he has not fully recovered his strength.

### **Saving energy**

A breakaway rider who does not want to keep spending energy, can choose to advance only one square at a time and avoid spending energy at the beginning

of the following turn. He will thus wait until he is joined by other riders, and resume normal playing afterwards.

## Placing the riders

At the beginning of the race the order of which riders are placed will be decided by the throw of a die. The player with the highest throw places one of his riders on the starting line. Clockwise, each player will place one of their riders until all riders are placed on the board. The placement of the riders will determine the race strategy and energy spent in the first turns.

## Turn order

Every turn all riders will move, starting with the riders in front of the race. If two riders are side to side, the one nearest the dotted marks on the road will move first.

## MOVEMENT

The maximum number of squares that a rider can move depends on the type of road on which he is and of the rider's abilities (cap color), as marked on the "Advance Table" ("Tabla de Avances").

*Example: on flat land (yellow road), the rouleur and the team leader can advance up to four squares while the other riders can advance only up to three squares.*

A rider can advance less squares than he is able to, to avoid, for instance, being in front of a pack, or changing the type of road the rider is on. However, each rider must advance at least one square in each turn.

Before a rider moves, we can decide if we want to use an **advantage card** or an **extra advance** (but not both)

## USING ADVANTAGE CARDS

The use of the advantage cards may allow a rider to advance some extra squares. Furthermore, some special cards allow a rider to change his position in the pack at the beginning of the turn, avoiding thus spending energy.

The cards, dealt at the beginning of the race, make that the strength of the teams is not equal (it is also the case in real cycling). However, good cards are not enough to win the race.

## Land cards

These are cards that can only be played by a rider on a special kind of road. The number on uppermost left corner of the card is the maximum number of squares that can move. The colour of the card shows us the kind of road it can be played on (which is also marked on a banner on the top of the card (remember: ascenso = uphill; descenso = downhill, llano = flat land)).

Some cards can only be used by specialist riders, others can be used by any rider ("todos"). If the rider on the card has an united colour, the card is for specialists, if the rider is striped, any rider can play this card. (Since there are no downhill specialists in this game, all blue cards feature a striped rider.

## Position cards

These cards can only be played by a rider who is exactly this position in the pack *at the beginning of the turn*. There are cards for the first ("primero"), second ("segundo") and third ("tercero") rider in the pack. Two or more riders side by side are considered in the same position. We can have two riders in the first position of a pack, or four riders in the third position, for instance.

Some position cards allow for an extra move (" +2" or " +3"). Others allow to catch the wheel of a rider who moved first ("2<sup>o</sup>->1<sup>o</sup>", "3<sup>o</sup>->2<sup>o</sup>" or "3<sup>o</sup>->1<sup>o</sup>"). These cards are very useful when a rider is going to lose contact with a pack (and therefore begin spending energy in the next turn).

## Pack position cards

With these cards a rider can change his position within a pack, or even join the pack ahead.

One card allows the last rider of the pack to place himself one square ahead of the first rider in the pack. Beware, if the pack has split during that move, the rider will only be able to place himself of the pack he is in at the moment of his move.

Another card allows a rider who is alone to catch the pack immediately ahead of him and place himself in the square just behind the last rider in this pack.

There is a card that allows a rider to leave his pack and place himself in the square just behind the last rider of the pack ahead.

Finally, the "Demarraje" card allows a rider who is riding alone to double the distance between him and the pack behind him. Needless to say, this can be a very powerful card, but all rivals know who has this card on the table and will try to prevent its use. And, of course, if this card is played too far from the finish, the rider may exhaust all his energy units before the end of the race.

## **Energy drink cards**

At the beginning of a turn a rider can play one of these cards to avoid spending an energy unit.

## **EXTRA ADVANCE**

Before moving a rider, we can try an Extra Advance. *We cannot try the Extra Advance if we play an advantage card for that rider in this turn.* The Extra Advance is accomplished by throwing a die and checking the Extra Advance table ("Tabla de Avance Extra") on the race sheet. On this table we find the number of extra squares we can advance (under "avance") and the energy units we will spend for this extra movement (under "esfuerzos"). As we can see, we can advance one or two extra squares, even effortlessly, but we can also spend one energy unit without reward. Trying an Extra Advance is a risky decision, one that has to be taken carefully.

## **BANNERS AND POINTS**

We have three different types of banner: sprints, mountains ("montaña") and the finishing line ("meta"). The first riders to pass each banner score points according to the Points Table on the race sheet. Only the first three riders score points at the mountain and sprint banners, but up to ten riders score at the finishing line. These points shall be written down on the team sheet.

## **END OF THE RACE**

The results of the race shall be written down on the race sheet. Upon close examination of the results, the players will decide who is the winner of the game, or if there is more than one player deserving to be considered the winner.