

Acorn Run

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It's that time of the year again: the famous Acorn Run is about to start. And this year you're competing too. You have trained all year and couldn't be more ready, but... the competition looks fierce. Bolt is known for his speed and you realise he may be hard to beat. And Ember was last year's crowd's favourite, showing off her acrobatic combo jumps.

Who is the fastest this year? Who will become the crowd's favourite by showcasing the most spectacular combos? And who will eventually win the entire event? Let's all gather at the Great Oak and find out!



Great Oak

Contents & game elements

4 Squirrel pawns

50 Acorn tokens



122 Cards

(40 starter + 82 market)



61 VP tokens

(9 Race VPs + 52 Combo VPs)



1 Race track board



4 Player boards



4 Player aids
(double sided)



Board setup

1

- Place the main board in the centre of the table.
- Place the race VP tokens in an ordered stack (10, 8 → 1) in the centre of the board (there is no 9VP token).
- Place the combo VP tokens in their dedicated spaces in the central area. One stack per value.



2

- Place an acorn on each track space with an acorn symbol.
- If a number is depicted, leave the space empty if it's higher than the number of players.
- Place the remaining acorns nearby.



3

- Shuffle the cheap market cards (costing 1 or 2) and the expensive market cards (costing 3 or 4) into 2 separate market decks.
- Draw and lay out 3 face up cards per market deck.



Player Setup

4

Each player:

- Choose a color, take the corresponding pawn and place the matching player board in front of you.
- Take the matching starting deck, shuffle it, and place it face down next to your player board.

5




4


5

- The person who last ate a nut is the starting player and places their pawn on the "1" space, on the Great Oak.
- Going clockwise around the table, each player places its pawn on the next start spaces (marked with "2", "3" and "4").

6

Each player draws their opening hand of cards (4 or 6) from their personal deck and gains acorns (1 or 2) as indicated on their starting space.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
				
	4	6	4	6
	1	1	2	2

 In all future turns, each player will draw (up to) 6 cards. **Only the first turn of the game is an exception.**

6

How to win

- Run through the 4 trees and jump over the finish line as fast as possible. You score race victory points (race VPs) for your race result (more details on scoring in **Finale** on **page 13**).
- Score combo victory points (combo VPs) by creating card combos during your jumps. The more cards you chain in a single combo, the more combo VPs you earn. Keep these VP tokens face down so that their value stays hidden for the other players until the end of the game (learn more about combo VPs in **Free actions** on **pages 8-9**).
- When all players have finished the race, everybody reveals their combo VPs and adds them up to their race VPs. **The player with the most total victory points wins!**
- In case of a tie, the player with the most race VPs wins.



Acorn Run is a deckbuilder

i If you are familiar with deckbuilding you may skip this section and immediately start reading the **Turn** section on **page 6**. The only things you need to know are:

- 6 card hands each turn
- acquired cards go to your discard pile
- at the end of your turn you may keep cards in hand for next turn or discard them
- then draw back up to 6 cards in hand

If this sounds cryptic to you, first read **Deckbuilding basics** on **page 5**.

Deckbuilding basics

Each player starts the game with a personal starter deck of 10 cards.

- 1 When you play a card, resolve it, then place it into a personal face up discard pile.
- 2 When the game instructs you to draw cards, always draw from your personal deck of cards.
- 3 If your deck is empty, but you're still required to draw cards, then shuffle your discard pile into a fresh deck and continue drawing from it.

Over the course of the game you can acquire new (better) cards by purchasing them from a market.

- 4 Pay the cost of a card costing x , by discarding x cards from your hand. Place purchased cards into your discard pile.

You will run through your deck fast, so after each reshuffle you'll quickly draw your newly purchased cards. Each player will end up with a unique deck this way, tailored to their strategy.

- 5 At the end of your turn, choose which cards you want to keep in hand for next turn (if any) and discard the rest. Then draw back up to 6 cards.



Turn

Players take turns going clockwise around the table, starting with the player on the 1st position on the Great Oak. During your turn you will:

- Resolve 1 main move: **Sprint** or **Climb** or **Descend**
- Resolve unlimited free actions (as long as you can afford them) :
 - **Jump**
 - **Standalone card action**
 - **Acorn action**
 - **Buy cards**
- At the end of your turn, choose which cards to discard, then draw back up to 6 cards in hand.



Play your main move and all free **actions in any order**.

Card breakdown

card color (red)

there are 3 card colors:
green - yellow - red



combo symbol (yellow)

many cards have a combo symbol - this indicates which card colors can be chained to it in a combo jump

special action (free move)

many cards have a special action, indicated with an icon and explained in the bottom text box



duplicate card info for
left handed players

cost (3)

to purchase a card from the market you have to discard an amount of cards from your hand equal to the cost

Play separately as **free move**:
Move 1 space forward in any color.

Find an overview of the cards with special rules in **Card special actions** on **page 18**.

Main move

In your turn, you may **resolve max 1 main move**: choose between a sprint forward, a climb upwards, or a descent downwards in the tree.

Sprint

Play cards of the same color as the lane you sprint in, or the color from one of the higher lanes: move that many spaces forward in your current lane.

- In green lanes: play , , or  cards
- In yellow lanes: play  or  cards
- In red lanes: play  cards only



Ember (red) plays 4 green cards to sprint and move 4 spaces forward in the green lane.

 Regardless of which lane you're sprinting in, **cards of only 1 color may be played to sprint** within 1 sprint action.

Climb

Move your pawn in an upwards direction by playing cards that match the colors of the spaces you move to. Go as high as you wish, as long as you can play matching color cards.




Frosty (blue) plays 1 green and 2 yellow cards to climb 3 space upwards, respectively moving 1 green space and 2 yellow spaces.

Descend

Play any color of cards to move your pawn in a downwards direction, moving 1 space per card.



Twinkle (green) plays 2 cards to descend 2 space downwards.

 During climbs and descents, you may **advance as far forward as possible**, provided that spaces are connected by a horizontal line.

General movement rules

- Each turn you may resolve 1 main move. Additionally, resolve as many jumps and other free moves as your cards and player board allows you to.
- All your moves can be resolved in any order, as long as you complete each separate move before starting another.
- You may move onto and through other pawns as long as you end your turn on an empty space.
- Exception: the big vertical “jump-off” spaces may contain any amount of pawns.
- If you end a move on a space containing an acorn, you may collect it into your supply.

i Acorns can be spent the turn you collect them or saved up to use in future turns. (read more about **Acorn actions** on **page 11**).



Ember (red) moves down with a free move, joining Bolt temporarily. Then she sprints forward 3 spaces, grabbing an acorn.



Ember (red) moves into the jump-off space, joining Twinkle and Bolt, and ends her turn there.

Free actions

There are 4 types of free actions: jump, play card special action, activate acorn action and buy cards. During your turn you may **resolve as many free actions as you want**, as long as you can afford them.

Jump

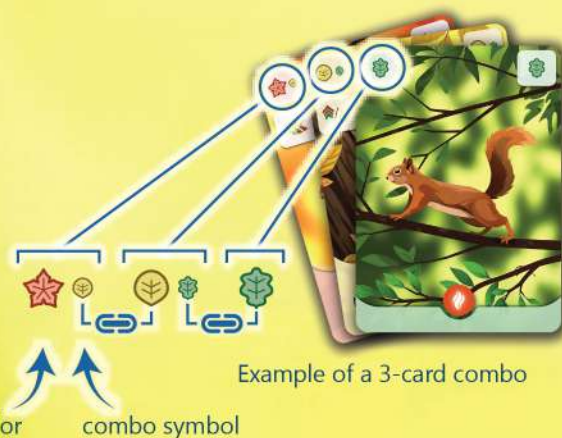
When you reach the edge of a tree, you cannot move any further except by jumping to the next tree. This is your opportunity to perform a mid-air combo trick!

Create combo

Chain cards into a combo by playing a card containing at least 1 combo symbol, followed by a card type matching one of the combo symbols on the first card.

If your second card also has combo symbols, you can chain a third card to it, and so on.

Combos can contain any color of cards - they don't have to match with the color lane you're jumping in.




Gain rewards

Making a combo, rewards you with combo victory points (combo VPs) and acorns, as indicated in the central area of the main board.

- Keep combo VPs face down until the end of the game (you may look at them at any time).
- Gained acorns can be spent immediately this turn, or kept for later.

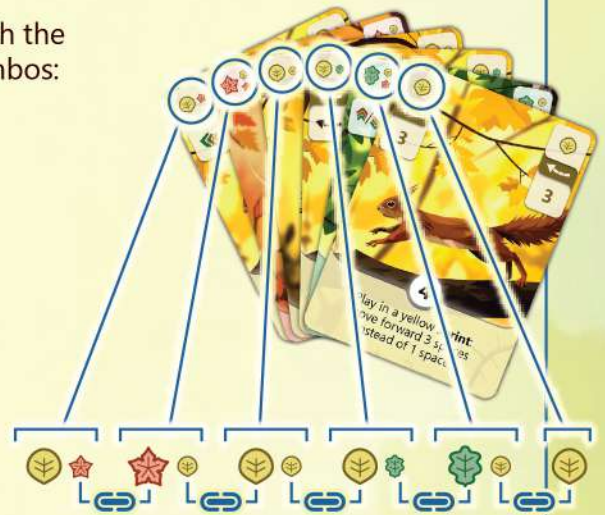
	2	3	4	5	6
VPs					
	1	1	1	2	2

 It's **not allowed to create multiple separate combos** within one jump. For example, two combos of 3 cards each, won't earn you twice the 3-card combo reward.

Tips on improving your combos

Large combos are not easy to achieve, but can be worth the investment. Here are some tips for improving your combos:

- Save good combo cards in your hand 1 or 2 turns before you will jump.
- If you don't have a full hand of 6 cards, it can be worthwhile to wait until your next turn to jump.
- Buy cards that combo with their own color, or cards that combo with 2 colors. These are more expensive but drastically increase your chances on continuing the chain.
- Spend an acorn to draw and discard 2 cards, increasing your chances on finding a combo (read more about **Acorn actions** on page 11).

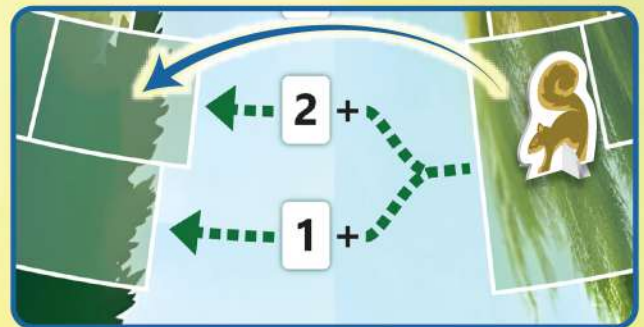


Example of a 6-card combo

Choose lane

When you jump to the next tree, move your pawn to the first space of either 2 lanes in the same color.

- If you performed a combo of 2 or more card, you may freely choose which: the upper lane or the lower lane.
- If you can't make a combo (or don't want to), you may choose to play a single card (any card) to jump without doing a combo trick. If you do, you must choose the lower lane.



Bolt (yellow) makes a combo jump of 3 cards and chooses to move to the top green lane

Foliage jump

In some trees there are gaps in the foliage in which you must perform a combo jump, or move around it.

A foliage jump is different from a regular tree to tree jump: You're not allowed to play a larger combo than indicated, nor a smaller one.



Bolt (yellow) makes a foliage jump by playing a 2-card combo.



Foliage jumps require an **exact number of cards** to be played: either a **2-card** or a **3-card** combo.



Card special actions

Many cards have a special action. This is indicated by a symbol in the top left of the card and explained in more detail in the text box at the bottom of the card.

We differentiate 2 different types of special actions: standalone actions and automatic actions.



Each special action is fully explained on the card

Standalone card actions

Standalone actions are separated by a **space**. When playing a card for its standalone action, place it in your discard pile after resolving it.



Play this card from your hand to gain +2 buying power (and optionally refresh a market row).

After resolving the effect, place the card into your discard pile.



Play this card to resolve any acorn action on your player board.

After resolving the effect, place the card into your discard pile.

Automatic card actions

Automatic actions are marked by a **sprint** or **jump** icon, attaching both effects to each other. They activate automatically when that card is played within a sprint or combo jump respectively. Automatic card actions are always optional.



Play this card as part of a (green) sprint action (together with more green cards). It counts as 1 move forward, as usual, but also generates a bonus effect: you may resolve an extra sprint action this turn (normally you are only allowed to resolve 1 main move per turn).



Play this card as part of a combo jump. Your reward is then changed to: a higher value combo point and 1 acorn less.

i Each special action is explained on the card itself. On **page 18** you'll find an **overview of most special actions in more detail**.

Acorn actions

Acorns you have collected can be spent on your player board to generate free moves and other bonus actions.

- Place an acorn on an empty grid space to claim its bonus action.
- Once an acorn is spent it cannot be spent again later. It stays on your player board and the space it occupies is permanently blocked for the rest of the game.
- You only get the bonus action once, when you place the acorn (there are no continuous effects).
- If you complete a column, you may also choose one of the column bonus actions depicted below.

Left grid

Remove a card in your hand from the game

OR

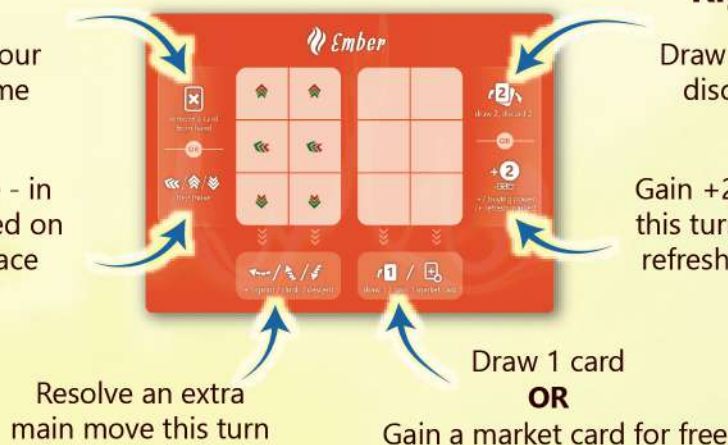
Resolve a free move - in the direction indicated on the chosen grid space

Right grid

Draw 2 cards, then discard 2 cards

OR

Gain +2 buying power this turn (+ optionally: refresh 1 market row)



Column bonuses

Buy cards

Each turn you may buy as many cards from the market as you can afford.

- To pay for a card that costs X, discard X cards from your hand or spend buying power generated by special card actions or acorn actions.
- When you buy a card, immediately replace the purchased card with a fresh card from the respective market deck.
- You may immediately buy newly placed market cards as long as you can afford them.
- Place all purchased cards in your discard pile.



i You can increase your buying power +2 this turn, by spending an acorn on your player board in the right hand grid.

End of turn

- ① At the end of your turn, place all your played cards in a personal face up discard pile next to your player board.
- ② Remaining unspent buying power (eg. from acorn or card actions) is lost.
- ③ If you still have unused cards in hand, you may choose to keep them for your next turn or discard them to your discard pile.
- ④ Then, draw back up to 6 cards from your personal deck.

If you ever need to draw a card, but your deck is empty, shuffle your discard pile and place it face down in your deck space, forming a fresh deck to draw from.

End of the game: the Finale

- The first player that finishes the race takes the 10 VP token from the centre of the board.
- Whenever the first finisher would take a turn, instead they discard the top race VP token from the stack (placing it back in the box). As a result, players that require more turns to finish the race will earn fewer race VPs.
- When another player crosses the finish line, they take the top race VP token from the stack. They skip their future turns during the finale.
- If the race VP token stack is empty, all players still in the race are disqualified (they score 0 VPs in total) and the game ends.
- Everybody reveals their combo VPs and adds them up to their race VPs. **The player with the most total victory points wins!**
- In case of a tie, the player with the most race VPs wins.



You are now ready to play

- Beginning with the starting player, players take turns, one after the other in a clockwise direction around the table.
- In your first turn, you choose your starting lane: freely choose any lane to start in. You may choose the same lane as another player. Since you don't start on the track, **your very first movement must always be a forward move - usually a sprint.**

Example turns

Learn how to play by examining a few examples turns described in detail. From a basic first turn to advanced techniques and pro tips.

Example turn #1

Your first turn - choose your starting lane wisely

Ember (red) is the starting player. Her opening hand of 4 cards contains 3 green cards and 1 yellow.

- 1 She chooses the bottom green lane to start in, and plays 2 of her 3 green cards to sprint 2 spaces forward. She places the played cards in her discard pile after resolving this action.
- 2 With her remaining green and yellow card she purchases the green (sprint 2) card, placing it in her discard pile, alongside the 2 cards she used to pay for it. This immediately sets Ember in a green speed strategy.
- 3 She has no cards left in hand and ends her turn. She draws 6 cards from her deck and passes the turn.



Embers hand



the market

i Pro tip: Always consider which cards you may want to purchase, before spending them on a movement. Purchasing fitting cards to strengthen your deck is key to a winning strategy. Especially in the early turns.

Example turn #2

Extra sprints are flexible

Bolt (yellow) is almost reaching a jump-off zone with 6 cards in hand: 3 yellows, 2 reds, and 1 green.

- 1 He sprints forward 2 spaces by playing 2 yellow cards. Since he included his yellow (sprint) card, he may resolve an extra sprint this turn.
- 2 With his red and yellow combo cards he chains a 3-card combo together and receives 1 VP plus 1 acorn as reward.
- 3 He still has 1 card left, and uses his extra sprint to move forward 1 space in the next tree.



Bolt's hand

Example turn #3

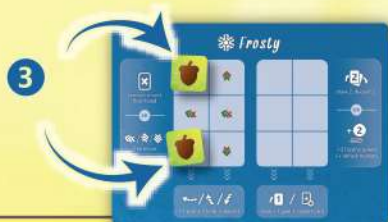
Remove unwanted cards early

Frosty (blue) pursues a yellow/red strategy and wants to get rid of his green cards.

- 1 Though he has 3 yellow card in hand, Frosty chooses to play only 2 cards to sprint and collect the acorn this way.
- 2 He also plays his red card for its special effect, and gains a 2nd acorn - removing the red card from the game in the process.
- 3 He spends both acorns on his player board to remove 2 green cards in his hand from the game.



Frosty's hand



i Pro tip: When choosing for a yellow or red strategy, your green cards become a burden. Removing some early in the game will drastically improve your hands.

Example turn #4

Draw cards to get better combos

Ember (red) ended her last turn reaching the green jump-off zone. With 6 cards in hand she wants to attempt a large combo jump.

- 1 Her hand only contains a 3-card combo, but she has more fitting combo cards in her deck and attempts to find a better combo. She spends 1 acorn on her player board allowing her to draw 2 cards and discard 2 cards.



- 2 She draws a yellow card that combos with green, and a green (sprint 2) card. She discards 2 redundant yellow cards.
- 3 The yellow (green combo) card is perfect - enlarging her combo to 5 cards! She collects 3VP and 2 acorns as a reward and decides to jump to the lower green lane.
- 4 For her main move she sprints 2 spaces forward with the green (sprint 2) card, collecting yet another acorn in the process.



i Pro tip: Drawing cards to improve your combo is often worth spending an acorn on. If you're certain your deck contains the missing combo piece, then go for it!

Example turn #5

Gain market cards for (almost) free

Twinkle starts her turn close to the tree edge. She chose for a heavy red strategy and has spent 2 of her collected acorns already on +2 buying power in earlier turns.



Twinkles hand



Twinkles player board

i Pro tip: Stay alert for the column bonuses. They can make a huge difference when used at the right time.

- 1 She could play her 2 red cards to move to the jump-off zone. But 1 of her red cards is key to creating a 4-card combo. She decides to only sprint 1 space forward (with 1 red card), and spend her acorn on a free move forward to reach the jump-off space.
- 2 With her 4-card combo she jumps to the top red lane, earning 2VP and an acorn as reward.
- 3 She spends her recently acquired acorn on +2 buying power. This completes the column - as a column bonus she chooses "gain 1 market card for free", taking the expensive red (jump forward) card.
- 4 A fresh market card appears, but it's not interesting for Twinkles deck. She uses her free "refresh a market row" (optional action from her earlier +2 buying power acorn activation) and refreshes the top market row, in the hopes of finding a good value 3 card, but no such luck.
- 5 Instead she buys the red (jump +VP) card with her remaining 2 buying power.
- 6 The market reveals a green (combo with red) card for 1. She discards her last hand card to buy it. She already has many red cards in her deck, so this will increase her chances on more and bigger combos.



the market




the top row is being refreshed



a new market card appears


Card special actions

Rule specifications for special card effects that can interact with the game in unintuitive ways.



If you make a 2-card combo with this, you gain a combo 1VP and no acorn.
If you make a 6-card combo with this, you don't gain a higher value VP token.
You may choose to not apply the special effect. So, if you make a 5-card combo you can choose between 4VP + 1 acorn, and 3VP + 2 acorns.

When played in a combo **jump**: as reward, gain a combo VP token of 1 value higher and 1 less acorn.



You move forward immediately after your jump is resolved.
You only move forward if you used this card in a combo jump. It can't be played as a separate action to move forward.

When played in a combo **jump**: move 1 space forward in any color after landing.



You may play other actions during your turn, before resolving the extra sprint action.
The extra sprint requires you to play cards from your hand again (cards played in the first sprint are already discarded).
Your extra sprint can be in another color.

Play in a green **sprint**: This turn you may resolve an extra sprint action.




When used in a green sprint you may choose to ignore the effect.
If you choose to move +4 spaces (instead of 1) then remove the card from the game afterwards.

Play in a green **sprint**: move forward 4 spaces (instead of 1). Remove this card from the game.



The +2 buying power and market refresh are 2 separate effects. You can apply them in any order before, after or in between purchases.
For example: you could buy a card, then refresh a market, and then buy a second card.

Play separately: Gain +2 buying power this turn. Optionally, you may refresh 1 market row.



If a card has multiple combo symbols, you may choose which card color to chain after this, within a combo jump (either yellow or red in this case).
You don't automatically get to chain 2 cards.

Commonly overlooked rules

You may only resolve **1 main move each turn**: either 1 Sprint, or 1 Climb, or 1 Descent.

Combos are only relevant to jump actions. **You can't make a combo if you're not jumping** and you can't jump if you're not in a jump-off space (all jump-off spaces are indicated with a ↩ symbol).

When making a **jump, card colors don't have to match the color zone** you're currently in.

During your turn, you may **resolve your actions in any order**. This includes main move, jumps, standalone card action (eg. free moves), acorn actions, buying cards, market row refreshes and extra moves.

You don't have to jump immediately, when reaching a jump-off space, even if you have the cards for a combo. Sometimes it's worthwhile to wait until next turn and find a greater combo.

Game Credits

Design, development & editing
Jasper Behaegel

Artwork
Jasper Behaegel with Imagen (AI image generator)

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**Jaybird
Games**

Icons overview

	Choose an Acorn action from your player board and resolve the effect without spending an acorn token		This turn you may resolve an extra sprint action
	Gain 1 acorn from the supply		If you play this card as part of a sprint it counts as 2 forward movement (instead of the standard 1 movement per card)
	For your combo jump reward you gain a combo VP token of +1 value, but 1 less acorn.		Automatic effect when used in a sprint. If you play this card as part of a sprint action, the special action is automatically added as a bonus effect
	Draw 2 cards, then discard 2 cards		Automatic effect when used in a combo jump. If you play this card as part of a combo jump, the special action is automatically added as a bonus effect
	Draw 1 card		If you apply the above effect, then remove this card from the game afterwards
	Choose 1 card from your hand and remove it from the game		Free move 1 space forward / up / down in a tree (you may ignore space colors)
	Gain 1 market card for free		This turn, you may resolve an extra Sprint, Climb or Descent action
	Gain +2 buying power this turn.		
	Optionally: Refresh 1 market row: discard a market row of 3 cards, and place 3 fresh cards from the respective market deck		

Player board overview

