

Pocket Samurai

Overview:

Pocket Samurai is a hybrid drafting / simultaneous card revealing game. An entire playthrough is composed of two Dojo Phases and the Bushido Phase. The Dojo Phase allows players to acquire cards, while the Bushido Phase is where players use these cards to determine a winner. Only victory will restore your honor!

Objective:

The objective of the game is to strike and have more swords than your opponent has helms. This allows you to overcome their defenses and win the battle.

Setup:

- Give each player a Strike! card to make up their hand.
- Shuffle the bushido deck and place it in the central play area.
- The first player is the last person to wield a blade. Buttering bread counts!

CARDinal rule:

If these rules and the rules on cards conflict, the cards always take precedent.

Dojo Phase:

In this phase, lay out ten cards from the bushido deck face up. Starting with the first player, each player takes turns picking a card of their choice from the face up cards and putting it with their Strike! card. Leave your drafted cards visible to the other player during this phase so you both know what is in your opponent's hand. When there are two cards left to pick in the center, discard them and start the next Dojo Phase. In the second Dojo Phase, reverse player order. After the second Dojo Phase is completed, pick up all cards, including the strike card, so that they are hidden from your opponent. This will form their hand for the next round.



Bushido Phase:

The Bushido Phase is comprised of multiple turns. A turn constitutes the following:

- Each player lays a single card from their hand face down.
 - Both players simultaneously reveal their card.
 - They then resolve the effects of the cards. Cards flipped stay out for the remainder of the game unless a card ability specifies they do not. Strike! cards never stay in play. Once a Strike! card is played, make sure the opponent's card does not interact with the Strike! card.
- Strike! cards resolve as follows:
- If swords are in excess of the opponents helms, the striker wins.
 - If swords are equal to or less than the opponents helms, the striker does not win.
 - Whenever the striker does not win after playing a Strike! card, they return the Strike! card to their hand.

Strike! Cards:

Strike! cards laid into play by card abilities take effect at the same time as Strike! cards that were flipped over. If both players simultaneously play a Strike! card and the game is not resolved, continue play. If this happens three times in a row, the round ends in a mutual defeat. If you only have the Strike! card in your hand, you will be forced to strike for the remaining turns. The Strike! card returns to your hand every turn and resolve last in event order. The Strike! card never goes to the exhaust pile.

Mutual Defeat:

If both players use Strike! cards that surpass their opponent's shields on the same turn, the game ends in a draw.

Iconography:



Swords symbolize your strength and will determine if you are able to overcome your opponent's defenses.



Helms are a representation of your defenses and will determine if you can withstand your opponent's attacks.



Aggression represents your strength and force of action.



Wisdom represents your battlefield awareness and strategy.



Agility represents your reflexes and mobility.

Swords and Helms:

Swords and helms will be matched with the opposite symbol of your opponent when a Strike! card is resolved. To hit your opponent, you will need more swords than their helms to successfully strike them.

Some cards let you choose or have variable symbols with each option in different corners. When cards have symbols chosen by rules written on the card, they will explain when the card is turned to either side. After flipping cards, turn the symbols the card produces to face the opponent so they can track your symbols. If both players put into play a card letting them choose symbols, no symbols are gained by either card.

Cards whose sides are decided by their abilities do not cancel out each other or cards that give a choice.

Abilities:

Some cards have abilities detailed below their name. Unless stated otherwise, abilities take effect immediately and only upon being flipped up. Some abilities are common and will be detailed in the following list. Flip abilities always occur first. Cards put into play from hand do so face up and their flip abilities do not trigger. Other cards flip abilities do not target them.

Flip Abilities:

Defeats: If a card with the symbol specified by the defeat ability is flipped up by the opponent the same turn this card is flipped, they must move it to their exhaust pile and the defeated card's abilities cannot be used. If two cards would defeat each other, they are both defeated with none of their other abilities taking effect.

Loses to: A card that says lose is defeated if the opponent plays the denoted card type on the turn you play that card.

Non-Flip Abilities:

Exhaust: Players may exhaust cards with the exhaust ability to gain their effects. You may only exhaust a card when a Strike! card has been played by either player. When a card is exhausted, it is immediately removed from your play area and placed in your exhaust pile. You immediately lose any symbols from the top of the exhausted card. A Strike! will allow both players to activate any number of exhaust abilities in a turn. You do not exhaust cards from your hand. You may not exhaust the Strike! card.

Ongoing: These abilities stay in effect if their card remains in play.

Choose: When cards have this keyword, you choose which symbol the card produces after the flip. Cards are turned with that symbol facing their opponent so they can keep track of it. If two cards with the Choose ability are put into play on the same turn, neither produces symbols. Choose takes place after the flip and if put into play from other cards.

Best of Three Variation:

The game is played best two out of three successful strikes. After a successful strike is made, take all your cards, and put them back into your hand. A mutual defeat counts as a successful strike for both players.