The Rules of Can’t Stop

A Parker Brothers game.

Modified and clarified from the Wikipedia article.

The Board The game equipment consists of four dice, a board, a set of colored markers for each player, called tiles, and three white markers called towers.

The board consists of eleven columns of varying heights (one for each of the numbers two through twelve). The columns on the ends (two and twelve) are the shortest, with only three spaces, and the seven column is the tallest, with thirteen spaces.

A player’s goal is to capture any three columns by moving his tiles from the beginning of a column (at the bottom of the board) to the top of the column. A column is “captured” when a tile has been moved to cover the number at the top of the column.

Tiles and towers. Colored tiles are used to mark a player’s position at the end of his turn and towers are used to mark his progress during the course of one turn. In Figure 1, all four players (yellow, green, blue, orange) have taken turns and progressed some distance upward on various columns. Yellow has progressed 3 squares on column 4 and 2 squares on column 7. It is now Yellow’s second turn, and he has rolled the dice, grouped them, and placed two towers on the board.

One Roll. On a player’s turn he rolls all four dice. He then divides the four dice into two pairs, each of which has an associated total. (For example, if he rolled 3 - 4 - 5 - 5, as in Figure 1, he could make an 8 and a 9, or a 7 and a 10.) The player must choose which pairs to make, and (under some circumstances) which pair to use first. A tower can be placed in any column that has not already been captured. It can sit on top of a tile owned by a different player.

If the towers are off of the board then they are brought onto the board and placed in a column that corresponds to a dice-total, either in the first square or on the square that follows his own colored tile, if it exists. (Figure 1)
If the towers are already on the board in one or both of these columns then they are advanced one space upward. (Figure 2)

If two towers are on the board, but they are in columns that do not match the current dice pairs, then the player must choose one of the current pairs to use with the remaining tower.

![Figure 2: Second turn, second roll.](image1)

To stop or not to stop, that is the question. A turn consists of several rolls of the dice. After a successful roll, a player may decide to stop, or he may roll again. If he stops, then he puts markers of his color in the location of the current towers and removes the towers from the board. On a later turn, if he restarts this column, he will start building from the place he previously claimed.

![Figure 3: Second turn, third roll.](image2)
**Going bust.** If a player decides to NOT stop, he rolls the dice again. If he cannot move he goes “bust. This can happen if no possible dice-combination matches the columns that contain towers, or because all matching columns have already been captured.

![Figure 4: Time to quit.](image)

**You must move if you can move.** After selecting the dice-pairs, the player *must* place a marker if he *can*. Suppose a player has a tower in the 7-column, with one unused tower and he rolls 3-4-6-2 (Figure 2) and he chooses to make the pairs 7 and a 8. He will advance his 7 marker and also MUST place a tower in the 8 column. He is not permitted to hold it in reserve and wait for a column he likes better.

**Time to stop.** It is wise to stop after making a lot of progress. In Figure 4, Yellow decides to stop because he has made 4 squares of progress, all three of his towers are used, and the towers are not well-distributed across the board. It is really important to stop if you have just reached the top of a column. If you continue, and go bust, you do not get to keep that column.

**Winning a column.** When a player reaches the top space of a column and claims it, this column is won, and no further play in that column is allowed. When a player claims three columns he has won the game.