GLADIATORES
Blood for Roses

FIGHT FOR FAME, GLORY AND THE ADORATION OF THE CROWD!

OVERVIEW

GLADIATORES puts you in control of a famous gladiator school (*ludus*) of the classical Roman era. Each player is hoping to gain the coveted keys to the colosseum in Rome by impressing Caesar and becoming the most glorious fighting school in the Roman Empire.

To do so, each player bids for the most famous gladiators in history. Securing these professional fighters will increase your school's prestige while also being a major public attraction during arena events.

Use your chosen gladiators skillfully in these combat events, providing a spectacle guaranteed to excite the roman crowds and gain your school the fame and glory it surely deserves!

Take care not to spend too much on these gladiators however. If they don't earn enough glory in return, your fame will dwindle in the eyes of Caesar and the keys to the colosseum will go to a rival ludus.

The game comprises of between III and V rounds, with each round having the following three stages:

I   BIDDING - where players each get to purchase a famous gladiator for the next event

II   COMBAT - the chosen gladiators fight for glory in a random arena event

III   WINNING - players claim their glory, determine the winner if this is the last round, or else reset game components ready for the next round.

To quickly get into the epic combats while skipping the other game concepts, just follow the Quickplay icon **I**

GAMEPLAY

- **EVENT SELECTION** Flip over the top event card to show rewards (**page 4**). Remove any excess crowd favour tokens above the total indicated on the event card from the supply and place them back into the box.

- **START PLAYER** The **winner** of the previous event takes the Active Player marker.

- **BIDDING** Gladiators available for purchase are revealed and players get to bid on them (**page 6**) until each player has chosen and paid for a single gladiator for the next event.

- **READY** Each player takes their purchased gladiator card, 14 combat cards, life point tokens and extra

- **GLADIATORS** crowd favour that the gladiator brings to the combat (**page 8**).

- **TURN ORDER** All players (starting with the Active Player) now takes a face down Turn Order marker, reveals it and places it in front of them. The player with **Turn Order 1** takes the active player marker and will initiate the next combat.

- **BETTING** Each player now has the option of placing a bet on any of the gladiators entering the combat including the player's own (**page 9**).

- **DECIDE** Each player chooses **one** of their tactics cards to use in this event and places it *face down*

- **TACTICS** near their Gladiator card. This tactics card can be revealed at any time during the event.

- **COMBAT** Arena combat is explained in detail on **pages 10 to 12**. Crowd favour is gained during the fight. Note that defeated gladiators get a bonus towards the next Bidding step (**see page 13**).

- **WINNING** The undefeated gladiator is declared the winner of the event. Rewards are now collected by all players (**page 14**) and placed on their wheel of glory (**page 15**).

- **VICTORY** If this is the final round, players count the victory points on their wheel of glory to determine the winner (**page 15**).

- **CLEANUP** If this is **not** the final round, game components are reset and gladiators return to the market ready for the next round (**see page 16**).

QUICKPLAY SETUP

I

1. Each player chooses a gladiator card (**see page 13**)
2. Take life point tokens as shown on the gladiator card
3. Draw 14 combat cards in total from the 3 combat decks
4. Take a random Turn Order marker each
5. Player with turn order 1 takes the Active Player marker
6. Player 1 begins combat! (**see pages 10-12** for how to fight)

**The winner is the last gladiator with life points remaining.**

GLADIATORS: Blood for Roses plays over 3, 4 or 5 rounds depending on the length of game required. The game will end either

i) at the end of a round where at least one player completes their wheel of glory or
ii) a set number of rounds decided at the start of the game.

Gladiatores can also be played as a single round 'quick' combat game. Players draw a random gladiator for the battle and skip the bidding step. All glory rewards are still gained as normal and converted into victory points to determine the winner.

Each round of the game is an arena event represented by an event card.

WINNER PRIZE REWARD

CROWD FAVOUR SUPPLY

2nd PRIZE REWARD

CROWD GLORY REWARDS
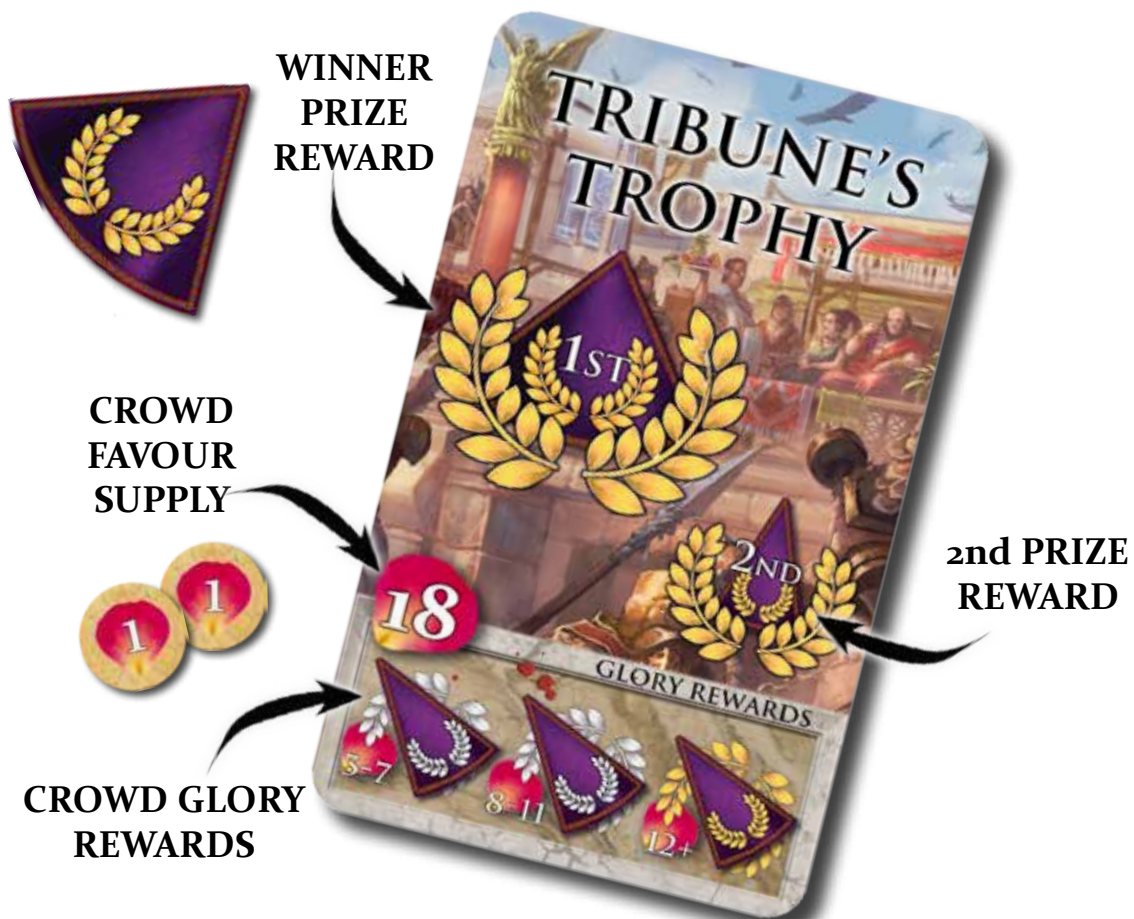
These events offer opportunities for player's schools to gain fame and glory by sending their gladiator into the arena to fight. These cards indicate the prize reward for winning as well as the glory gained from impressing the crowd (crowd favour).

Event cards are normally randomly drawn for each round. As a game variant, event cards can be drawn in advance of the game starting and laid out side by side (so players get to see which events (and their rewards!) will come in subsequent rounds).
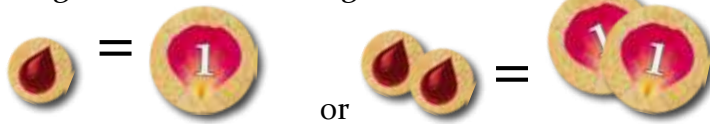
CROWD FAVOUR

Crowd favour tokens represent the glory gained from putting on a good show for the event organiser (the Editor) and the crowds who come to see the gladiators fight. Because the crowd has a limited size, the number of crowd favour tokens are also limited.

During an event, crowd favour can be gained from either

i) causing wounds to another gladiator

= or =

ii) defeating a gladiator - which gains an extra

iii) combat cards

iv) gladiator abilities

All crowd favour gained during an event comes from the event supply pool. When this supply has run out, the crowd has chosen their favourite gladiator and no more favour can be gained (except if using the variant rule below).

VARIANT RULE:
A gladiator that causes wounds can take crowd favour tokens (equal to the wounds caused) from the losing gladiator.

- = 1

All crowd tokens gained in an event must be fully converted into glory wreaths after each event and **cannot be saved** for later.

Each event card shows the glory rewards gained from converting crowd favour tokens into glory wreaths.

GLORY REWARDS

14

3
1 =

4-7   8-11   12+

5

SETUP: BIDDING

In the bidding step, the market will be filled with available gladiators. Players will then take turns to bid on these gladiators, or outbid each other to secure their chosen gladiator, so that each player will have a single gladiator to use in the next event.

The helmet icons above the bidding placements indicate which columns will be used depending on the number of players. So, column 3 will only be used in a 4-5 player game.

MARCUS ATTILIUS

I Reveal the top gladiator marker (currently face down) and place it with the name showing next to the 1st space of the market. Subsequent gladiators (equal to the number of players +1) are then revealed and placed similarly **above** the 1st.

II The player on the 1st marker position of the star player market board chooses which gladiator they will bid on and moves their marker to the *left-most* position of that gladiator's rank. [In this example, player 1 has chosen the gladiator at 2nd rank].

The other players in order now choose gladiators and can outbid another player (in 3+ player games) by placing their marker *to the right* of the previous bid. The outbid player must now immediately choose another option.

Positions left empty by a player who has had to move by being outbid, cannot be re-used in this bidding step by any player. This outbidding process continues until all players have chosen not to change their bid (have passed).

III The cost of the chosen gladiators must now be paid (by paying glory wreaths from player boards back to the supply). Players unable to pay the cost from their player boards must take an advance from the Bank Wheel by moving their marker up the scale by the amount owed.

BIDDING EXAMPLE:

Ludus Genua has bid for the gladiator in row 3 by taking the 1st space (bronze). Ludus Messana chooses to outbid Genua, taking the next available space (silver). Genua now has to immediately change their choice - and moves to the first gladiator space available in row 2 (bronze). Genua's previous space in row 3 is now no longer available to any player.
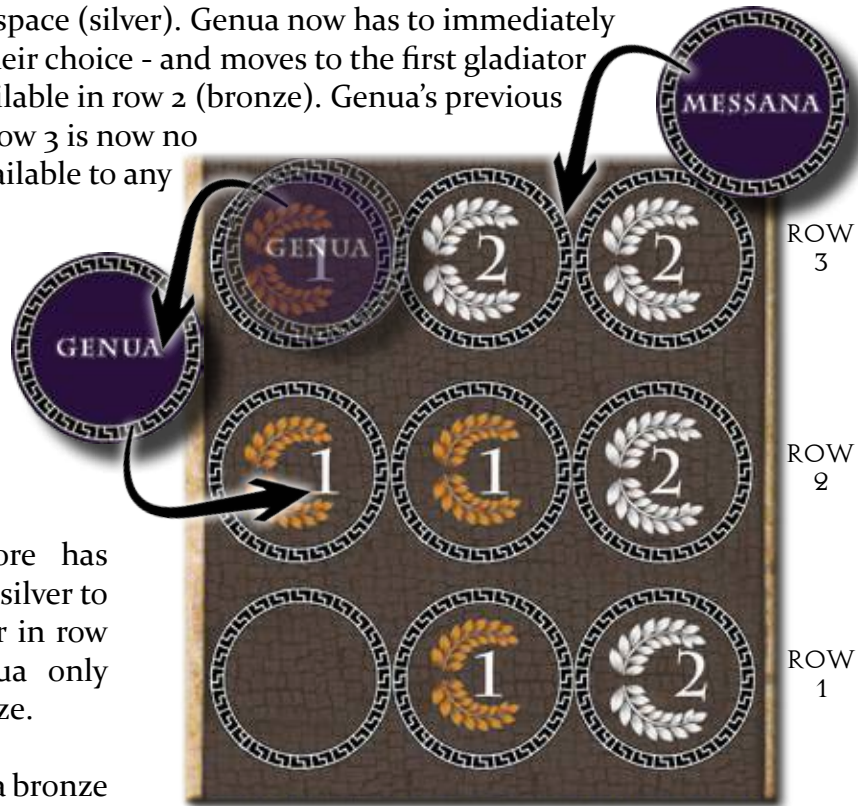
Messana therefore has to pay a cost of 2 silver to buy the gladiator in row 3 whereas Genua only has to pay 1 bronze.

Genua must pay a bronze glory wreath token into the supply and takes the gladiator card for the next event.

BANK WHEEL

Messana however realises that at the moment they only have a single bronze glory wreath (value 1) on their board. To pay the silver (2) required, Messana must borrow the extra glory as an **advance** from the Bank Wheel.

This advance counts against a player's victory points at the end of the game.

The Messana player moves their marker on to the 1 (Bronze) position on the Bank Wheel.

Note: If a player has somehow borrowed the maximum 6 points from the bank, they must use their own glory wreath tokens to pay for gladiators from now on.

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PLAY: READY GLADIATORS

Every player should now have successfully bid (and paid) for one of the gladiators available. Each player takes the corresponding set of 9 gladiator specific combat cards into hand, then draws **another 5 cards** of their choice from the 3 combat decks (total hand size of 14 cards).

Variant: Draw 9 cards each (total hand size 18 cards)

Players now take the number of life point tokens (from the supply)and extra crowd favour (*from the box, not from the event supply*)marked on their gladiator card.

Prior to the combat step, each player's board should look like this:

Any bonuses specific to a gladiator school are now also taken (e.g. extra crowd favour or combat cards).

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PLAY: BETTING

The Roman people liked to gamble on arena fights and wagered on the experience and confidence of the gladiators winning a combat. Turn order simulates both of these factors with the gladiator attacking first being the most confident.

A gladiator's turn order therefore also dictates the betting odds for that gladiator potentially winning a combat. Betting odds are shown at the top right of each gladiator character card.

Example: with turn order 4, this gladiator is worth a silver wreath to anyone who bets on her if she wins the combat.

*Players can only normally make **1 bet per combat event**.*

Skip the Betting step in a 2 player game !

Players choosing to gamble on the combat select one of their betting chips and place it *face down* near their board.

There is *no cost* to placing a bet.

*Once chosen, a player **cannot check** who they bet on! If you forget then too bad!*

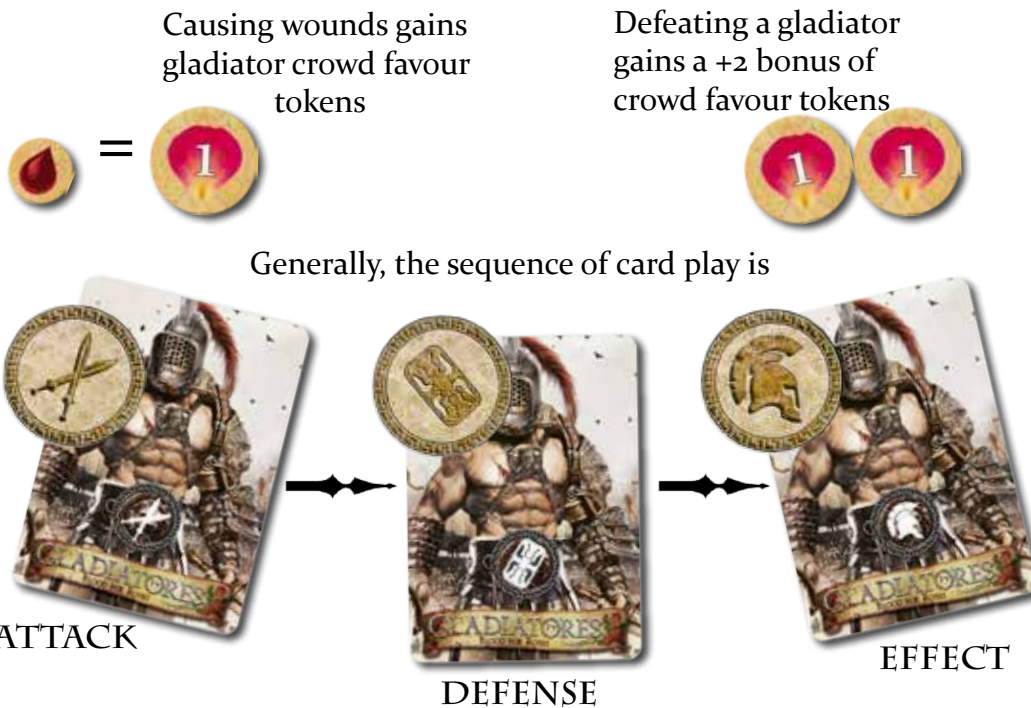For quickplay, players do not need to use the ludus player boards !

PLAY: COMBAT

Combat cards represent actions that can be chained into a sequence of moves and counter moves, in an attempt to cause a wound or impress the crowd. Cards also represent the stamina and endurance of the gladiator. A gladiator who uses up all of their cards will collapse onto the sand and be out of the fight!

All 14 cards (18 in 2 player games) are kept in hand and are available to be played at any moment by the player.

A gladiator targets a **single other gladiator** to receive an attack. *The other gladiators are not involved in this exchange.* Cards are played **on top of each other** so only the top card is showing (the currently *active* card).

Only the last card in an exchange gets to activate any trigger effects.

Causing wounds gains gladiator crowd favour tokens

Defeating a gladiator gains a +2 bonus of crowd favour tokens

Generally, the sequence of card play is

ATTACK

DEFENSE

EFFECT

Effect moves are often counter attacks or combat finishing moves because they cannot be countered (i.e. there are no card names in the orange banners). A careful gladiator will have a selection of all 3 types in their hand to start the combat.

I

Attacker plays a **CLEAVE** attack card

Defender counters the attack with a **PARRY** card

II

Attacker counters the Parry with a DISARM card

III

Play continues with each player playing a card in turn until one of them passes.

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COMBAT SEQUENCE

I In Turn Order, a player can either
- choose another gladiator to play an Attack card against,
- discard a card (see Discarding on **page 17**),
- or play an Effect card or gladiator ability marked with the ▲ symbol. If a player has no Attack cards in hand they ***must use the Discard action***!

II The target gladiator in response can then either
- choose to play a counter card (the possible BREAK cards are named on the orange banners of the current *active* card). This new card is placed on top of the previous card to show it is now the active card,
- play an applicable gladiator special ability (which ends the exchange),
- or can choose to pass

III The attacking gladiator can then choose to respond again by playing another counter card, gladiator ability if possible or must pass.

IV The defender can then choose to play another applicable card or ability against the newly played card, or must pass.

If either player passes, any trigger effects on the final 'active' card (on top of the pile of cards) is now actioned. Crowd favour tokens are gained immediately during combat.

All cards used in the exchange are moved to a discard pile.

The player whose gladiator has the next lowest Turn Order token takes the *Active Player marker,* then begins their turn at step 1 above.
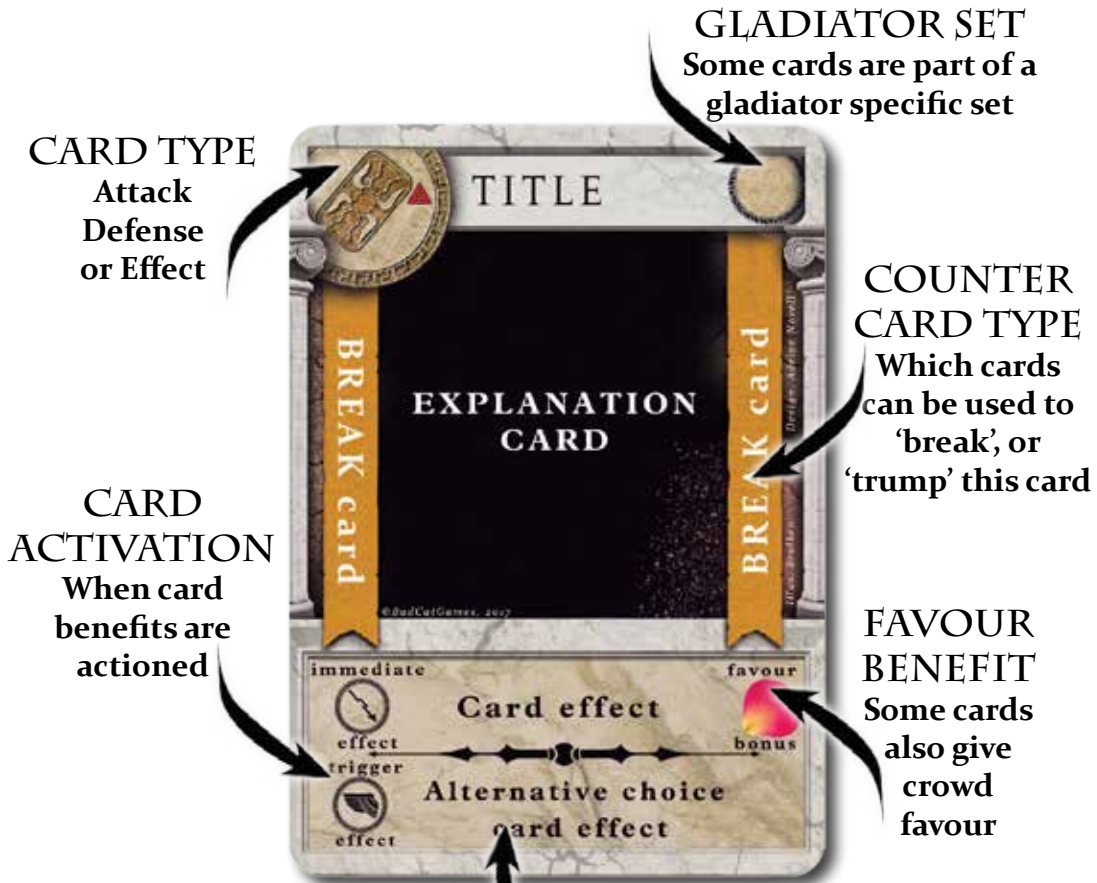
Combat continues until only one gladiator is left with life points or cards in hand.

Combat cards are explained in detail on the next page.

COMBAT CARDS

The combat cards represent specialised combat moves and counter moves. An experienced gladiator will be trained in all these techniques. As well as the 3 decks of available combat cards, each gladiator has their own unique set of these combat moves.

GLADIATOR SET
Some cards are part of a gladiator specific set

CARD TYPE
Attack
Defense
or Effect

TITLE

COUNTER CARD TYPE
Which cards can be used to 'break', or 'trump' this card

BREAK card

EXPLANATION CARD

BREAK card

CARD ACTIVATION
When card benefits are actioned

immediate

Card effect

favour

effect

trigger

bonus

FAVOUR BENEFIT
Some cards also give crowd favour

effect

Alternative choice card effect

Cards that have a ▲ symbol next to the title ▲ can be played in a gladiator's turn *instead of an Attack card.*

CARD EFFECTS
Cards can have 1 or more effects. The dividing line means an Either/Or option.

Gladiator specific combat cards have the gladiator's icon in the top right corner of the card

For speed of setup, store these special gladiator cards separately to the main combat cards (in their own deck) after use.

BLOCK

SHOVE

LEAP

You can play an ✗ card if possible

You may play a TAKEDOWN card if possible

GLADIATOR CARDS

Each gladiator in the game has a unique fighting style that is represented by their special ability (detailed on each gladiator character card) and their unique set of combat cards.

These special abilities are useable at any time the gladiator is **active** (that is, either being targeted by another gladiator or when it is that player's turn).

GLADIATOR ICON

GLADIATOR NAME

LUCIUS FELIX

STARTING LIFE POINTS

BETTING VALUES

1 - 2

3 - 4

5 - 6

STARTING BONUS CROWD FAVOUR

WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

SWORD & SHIELD
SPECIAL ABILITY - BACKSTAB

Play after target uses a BLOCK card. Target takes a 🩸 +1

Play as a STAGGER card and target must discard one card.

SPECIAL ABILITY

Special abilities are immediate effects. Flip the gladiator card over to show that an ability has been used. The ability refreshes (player turns the card back over to the front) *at the end of the player's NEXT turn.*

Special 'combat' abilities are treated as *combat finishing moves* that cannot be 'countered' by an opponent playing another card against them. A combat exchange always ends if a gladiator special ability is used.

A special ability with the 🔺 icon can be used in a player's turn instead of having to play an attack card or discarding.

> **I** For quickplay, players should ignore the special ability functions for the first couple of games.

The last gladiator to have either life points left or cards in hand is declared the winner of the event. The last gladiator to be defeated comes 2nd.

Gladiators who are defeated (lost all life points) or have run out of cards (exhausted) are out of the current fight.

*However, when this happens, the player can immediately place their ludus marker on the **lowest numbered available space** of the gladiator market board.*

Once combat is over, glory rewards gained from the event are now claimed by **all players** - even those who were defeated.

EVENT PRIZE
The winning gladiator gains the 1st prize wreath (large token) while the runner up (or last gladiator to be defeated) claims the 2nd prize (small token).

The winning gladiator also claims *all remaining crowd favour tokens* available in the event supply. If petals run out from this supply, no more can be taken.

All crowd favour is converted to glory wreath tokens and placed on a player's wheel of glory.

BETTING PRIZE

Any player that has bet on the winning gladiator now claims their glory reward based on the betting odds shown on that gladiator's card.

WHEEL OF GLORY

Glory wreath tokens gained during the game are placed on a player's Wheel of Glory. Only tokens on this board are worth victory points (VPs). A player cannot normally rearrange tokens on this board once placed.

The 1st Player to fill all spaces on their wheel gains a game end bonus of 8VPs. The 2nd Player to do so gains 6VPs.

Note: A player can swap tokens on the wheel if they have more glory tokens than available spaces; for example removing two small bronze wreaths (1VP each) to place a large silver (5VPs) wreath. Swapped glory wreath tokens must be discarded back into the supply. Spare tokens cannot be stored anywhere else but on the wheel of glory.

VARIANT RULE

Glory Wheel Function

Wheels also have various functions that can be immediately used when a token is placed over them. Most affect the next event. Any crowd favour gained from these functions is kept ready for the next event.

Once covered and used, a function is no longer available - even if the player swaps glory tokens.

PLAY: VICTORY

Glory wreath tokens gained during the game are converted into VPs at the end of the game.

The bank wheel shows the VP value of each glory token. Any debt owed from advances taken from the bank reduce a player's total VP score (e.g. here ludus Aemilius owes 5VPs to the bank).

The player with the most VPs wins the game.

If players are tied, the player with the most gold wreaths, then silver wreaths wins.

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RESET: CLEANUP

If playing more than 1 round of the game, a cleanup phase is required so that game components are reset ready for the next event.

To reset the game ready for the next round:

- Discard all remaining cards in hand to the discard pile. Remove the gladiator specific cards back into their . All other Attack, Defense and Effects cards go back into their relevant decks. Reshuffle each combat deck.

- Discard all used Tactics cards (and the old Event card) back into the game box. They will not be available for the rest of the game.

- Return used gladiator character cards to the centre of the table. Reshuffle the gladiator (scroll) markers and place in a pile face down as before.

- [If used] Return sponsor cards back into their sets and reshuffle each set.

- Each player refreshes their starting Crowd Favour tokens (3) placing all others into the general supply and resets their starting life points to 4.

- Players keep their glory wreath tokens (VPs) on their wheel of glory.

- Players are now ready to begin the next Event with the player *who won the last event* taking the Active Player marker.

Now that you've had some fun with just the combat, you are ready for the challenge of taking one of the famous gladiator schools all the way to Rome, to impress Caesar at the infamous Colosseum!

I

ADDITIONAL RULES

DISCARDING CARDS

An alternative option in a player's turn is to discard a card to redraw a card from any deck. This happens most often when a **gladiator has no more attack cards** in hand and must draw one ready for their next turn.

The crowd will not be happy with this delaying, so the player must pay *a **penalty of one favour token*** (if they have any) everytime they discard a card in this way.
If they have no favour tokens they can still discard a card with no further penalty.

EXHAUSTION

Players must carefully manage their hand of cards in each combat. Running out of cards means their gladiator has collapsed from exhaustion and is out of the fight. The player will keep all crowd favour tokens gained during the combat however.

Exhausted gladiators cannot be targeted by gladiators still fighting!

An exhausted gladiator could still win 2nd place if they are the last gladiator to fall.

2 PLAYER GAMES

Two player games are played exactly like the normal (or quick rules) game, with 3+ events but with 18 combat cards for each player.

Ignore the betting option. If using the Sponsor cards, all these cards are shuffled together and each player is dealt 1 card randomly before each event.

Changes for the 2 player variant are marked with this icon.

FAQ

Can you explain how the BASH card works? Sure! The BASH card is a bit more complicated than normal combat cards; because it has two options (above and below the divider line). The immediate effect *above* the line is a weak bash that gives the using player a quick bonus **but it does not have an effect on the target**. Therefore the target player does not need to play a card in response (since the *bottom* effect option will never occur (the dividing line is an either/or option). If the player playing the BASH chooses to activate the *bottom* effect option, the opponent can then play cards as normal to try and counter the BASH.

What happens if the Combat card decks run out? There *should* be enough combat cards so this will not happen, but if it does just sort the discard pile by card types and refill the combat card decks. (Players with gladiators already defeated could help sort these to speed up this process if it looks likely to happen).

If I choose the 'Draw 1 card' option on the BASH card, does my target still have to play a card in response (since the wound effect will never happen because of the either/or divider)? No. You need to choose an effect option when you play the BASH so your target knows whether they need to react or not.

Why can't I re-use the same Tactics card? You can with this variant rule as long as all players agree in advance.

What happens if I've borrowed the maximum glory from the bank wheel and have no glory wreath tokens as well? In the extremely unlikely event this happens, you cannot bid on gladiators but can take a gladiator remaining in the market for free - after all players have chosen and bought theirs.

If I bid a gold wreath (cost 3) but don't have a gold wreath token on my player board, can I pay with lesser tokens? Yes, for example you could pay with a silver (2) and a bronze (1).

Where does extra crowd favour come from? During an event, the total amount of crowd favour tokens (the crowd size) is limited by the value shown on the event card. When taking extra crowd favour (e.g. shown on a gladiator card) the tokens *must come from the general supply,* not from the event supply.

The following page shows a detailed example of combat card and counter-card interaction. It also shows how a gladiator's special abilities can be used.

- The *Active Player* is the 1st **Attacker** and targets a single gladiator - playing a STRIKE card.

- The options for the **Defender** are to play a PARRY, DODGE or BLOCK card. The Defender plays a PARRY card. The 🩸 on the STRIKE card therefore never happens.

- The **Attacker** can counter the PARRY by playing a DISARM or GRAB card. The attacker cannot play (or chooses not to play) either card. The trigger effect then happens and the **Defender** chooses to counter-attack!

- The player (playing Kalendio) chooses a THRUST card hoping to return some damage or forcing the other player to possibly play a BLOCK - so Kalendio can use his special ability.

- The active player needs to respond with either a DODGE or a BLOCK card but realises the Entangle trap being laid. Luckily the player (playing Astyanax) has a DODGE card and plays it. He draws a card as an immediate action.

- The counter card options for a DODGE card is a FEINT. The KALENDIO player has a FEINT so plays it.

- The FEINT card is perhaps the most complicated card in the deck. Essentially the ASTYANAX player has to play another DODGE card now otherwise the FEINT cancels out the DODGE card (already played) and the previous card (THRUST) is successful.

- The THRUST will do 🩸 because KALENDIO uses a Trident, and ASTYANAX has no more DODGE cards so decides to use his 2nd special ability (flipping his card over and taking a 🪙 from the crowd pool for using his special ability. Special abilities are combat finishers so the exchange of cards stops here.

SPECIAL ABILITY - AGILITY

Draw 1 card from any deck. Then discard any 1 card from hand.

Play as a DODGE card but discard one card. +1

CREDITS

For hints, strategies and news on exciting expansions, contact the helpdesk for injured gladiators at

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