




# Foreword

Welcome to the Salt & Bones rulebook! We hope you enjoy.

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**Launching May 26, 2020**

Brought to you by The Pen & Dragon

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Strategy Deck and Cards

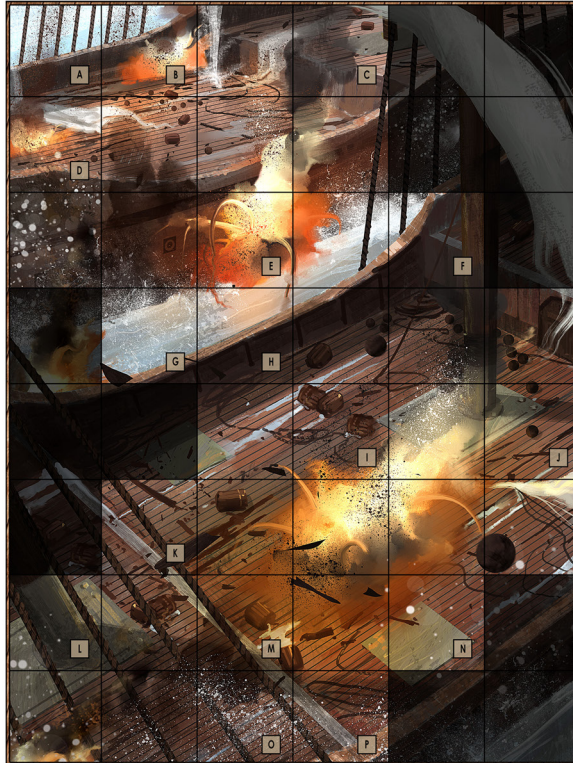
# 1. Game Setup

Player Board

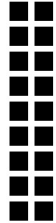


Health Marker →

Field Board →



Field Markers



Attack Deck



Strategy Deck



Field Deck



Momentum Token

Health Marker →



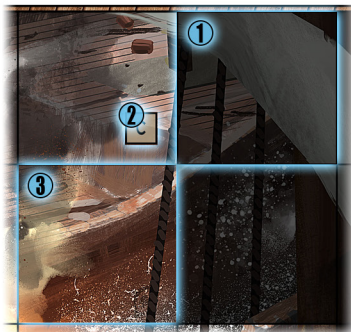
Player Board

# 1.1 Anatomy of Components

## Your Field Board

- ① Grey tiles are unplayable at all times
- ② Playable tiles destructible by Field Deck (use Field Markers to keep track)
- ③ Regular playable tiles

Field Board



## Your Player Board

- ④ Player Health bar (use a Health Marker to keep track)
- ⑤ Slots for Strategy Cards
- ⑥ Type of Strategy Card fitting this slot  
**INSTINCT** **EQUIPMENT** **GAMBIT**
- ⑦ Cards are placed either revealed (face-up) or hidden (face-down)

Player Board



## Your Cards

- ⑧ Card rarity (number of copies in deck)
- ⑨ Quick reference guide
- ⑩ Attack Value
- ⑪ Opportunity Value
- ⑫ Bonus Effect (if any)
- ⑬ Card name
- ⑭ Strategy Card type indicator  
**INSTINCT** **EQUIPMENT** **GAMBIT**
- ⑮ Card activation condition (if any) and effect
- ⑯ Lore (most effective when read in combat)

Attack Card



Strategy Card



## 2. Gameplay Loop

Salt & Bones is played in a series of rounds, each with the following 4 phases looping back to the beginning. Repeat each round in this order until one player wins.



### Field Phase

Your playing area is reduced as the Field Deck destroys the Field Board.

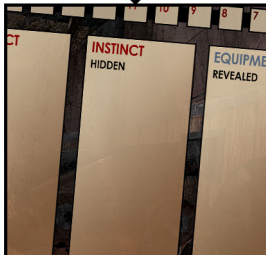
*Smoke, fire, and the smell of gunpowder: the deck crumbles around you.*



### Draw Phase

Players fill their hand by drafting cards from the Attack and Strategy Decks.

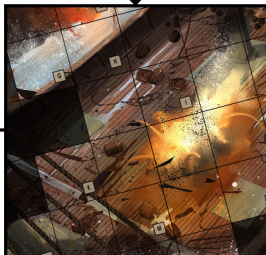
*Will they be careful or will they be reckless?  
Will you spring their trap...or will they yours?*



### Preparation Phase

Players prepare for battle by placing Strategy Cards onto their individual Player Boards.

*Prepare your tricks now; you won't get a chance to in the heat of it.*



### Combat Phase

Players go into combat against each other, using their Attack and Strategy Cards.

*Every step calculated, ever trap laid...  
Time to see who had the better Plan B.*

### 3. Basic Gameplay

Here is a quick walkthrough of the basic gameplay of Salt & Bones. Use these instructions to get a game started with just the basics!

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**Note:** Both players start the game at 20 Health, marked on your Player Boards using the Health Markers (red cubes).

1. Decide which player starts with Momentum, and give them the Momentum Token.

#### Field Phase

2. Flip the top card of the Field Deck and use the Field Markers (black cubes) to mark the now unplayable tile(s) on the Field Board.

#### Draw Phase

3. Starting with the player with Momentum, take turns drawing from the Attack and Strategy Decks to a hand of 7 cards.

#### Preparation Phase

4. The player with Momentum places Strategy Cards to their Player Board first.

5. The other player places Strategy Cards to their Player Board.


#### Combat Phase

**Note:** Gambit Cards on either Player Board will affect both players for the entire duration of this phase.

6. The player with Momentum plays the first Attack Card to the Field Board in any of the 4 centre tiles.

The Attack Value ~~xx~~ is shown on the card, and is the damage done to the other player's Health.

**7.** The other player then plays an Attack Card to the Field Board, placed adjacent to the existing Attack Card on only playable tiles.

If the Attack Value of this card is placed with the arrows lined up with the Opportunity Value  of the existing card, the values are added together to become the total damage done to Health.

**Note:** All Attack Cards from now will be placed adjacent to any existing card on the board. Opportunity Values will increase Attack Values to do more damage to Health.

**8.** Take turns playing Attack Cards until either player disengages.

Strategy Cards from the Player Boards can be played at any time for their effect.

**9.** Either player can disengage at the start of their turn, before playing an Attack Card. This ends combat immediately.

**10.** Discard all Attack Cards from the Field Board.

Do not discard unused Strategy Cards from the Player Boards or the Field Markers from the Field Board.

**11.** If the player disengaging had Momentum, give the Momentum Token to the other player. If not, the player with Momentum keeps it.

**12.** Repeat from Step 2 until either player wins.

**Note:** You win when your opponent's Health is at 0 at the end of combat.

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These are the basic gameplay instructions. But Salt & Bones is a strategy game of careful planning and preparation, so there's more!

As soon as you're ready, move onto the next section, Detailed Gameplay.

## 4. Detailed Gameplay

Salt & Bones is played in a series of rounds, each containing 4 phases: **Field**, **Draw**, **Preparation**, and **Combat**. After the last phase (combat), a new round starts from the first phase (field).



Players start at 20 Health at the beginning of the game, tracked on the individual Player Boards using Health Markers (red cubes). Health will be reduced during the Combat Phase as players take damage, and cannot be replenished in any way.



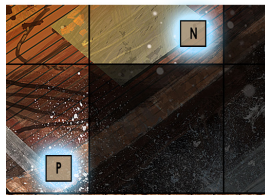
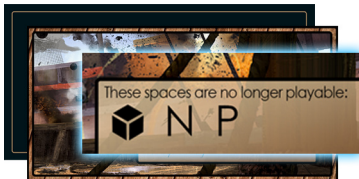
At the start of the game, decide which player begins with Momentum, and give them the Momentum Token.

### 4.1 Field Phase

During this phase, the playable area is reduced as the Field Deck destroys the Field Board.



Flip the top card of the Field Deck and use the Field Markers (black cubes) to mark the corresponding tiles on the Field Board - these tiles are now destroyed.



Destroyed tiles become unplayable, and players can no longer play Attack Cards onto them. Destroyed tiles are permanent for the remainder of the game.



## 4.2 Draw Phase

During this phase, players will fill their hand with cards from the Attack and Strategy Decks.



At the start of the phase, before drawing any cards, players can discard a single card from their existing hand. Cards from the Player Board cannot be discarded this way, only cards from your existing hand.

Starting with the player with Momentum, take turns drawing a card until both players are holding 7 cards in their hand. Once one player's hand is at 7 cards, the other player continues to draw until their hand is also at 7.

Cards can be drawn from the Attack and Strategy Decks in any order to make a hand of 7. These will be used in the next phases, so plan your strategy and draw accordingly.

If either the Attack or Strategy Decks run out of cards while drawing, finish drawing to a hand of 7 using the remaining deck. This will be the last round of the game.

## 4.3 Preparation Phase

During this phase, players are preparing for battle by placing Strategy Cards to their Player Boards.



All Strategy Cards you want to play during combat must be placed onto your Player Board now. You can only play Strategy Cards during combat from your Player Board, not from your hand.

The player with Momentum fills out their board first, followed by the other player.

Strategy Cards come in 3 types, marked on each card front:

**INSTINCT** **EQUIPMENT** **GAMBIT**

These can be placed only in their corresponding slots on the Player Board: 3 **INSTINCT** Cards hidden (face-down), 2 **EQUIPMENT** Cards revealed (face-up), and 1 **GAMBIT** Card revealed (face-up).



**INSTINCT** Cards are hidden from your opponent, and are meant to amplify your strategy or disrupt your opponent's.

These will be triggered either automatically or by you during the Combat Phase.



**EQUIPMENT** Cards are visible to your opponent and are used to gain early advantage during combat.

These will be triggered automatically during the Combat Phase.



**GAMBIT** Cards are visible to your opponent and are gamechanging modifiers during combat.

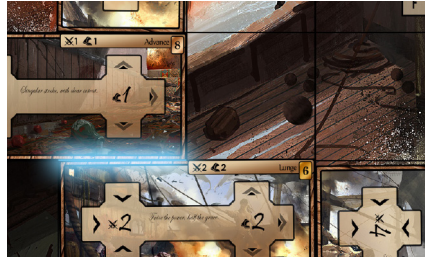
These are in effect for both players for the entire duration of the Combat Phase.

If the corresponding slots on your Player Board are full, or if you do not want to place Strategy Cards to them, you can leave cards in your hand for the next round's Preparation Phase. You cannot play Strategy Cards directly from your hand during the Combat Phase.

## 4.4 Combat Phase

During this phase, players will go into combat using Attack and Strategy Cards.

The player with Momentum plays the first Attack Card to the Field Board. This first card must be placed on at least 1 of the 4 centre tiles of the board.



From here, take turns to play 1 Attack Card to the board. You must play an Attack Card on your turn, or you will disengage. Attack Cards can be played only on unoccupied playable tiles of the board, placed adjacent in any orientation to any existing card.

### 4.4.1 Damage

Each Attack Card contains an Attack Value and an Opportunity Value. Some cards will have an additional Bonus Effect. All Attack Cards can still be played for the Attack and Opportunity Values even when the Bonus Effect is not applicable.



**Attack Value**  $\times$ : base damage you will deal to your opponent.

**Opportunity Value**  $\curvearrowright$ : increases Attack Values to deal more damage; can be used by either player.

Attack Values placed next to one or more Opportunity Values, with the arrows lined up, will deal increased damage. The new damage total is the Attack Value + the Opportunity Value(s).

Your opponent's Health is reduced by this damage amount.



## 4.4.2 Chain Cards

Each turn, you can play only 1 Attack Card to the board, unless you have Momentum and an Attack Card with the Bonus Effect of Chain in your hand.



Chain cards are marked with a Chain symbol on the card front. These cards are playable immediately after another Attack Card on your turn, if you have Momentum. Otherwise, play these as regular Attack Cards without a Bonus Effect.

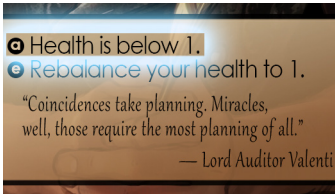


Most Attack Cards can have a Chain card played immediately after, unless its Bonus Effect states “stops chain” on the card front. Cards with this Bonus Effect cannot have a Chain card played after.

Chain cards are placed the same way as other Attack Cards on the Field Board - on unoccupied playable tiles adjacent to another card.

## 4.4.3 Playing Strategy Cards

Strategy Cards from your Player Board are played at any time, whether or not it's your turn in combat.



Some **INSTINCT** Cards and all **EQUIPMENT** Cards have an activation condition - if this is met, the card is automatically triggered and must be played. You cannot choose to not play this card.

All other **INSTINCT** Cards without an activation condition can be played at any time, whether or not it's your turn in combat.

**GAMBIT** Cards affect both players and are in effect throughout the entire Combat Phase.

When an **INSTINCT** or **EQUIPMENT** Card is played, it is discarded.

#### 4.4.4 End of Combat

The Combat Phase ends when a player successfully disengages, which can happen in two ways:

1. You choose to disengage by not playing an Attack Card from your hand on your turn.
2. You are forced to disengage because you do not have any Attack Cards, or because a Bonus Effect of an Attack Card is applicable.

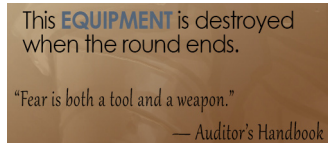


Disengaging happens at the start of your turn, and you cannot play any other card after you disengage. You cannot disengage if you've played an Attack Card on your turn already.

If your disengage is successful, the Combat Phase ends immediately. Your disengage will not be successful if the **GAMBIT** *Test of Courage* is in play - in this case, your opponent receives an additional turn before you disengage successfully. During this additional turn, you can play Strategy Cards as normal.

Disengaging is the only way to change who has Momentum. If you are disengaging and you had Momentum, give the Momentum Token to your opponent.

At the end of combat, discard all Attack Cards played to the Field Board. Discard all **GAMBIT** Cards from the Player Boards, as well as any **EQUIPMENT** Cards that are marked "destroyed when the round ends".



All other unplayed Strategy Cards on the Player Board will remain for the next round.

The destroyed tiles on the Field Board are permanent throughout the game and will not be removed.

## 5. How To Win

Win conditions are checked only at the end of combat, after the Combat Phase has ended with a disengage. If any of these conditions are triggered during the round, keep playing until the end of combat.

During the Draw phase, if either the Attack or Strategy Deck are drawn out, continue drawing to a hand of 7 using the remaining deck, and play the remainder of the round as normal. However, this will be the last round of the game.

During the Combat Phase, if either or both players are at 0 Health, continue playing until a successful disengage occurs.

### Winning The Game

If your opponent is at 0 Health and you still have Health remaining...

**YOU ARE THE WINNER!**

*Is there anything more definitive than walking off the battlefield alone?*

### Second Wind

If both you and your opponent are at 0 Health, both players rebalance their Health to 1 and begin another round.

*If neither have the will left to continue, the best course of action is to regroup and try again.*

### Exhaustion

If either the Attack or Strategy Deck was drawn out this round and there is no winner by the end of combat, the game will end in a draw.

*Sometimes there are no winners, just a name to remember for another day.*

# 6. Glossary

## Activation Rules

Some **INSTINCT** Cards and all **EQUIPMENT** Cards have an activation condition, which are rules on how to play this card.

- Opponent disengages from combat.
- Choose a player to discard their hand.

The ○ is the activation condition, if any. The ○ is the effect details. (Attack Cards with Bonus Effects also have this symbol, used in the same way.)

If the card has an activation condition, it can only be played when that condition is met. You also cannot choose to not play the card once the activation is met, even if the effect will not occur. This is the case of the **EQUIPMENT** *Bracer* still triggering without its effect occurring and being discarded when the **GAMBIT** *Test of Pain* is in play.

## Attack Deck / Attack Cards

The Attack Deck is how you will primarily damage your opponent.




Attack Cards are played to the Field Board during the combat phase, on any 2 playable tiles. You must play 1 Attack Card on each of your turns during the phase, or you will be disengaging from combat.

Attack Cards contain an Attack Value ~~1~~ and an Opportunity Value ~~1~~, and some contain an additional Bonus Effect. See related Glossary entries for more details.

All Attack Cards can be played on your turn, even if the Bonus Effect is not applicable.

## Attack Value

Marked on the front of each Attack Card, by the sword icon  and the arrows inward.



This value is the base damage you will do to your opponent with this card.


The arrows inward signify that this value can be increased by adjacent Opportunity Values if the arrows are lined up.

The new damage value will be the Attack Value + adjacent Opportunity Value(s).

## Bonus Effects

Some Attack Cards have an additional Bonus Effect. If applicable, these effects occur in addition to the base Attack and Opportunity Values of the card. If not applicable, these Attack Cards can still be played for the base Attack and Opportunity Values.

## Card Negation

The Strategy Cards *Condescend* (**INSTINCT**) and *Test of Will* (**GAMBIT**) both negate Chain and **INSTINCT** Cards. When negated, card effects  (Bonus Effects for Chain cards) will not apply.

Chain cards can only be negated if it is played as part of a chain. If you play a Chain card as a normal Attack Card with no Bonus Effect, it cannot be negated this way.

**INSTINCT** Cards can only be negated if they are actively played, not while they are still hidden (face-down) on the Player Board.

For *Condescend*, this card will be played by you against a specific Chain or **INSTINCT** card your opponent attempts to play. When a card is negated this way, it is discarded.

For *Test of Will*, all Chain and **INSTINCT** cards are negated during the entire Combat Phase. Any Chain or **INSTINCT** cards played will be negated and discarded.



## Chain

Some Attack Cards have the Bonus Effect of Chain. Players with Momentum can play this Chain card immediately after another Attack Card on the same turn.



Most Attack Cards can have a Chain card played after, including Chain cards themselves - you can play multiple Chain cards in succession, if you have Momentum. The only exception is Attack Cards with the Bonus Effect marked “stops chain”. These cards cannot have a Chain card played immediately after.

To utilize the Chain Bonus Effect, you must have Momentum. Then:

1. Play a regular Attack Card that does not have the Bonus Effect of “stops chain”.
2. Play an Attack Card with the Chain Bonus Effect following usual placement rules - on unoccupied playable tiles adjacent to another card.

## Damage Instances (Deal)

When damage is dealt via an Attack or **EQUIPMENT** Card, a damage instance is created. Instances are used to determine damage increases and negations.

Each Attack Card creates a single damage instance with its Attack Value, including damage increases from adjacent Opportunity Value(s). The Attack Card *Flourish* creates 2 additional damage instances with its Bonus Effect for a total of 3 damage instances, requiring 3 damage negate cards to fully block.

The **EQUIPMENT** *Razor Oil* creates a single damage instance in addition to the damage instance from the Attack Card you just played.

Opportunity Values of Attack Cards can only increase Attack Values when the arrows are lined up. They do not increase other damage instances (such as the 2 additional damage instances of *Flourish*).

The **GAMBIT** *Test of Skill* increases all damage instances instead of creating a separate damage instance.

The **INSTINCT** *Anticipation* and the **EQUIPMENT** *Bracer* are damage negate cards that negate a single damage instance from lowering your health. The **GAMBIT** *Test of Pain* disallows these cards from negating damage during the Combat Phase it's played in.

## Damage Negation

There are several cards that use the mechanic of negating damage - these cards prevent a damage instance from lowering your Health.

The **EQUIPMENT** *Bracer* automatically blocks the first damage instance taken. You cannot choose when to play it.

The **INSTINCT** *Anticipation* is played by choice against a single damage instance. You can choose which damage instance to negate.

If you play an Attack Card that creates a single damage instance and your opponent has 2 of the **EQUIPMENT** *Bracer* on their Player Board, the first *Bracer* will be activated to negate the damage and will be discarded. Because this damage instance was negated, if there is no other damage instance, the second *Bracer* will not be activated.

In this same scenario, if the **GAMBIT** *Test of Pain* is in effect or if you play the **INSTINCT** *Overwhelm*, then the first *Bracer* will be activated but cannot successfully negate the damage. Using the same damage instance, the second *Bracer* will be activated and will also be unsuccessful in negating the damage. Both *Bracers* are still discarded.

## Disengage

A disengage happens in two ways:

1. You choose to disengage by not playing an Attack Card from your hand on your turn.
2. You are forced to disengage because you do not have any Attack Cards, or because a Bonus Effect of an Attack Card is applicable.

Disengaging happens at the start of your turn, and you cannot play any other card after you disengage. You cannot disengage if you've played an Attack Card on your turn already.

If your disengage is successful, the Combat Phase ends immediately. Your disengage will not be successful if the **GAMBIT** *Test of Courage* is in play - in this case, your opponent receives an additional turn before you disengage successfully. During this additional turn, you can play Strategy Cards as normal.

## Equipment Cards

**EQUIPMENT** Cards are placed revealed (face-up) on your Player Board and are used to gain early advantage during the Combat Phase.

All **EQUIPMENT** Cards have activation conditions that will be triggered automatically during combat. Once triggered, they are discarded.

At the end of the Combat Phase, leave any unplayed **EQUIPMENT** Cards on your Player Board, unless it states “destroyed when the round ends”.

## Exhaustion

If during the Draw Phase, either the Attack or Strategy Decks were drawn out, the game is in its last round. If there is no winner by the end of the Combat Phase, the game ends in a draw.

## Field Deck and Cards

The Field Deck is how the Field Board is destroyed every round.



During the Field Phase, the drawn Field Card shows which tiles are to be destroyed. These destroyed tiles become unplayable.

Destroyed tiles are permanent and will stay destroyed for the duration of the game.

## Gambit Cards

**GAMBIT** Cards are placed revealed (face-up) on your Player Board and are gamechanging modifiers during the Combat Phase.

**GAMBIT** Cards affect both players for the entire duration of the Combat Phase, and cannot be negated in any way.

At the end of the Combat Phase, discard the **GAMBIT** Card from your Player Board.

## Health

Players start at 20 Health at the beginning of the game, tracked on the individual Player Boards using Health Markers (red cubes). Health will be reduced during the Combat Phase as players take damage, and cannot be replenished in any way.

## Instinct Cards

**INSTINCT** Cards are placed hidden (face-down) on your Player Board and are meant to amplify your strategy or disrupt your opponent's during the Combat Phase.

These can be triggered either automatically if there is an activation condition, or manually by you during the Combat Phase. Once played, they are discarded.

At the end of the Combat Phase, any unplayed **INSTINCT** Cards on your Player Board should be left to carry over to the next round.

## Momentum

*Momentum is everything in Salt & Bones.*

Momentum determines which player goes first whenever there is a turn order, signified by the Momentum Token.




Momentum also allows you to use the Attack Card Bonus Effect of Chain, if you have Momentum during the Combat Phase.

At the beginning of the game, decide which player starts with Momentum. Do not do this at any other time except for the beginning of the game.

At the end of the Combat Phase, if the player that is disengaging has Momentum, give the Momentum Token to the other player. If the disengaging player does not have Momentum, do nothing with the Momentum Token.

This is the only way for Momentum to change players during the game.

### Opportunity Value

Marked on the front of each Attack Card, by the boot icon  and the arrows outward.



This value represents the opportunities you create with each attack, and can be used by either player when attacking.

The arrows outward signify that this value will increase adjacent Attack Values if the arrows line up.

The new damage value will be the Attack Value + adjacent Opportunity Value(s).

### Parry

Some Attack Cards have a Bonus Effect related to Parry. This mechanic is activated by the card *Advance Into Parry* and used by the card *Lunge/Riposte*.

The Bonus Effect of *Advance Into Parry* is activated automatically, and Parry is now active for your next turn.



If you play *Lunge/Riposte* while Parry is active, the additional Bonus Effect of the card is activated. If you play this card while Parry is not active, this is a normal Attack Card with no Bonus Effect.

You cannot use your opponent's Parry.

## Second Wind

At the end of the Combat Phase, if you and your opponent are at 0 Health, both players rebalance their Health to 1 and begin another round.

In order to win the game, you must be above 0 Health at the end of the Combat Phase while your opponent is at 0 Health.

## Strategy Deck and Cards

The Strategy Deck contains additional tools to take into combat.



Strategy Cards come in 3 types, marked on each card front - **INSTINCT**, **EQUIPMENT**, and **GAMBIT**. See related Glossary entries for more details.

All Strategy Cards you want to play in combat must be placed onto your Player Board during the Preparation Phase. You cannot play Strategy Cards from your hand during combat.