FRONTRUNNER

FRONTRUNNER is an action packed game involving strategy and luck about the race to become President. By playing strategy cards, you will change how the voters of each state feel about you. Do you reveal dirty secrets about your opponent, or prove that you can read to schoolchildren by reading to schoolchildren? There are many ways to show you have what it takes to be President, but you have to choose. Your time and resources are limited and national events will also impact the voters before election day. Pick a running mate, campaign across the nation and use every trick you can to win the election!

IN THE BOX

State Markers – 22
Board - 1
Die -1
Rules – 1

Cards
Strategy - 74
Event – 17
VP – 8 Democrat, 8 Republican
Blank – 4
Convention - 1
My Turn – 2

**2-4 Players
~ 45 Minutes**

To become President of the United States, a candidate must campaign to win states individually. Each state has an assigned number of "Electoral College" votes based on population. States with fewer people have fewer votes and larger states have more. The candidate who wins enough states to have **270** or more Electoral College votes on election day is elected President.

In **FRONTRUNNER**, **Republicans** are expected to win the most conservative states and **Democrats** the most liberal states. The rest of the states are "in play" and can be found on the **FRONTRUNNER** game board.

This scenario is only one example of how an election may begin, but it starts the game with an **exact tie**. The goal of the game is to influence voters and earn more than the required **270** Electoral College votes to become President on election day.

Setup:

Shuffle the **STRATEGY** and **EVENT CARDS** separately. Deal **5 STRATEGY CARDS** face down to each player and count out **36 STRATEGY CARDS** as the **DRAW PILE**.

Mix **5** random **EVENT CARDS** into the **DRAW PILE** and shuffle it. Place the **CONVENTION CARD** in the **DRAW PILE 13** cards from the top (exactly 12 cards should be above it)

Leave the unused **STRATEGY** and **EVENT CARDS** face down in two separate piles to the side. The unused **STRATEGY CARDS** can be used as replacements when needed and the extra **EVENT CARDS** may be used in case of a tie-breaker. The **VP CARDS** are set aside, face down, for the Convention.

CONVENTION CARD IN DRAW PILE.

12 CARDS SHOULD BE ABOVE IT.

EXTRA NATIONAL EVENT CARDS

5 STRATEGY CARDS IN EACH PLAYER'S HAND

36 STRATEGY CARDS

EXTRA STRATEGY CARDS

5 NATIONAL EVENT CARDS PLACED RANDOMLY IN THE DRAW PILE.

Place the **STATE MARKERS** on the Board on the shaded square on the line for each state.
(MN = Minnesota, WI = Wisconsin, NJ = New Jersey…)

How to begin:

Each player should have **STRATEGY CARDS** in their hand. Look at your hand, but do not show it to your opponent. One Player is the **Republican** and the other is the **Democrat**. You can decide this on your own or use the die. Roll the die to see who begins the game. Red = **Republican**, Blue = **Democrat**

Each Turn:

STRATEGY: A player plays one card face up from their hand and any states mentioned should have their **STATE MARKERS** moved. The player must then also **DISCARD** one card from their hand face down. The discarded card has no effect on the game board.

> ***REMEMBER**: If you play a STRATEGY CARD, it has the opposite effect it would have if your opponent had played it. "+4" means that you should move the **STATE MARKER** 4 spaces **in your favor.**

CAMPAIGN: Each player must campaign 1 time each turn (unless otherwise instructed by any previously played strategy cards). To campaign, the player first chooses a state to "campaign" in and announces it to their opponent. The player then rolls the die. Each side of the die has a 1, 2 or 3 on it to indicate how many spaces to move the **STATE MARKER** in their direction.

> ***REMEMBER**: When campaigning, only the number matters.
> The die is sometimes also used to make decisions. When deciding
> between **Democrat** and **Republican**, only the color matters.

DRAW: The player then draws **2** cards from the pile. This ends their turn.

How to Move the STATE MARKERS:

STATE MARKERS will move along a line that represents the popularity of both players in each state. Any progress for a **Republican** should move the piece towards (or further into) their side of the board and for the **Democrat** it will move towards (or further in) the other direction.
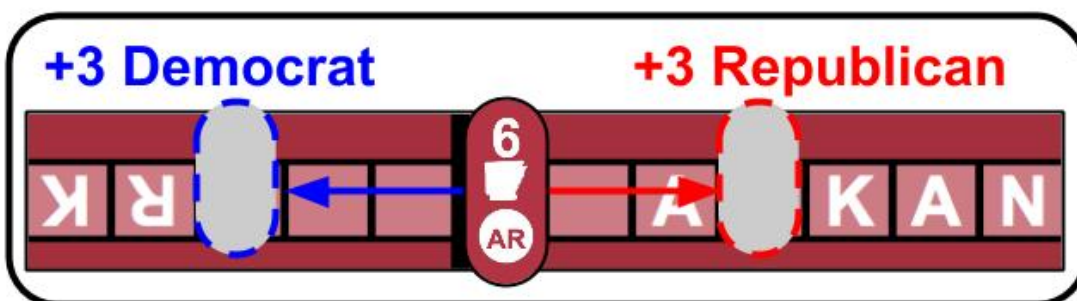
A game piece cannot move further than the space allowed on the board as it is unlikely any candidate would lose close to 100% of the vote in any state.

> ***REMEMBER:** a state's color only refers to where it starts on the board. Many states will hopefully move to your half of the board even though they are not the color associated with your party.

Example Turn:

1. The Democrat plays a STRATEGY CARD with +4 in Arizona and -2 in Kentucky.

Arizona, with 11 Electoral College votes, is now held by the Democrat, but Kentucky, with only 8 votes, moves further away and is safer for the Republican.
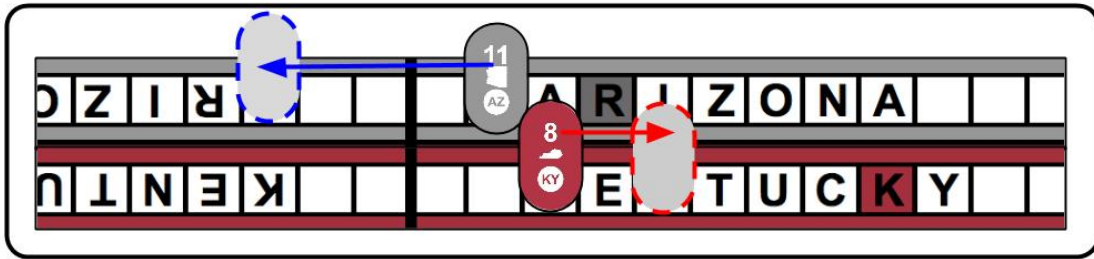
2. The Democrat then discards 1 card and chooses to campaign in Florida.

They roll a 2. Florida moves and is now closer to the center, but remains Republican

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3. The Democrat takes two cards from the DRAW PILE. One Card is an EVENT CARD.

The EVENT CARD is read immediately and all states move +1 for the Republican. The Democrat then draws one more STRATEGY CARD to end their turn with 5 cards.

**4. It is now the Republican's turn.**

Events:

Whenever an **EVENT CARD** is drawn, it must be read immediately and any states mentioned should have their **STATE MARKERS** moved. Make sure both players have 5 **STRATEGY CARDS** and take from the **DRAW PILE** if needed before continuing the game. **EVENT CARDS** can come in immediate succession. Read them each and calculate their effects on the board using the **STATE MARKERS**.

Convention:

When the **CONVENTION CARD** is drawn, each player must choose a Vice Presidential Candidate as a running mate. There are 8 blue **VP CARDS** for the Democrat and 8 red **VP CARDS** for the Republican. Each player chooses four random VP Candidate cards of their color without looking at them. Then the player may pick one of those four candidates to be their running mate. Both players should choose a VP before the choices are revealed and any **STATE MARKERS** are moved. After they are selected, **VP CARDS** should be kept face up by each player as they may have an effect on gameplay later. The player who drew the **CONVENTION CARD** should replace it with another card from the **DRAW PILE**. The convention is over and the game continues without skipping a player.

Strategy:

STATE MARKERS show the number of Electoral College votes in each state. This means that some states are worth more than others and a player can win by "flipping" a few larger states or many smaller ones. Your strategy may be different each time you play. While a **STATE MARKER** is on your side of the board, its Electoral College votes are yours. It doesn't matter how far the **STATE MARKER** moves from the center, except that it becomes more difficult for the opponent to win it back.
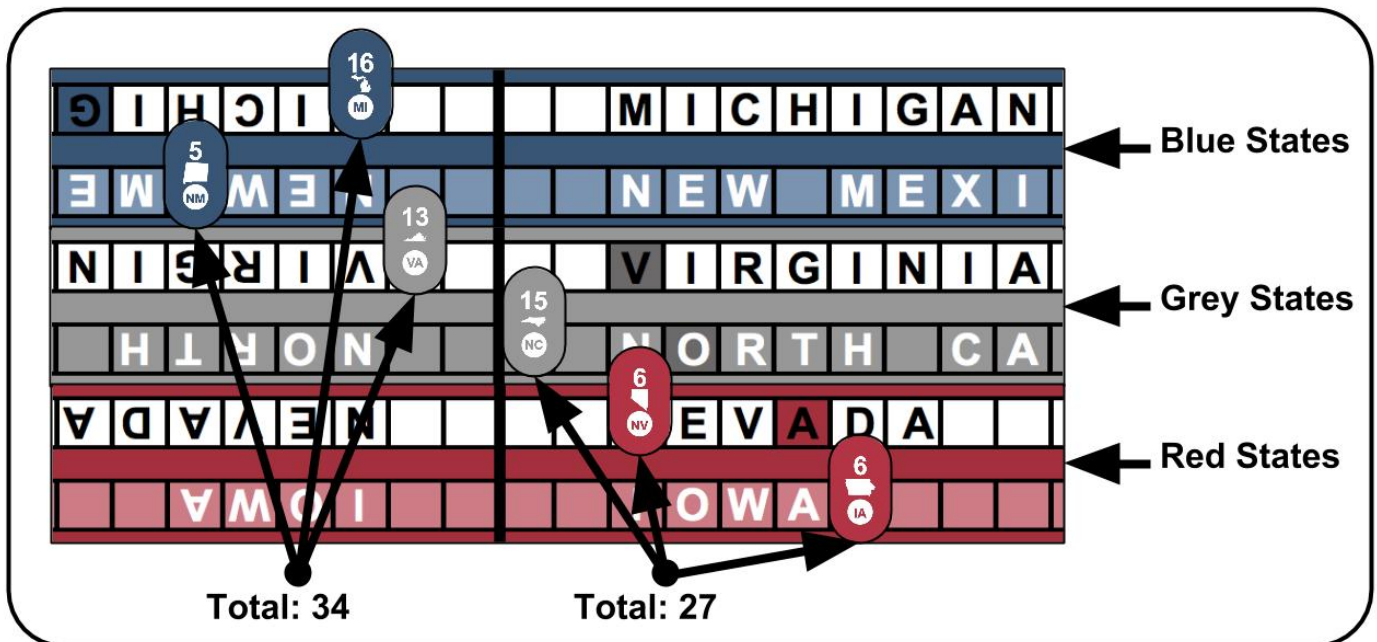
Red States and Blue States start relatively far from the center as it is harder for the opposing party to win over enough voters to flip the state. Grey States are "Swing States" and start closer to the center as they could easily be won by either party. Some cards may impact one or two states, while others can impact all of the states in one or two color zones. Choose the cards you play, the cards you discard and the places you campaign very carefully. Winning the most states isn't as important as winning the most Electoral College votes. However, a small state close to the center *may* be a better target than a larger state that is further away.

End of the Game:

When the final card at the bottom of the **DRAW PILE** is taken, each player has one more turn without drawing new cards. (This means your last four cards will not be played.) Then **1 EVENT CARD** is drawn from the top of the **EXTRA PILE** that was set aside at the beginning of the game. Once this event is over, players should calculate how many Electoral College votes they have on their side of the board and the player with the most votes wins. In the event of a tie, play one more **EVENT CARD** from the **EXTRA PILE** to find a winner and recount.

4-Player Variation:

Play "bridge style" with each player partnered with the person across the table from them (with opponents on either side between them). All Four players should be dealt **5** cards before creating the **DRAW PILE**. Think of your team as a candidate and a Super PAC, who can work toward the same goal, but cannot coordinate their efforts. Players cannot tell their partner what is in their hand, but they can discuss where to campaign and can pick a **VP CARD** together.

Variations:

FRONTRUNNER can be made longer or shorter by having more or fewer **STRATEGY** and **EVENT CARDS** in the **DRAW PILE**.

> *__REMEMBER__: The game should start with a multiple of **4 STRATEGY CARDS** in the **DRAW PILE**. The minimum recommended is **20 STRATEGY CARDS** and **3 EVENT CARDS**.

The basic version of **FRONTRUNNER** relies more heavily on strategy than luck. The more **EVENT CARDS** there are, the more random the game is. If you want more strategy in your game, don't include as many **EVENT CARDS**, but remember to always leave aside for the end of the game.

The game can be made easier or more difficult by varying how many cards are in a player's hand or how many are discarded and replaced at the end of each turn.

Extra Cards:

There are 4 blank cards included with this game. Come up with your own cards to make your copy of **FRONTRUNNER** unique!