

Swords & Skull

RULEBOOK



THE GOAL

Each turn, you roll dice and choose one of your figures (your Officer or your Pirate) to move clockwise around the island. Both gain Might and earn Wealth for you until one of them is ready to enter the Lair of the

Pirate King. Once there, you can either buy back a stolen Royal Navy ship or take it back by force. If your Officer or Pirate is the first to recover the stolen ship, you win the game.

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The nefarious Pirate King has stolen Her Majesty's Ship, the Sea Hammer, the pride of the Royal Navy. Furious, the Queen has offered a great reward to the person who can retrieve it. As one of the advisors to the Queen, you have chosen an officer of the Royal Navy to pursue the Pirate King. Of course, it might take a thief to catch a thief, so you've also conscripted a vicious pirate from the Queen's dungeons.

Now they are preparing to enter the dreaded Lair of the Pirate King. Will one of them be the first to recover the Sea Hammer? Or will one of your rivals receive the Queen's reward instead?

SETUP

- Put the game board on the table.
- Put 1 gold piece (1 Gold) on each of the 4 Treasure Chest spaces. Put the rest of the gold pieces in a pile next to the board; that pile is called the Bank.
- Shuffle the Enemy deck, then put it face down next to the game board. Do the same with the Fortune and Item decks.
- Count the number of players. Remove from the game any Crew cards that have a number on the back greater than the number of players. (For example, if you're playing a four-player game, you would remove each card with a "5" on its back. If you're playing a three-player game, remove cards with a "4" or "5.")



- Put the remaining Crew cards on the table in separate face-up piles. You'll need one pile for each type of Crew card. (When you're done, you'll have ten face-up piles.)
- Each player chooses a color and takes the player card, Pirate figure, and Officer figure for that color.
- Each player takes 10 Gold and puts those gold pieces on his or her player card.
- Line up all the players' Pirate figures on the Pirate Ship space and all the Officer figures on the Navy Ship space.
- Decide who will play first.

PLAYING THE GAME

Play proceeds clockwise, starting with the first player. During your turn, do the following in order:

1. Roll the dice and move one of your figures (see Movement).
2. Encounter the space it lands on (see Encountering Spaces).
3. If another player has a figure on that space, your Officer or Pirate fights it (see Combat).
4. Pass the dice to the player on your left.

MOVEMENT

Roll both dice. Unless you roll doubles or double blanks, choose either your Officer or your Pirate and move it a number of spaces equal to the total rolled. Figures move clockwise around the board. If you roll a blank and another number, treat the blank as a 0. After you move, you encounter the space your figure lands on.

Doubles: If you roll doubles (except for double blanks), you must move **both** your Pirate and your Officer the **total** rolled. After you move them, you must choose which one encounters a space first. Once you've chosen, resolve that encounter completely (drawing Fortune cards and performing actions for that figure, if necessary) before the other figure encounters its space.

Double Blanks: If you roll double blanks, pick up your Officer or your Pirate and put it on any unoccupied outer path space along the edge of the board. (It's okay to move off the volcano path or Lake of Fire with double blanks, but you can't move onto the volcano path, onto the Lake of Fire, or onto the Lair of the Pirate King.)

Paths: The spaces around the outside of the board are on the "outer path." The spaces in the middle of the board are on the "volcano path."

Volcano Path

The only entrance to the volcano path is through a Cave space that's nestled between the Docks and Fort Rock. When you land on that Cave space, you can

decide whether to continue moving clockwise or move onto the volcano path.

Example: *If your Pirate is on the Castle and you roll a 3, you could move onto the volcano path and land on the Idol, or you could continue on the outer path and land on the Docks.*



The volcano path exit is on the opposite side of the board. When exiting the volcano path, continue moving clockwise around the board as usual.

Thieves' Den

The Thieves' Den has two exits. When moving through or out of the Thieves' Den, you choose to either continue on the volcano path or enter the Lake of Fire.

Lake of Fire

When you enter the Lake of Fire, your movement stops there, regardless of what you rolled. You can

only exit the Lake of Fire by moving forward onto the Lair of the Pirate King on your next turn, rolling double blanks, or playing a Local Guide card.

If you roll doubles (except double blanks) while one of your figures is on the Lake of Fire, you move it onto the Lair of the Pirate King (and move your other figure normally). If both of your figures are on the Lake of Fire when this happens, they both move onto the Lair of the Pirate King.

Ships

You can't move onto the Navy Ship or the Pirate Ship unless forced there by a game effect. When your Officer or Pirate is told to return to its Ship, return that figure to the appropriate Ship. The Officer returns to the Navy Ship, and the Pirate returns to the Pirate Ship.

Each Ship is only one space, and it connects at the appropriate Dock space. You don't encounter other players' figures when you're sent back to a Ship.

ENCOUNTERING SPACES

Most spaces tell you what to do when you land there. When you encounter a space, follow its instructions. Some spaces have additional rules, which are detailed below.

Cave

Flip over the top card of the Enemy deck and fight the Enemy depicted on the card (see Combat).

Trading Post

Here are the **auction rules**: Flip over the top card of the Item deck. The player to your left starts by bidding any amount of Gold he or she has (at least 1 Gold) or passing. In clockwise order, each player gets one chance to bid higher or pass. You have the last bid. Whoever bid the most buys the Item from the Bank for the amount of the bid.

The Auction card uses these same rules.

Settlements

The game board has five settlements: Clearwater, Rum Reef, Mercenary Camp, Smugglers' Cove, and Fort Rock. When your figure lands on a space for a settlement, you encounter that settlement. Encountering a settlement works the same regardless of which space your figure has landed on.

When you encounter a settlement:

- Choose one of the Crew cards available (if any) for that settlement and take it for free.
- Then look to see if other players have Crew cards for that settlement. If a Crew card for that settlement has 1 or more Gold symbols, you'll need to pay that amount of Gold to the player who has that card.

Example: *Your figure lands on Clearwater. Jack has one Clearwater Crew card with a Gold symbol on it, and Sarah has two Clearwater Crew cards with Gold symbols on them. You pay 1 Gold to Jack and 2 Gold to Sarah.*



Treasure Chest

When you land on a Treasure Chest that doesn't have Gold on it, you still restock the other Treasure Chests.

Bridge of Tears

Encountering this space has no effect if you're the player with the most Crew cards or Gold. If no player has more than 2 Gold, take all Gold from the player with the most Gold.

Lava Tubes

When you roll 1 die for landing on the Lava Tubes, if you roll a blank, your figure doesn't move.

Thieves' Den

When you're sent here by the Lake of Fire or Lair of the Pirate King, you must roll to see how much Gold you pay before you fight any opponents' pieces on the Thieves' Den.

Lair of the Pirate King

For a further explanation of the combat it in this example, see Combat.

Example: *You land here with your Pirate. It has Might 12, and you have 5 Gold. You roll the die and get a 3. There are a total of*

4 players in the game, so you look at a result of 7 on the chart to see how much Gold the Pirate King demands for return of the Sea Hammer. The amount is 45 Gold, which you can't pay.

Since you can't pay, your Pirate must fight the Pirate King. The player to your left rolls a die and gets a 1. When added to the Pirate King's Might of 10, that's a combat result of 11. You roll and get a blank, so the Pirate King automatically wins! Your Pirate is sent to the Thieves' Den.

COMBAT

Combat occurs when you land on:

- a Cave or Smoky Cave (where you would fight an Enemy),
- the Lake of Fire,
- the Lair of the Pirate King, or
- a space containing any number of other players' figures.

Basic rules of combat

When your figure is in combat, you roll a die and add the Might value of your Officer or Pirate to the total. Your opponent does the same. The highest total wins. If there's a tie, the attacker wins.

If you roll a blank in combat, you automatically lose. If you both roll blanks, both players reroll.

Might

Each Officer and Pirate starts with a Might of 0. As you play the game, you'll pick up cards that add to the Might of your Officer or Pirate.



Pirate Might symbol



Officer Might symbol

Whenever you need to know the Might of your Pirate or Officer, count up all the appropriate symbols on the Item, Crew, and Fortune cards in front of you.

Example: *You have 2 Clearwater Crew cards. Each one has an Officer symbol. You also have a Cutlass Item card with two Officer symbols. Your Officer's Might is 4.*



Enemies

To determine the Might of an Enemy, count up the number of Crew cards you have. Then look at the chart on the Enemy card. The chart also lists your reward for winning against that Enemy. The player to your left rolls for the Enemy. You win ties.



Other Players' Figures

After your figure encounters a space, it fights any other Officers and Pirates on the space that belong to other players. If there are multiple figures on the space, you choose the order your figure fights them. The fight uses the basic rules of combat, but with a few additional rules.

Benefits of winning: If your figure wins in combat against another player's figure, you can take 2 Gold from that player. If that player has more Crew cards than you do, you can instead choose one of his or her Crew cards and take it.

(If you choose to take 2 Gold from someone who has less than 2 Gold, that player goes Bankrupt; see below.)

Keep the Peace, Lucky Blow, Quick Thinking: Three Fortune cards can affect combat, if either player has them. Keep the Peace can be played before you roll for combat; the other two can be played after you roll (before you apply the results of the roll).

When either player wants to play one of these cards, use this rule: Before you roll, the attacker chooses whether to play a Fortune card or pass. Then the opposing player chooses whether to play one or pass. When both players pass in order, no more Fortune cards may be played. After you roll, both players go through the same sequence.

BANKRUPTCY

You go Bankrupt if you owe more Gold to another player, the Bank, or the Treasure Trove than you can pay. When you go Bankrupt, you must sell Item cards to the Bank until you have enough Gold to pay what you owe. If you sell all your Items and still can't pay the full amount, the Bank covers the rest of your expenses, but your figure is sent back to its Ship. Items that you sell are discarded.

You can't go Bankrupt to buy Items or pay the Pirate King; you must have enough Gold "on hand" for your purchases.

CARDS

If you run out of cards in the Enemy, Fortune, or Item deck, shuffle the discarded cards to create a new deck.



Enemy cards

To find the Might of an Enemy you're fighting, count up the number of Crew cards you have, then look at the chart on the Enemy card. The chart also lists the reward you receive if you win that fight.



Fortune cards

Each Fortune card tells you in *italicized* text when you can play it. Under that text, it tells you the result of playing the card. Unless a card says to play it immediately, put it in your hand and keep it secret.

If you draw 2 Fortune cards at the same time and both of them say "play immediately," you choose the order in which you play them.

Item cards

Whenever you get an Item card, put that card in front of you face up.

Any Item card that gives a bonus to Might is a "weapon." Each player is limited to a total of 4 weapons—2 Pirate weapons and 2 Officer weapons (since a figure only has two hands). If you acquire a weapon you can't use because you're at your limit, you must sell a weapon of the appropriate type to the Bank for its sell cost. Items that you sell are discarded.

There are only two other times when you can sell an Item: when you're about to go Bankrupt, or when someone plays a Bandit's Bargain card and buys a weapon from you.

Crew

Whenever you get a Crew card, put it in front of you face up. The bonus you receive from that Crew card depends on the symbols on it.



Each Pirate Might symbol adds 1 to the Might of your Pirate.



Each Officer Might symbol adds 1 to the Might of your Officer.



Each Gold symbol helps you earn more Wealth.

WINNING THE GAME

When a player's Officer or Pirate lands on the Lair of the Pirate King, and that player either pays the appropriate amount of Gold to the Pirate King or wins against him in combat, that player wins the game.

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