

GLADIATORS

Player's Manual



Welcome to the arena!

Gladiators is a game for 2-4 players, where you duke it out with your friends to become the last one standing! Use your brawn, wits, and finesse to outfight and eliminate all your opponents in this card game inspired by the 52-card poker deck.

Game Contents:

13 Speed cards



13 Attack cards



13 Defense cards



13 Health cards



4 Wound Tracker cards



4 Battle Guide cards



I ♠ Setting Up

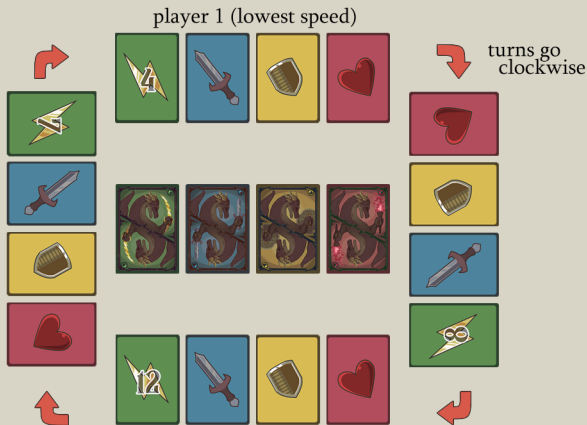
- 1 ♦ Separate the cards by their traits (Speed, Attack, Defense, and Health) into four decks. Shuffle them and place them face-down in the center of the play area.
- 2 ♦ Each player should flip one card from each trait deck face-up in front of them, in a row. At any point during the game, the topmost card on each of a player's trait piles represents their power value for that trait. (The only exception is when you have a triple among those cards—see “Special Combinations” section). Cards under that are considered History; treat them as discarded cards. Players should decide before starting the game whether viewing History cards is permitted.

These cards in front of the player are their traits, which constantly change throughout the game. Think of the traits as the player's character stats. Try to keep the order of these cards in the same order as the decks in the center (from your point of view), so that it is easy for each player to tell which trait is what during gameplay.

Recommended Setup:



3 ♦ The player with the lowest Speed power goes first. Turns proceed clockwise.



4 ♦ Starting with the first player, each player should draw a number of trait cards into their hand. This number is equal to the total number of players. (For example: when there are 2 players, draw 2 cards, and when there are 4 players, draw 4 cards). Cards in your hand don't count for your trait power, but you may play them to replace and change your trait power during the game.

Keep in mind that throughout the game, players may only hold up to 1 card of each trait in their hand. At this point, if there are fewer than 4 players in total, players should draw cards from the trait decks of their choice. Otherwise, draw 1 card from each trait deck. Keep your hand hidden from the other player(s) throughout the game.

Tip: Draw cards of the traits that are weakest for you.

5 ♦ Finally, each player should take a Wound Tracker card and a Battle Guide card. Place the Battle Guide card on top of the Wound Tracker card. Throughout the game, as you take damage, slide the Battle Guide card down to reveal and keep track of the amount of damage you have taken.

As a bonus, the Battle Guide card will be right there to remind you of the actions and moves you can make.



II ♥ Gameplay

Players take turns to take an action, starting with the first player, proceeding clockwise (as established during setup). You must take one action during your turn.

At the beginning of your turn, before you take any actions, you may choose to play a card from your hand. To play a card, place it on the corresponding trait in front of you, replacing it and changing its power value.

Tip: it is not always beneficial to do this.

playing a card from your hand
(before your action or in response)



When taking your action, you must tell the other players what action you are planning to take, to which they may make a response. To respond, the player should place a card from their hand onto the corresponding trait in front of them, replacing it and changing its power value.

(see graphic above)

Tip: it is also not always beneficial to make a response.

Response can be made in clockwise order, beginning with the next player (regardless of what action the current player is making). In order to facilitate faster gameplay and prevent unwanted stalling, instead of waiting for each player to declare whether they wish to respond, players who wish to respond should speak up to make a response.

The following are the actions you may take (starting on the next page):

Action - Focus

To Focus is to flip a trait card from the center onto your own trait pile, replacing it and changing its power value.

- 1 ♦ First, tell the other players which trait you wish to Focus.
Other players may choose to make a response at this point.
After other players have chosen to make a response (if any),
Focus the trait you chose.
- 2 ♦ If there are no more cards in the trait deck, Restock it by taking all the cards from each player's history (all the cards under the top card) for that trait and shuffling them back into the trait deck.



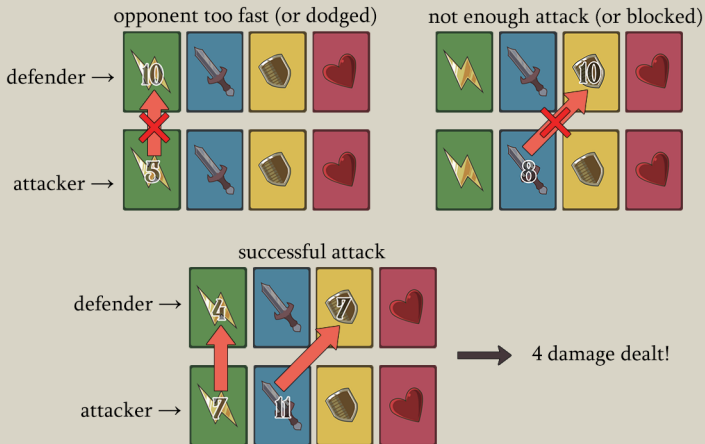
if last card, reshuffle



Action - Attack

To Attack is to attempt to deal damage to an opponent. In order to Attack an opponent, your Speed trait must be higher or equal in power to the opponent's Speed trait, and your Attack trait must be greater than the opponent's Defense trait.

- 1 ♦ First, tell the other players whom you wish to Attack. Other players may choose to make a response at this point.
- 2 ♦ If the opponent you targeted has a higher Speed trait than you after responding, they dodge the attack and don't take any damage. Likewise, if that opponent's Defense trait is now equal to or greater than your Attack trait, they block the attack and don't take any damage.
- 3 ♦ Otherwise, the opponent takes damage equal to the difference between your Attack trait and their Defense trait.



When you get attacked and take damage, reveal more wounds on your Wound Tracker card to show the total amount of damage you have accumulated. After taking damage from an attack, if the number of your wounds are the same as or more than your Health trait, you are eliminated from the game!



Note: If you replace your Health trait either by Focusing or by placing a Health trait card from your hand, and your wounds number equal to or more than your new Health trait, you are not eliminated. However, any successful attack later on (in which you take 1 or more damage) will eliminate you.



Action - Gambit

To perform a Gambit is to sacrifice a pair among your traits to transfer one of those traits to another player, replacing their corresponding trait card and changing its power value. This may be done whether you wish to weaken or strengthen the other player.

- 1 ♦ First, tell the other players whom you wish to perform a Gambit on, which pair you are going to use, and which trait you wish to transfer. Other players may choose to make a response at this point.
- 2 ♦ Perform the Gambit, placing your trait card on the target player's slot for that trait, then Focus the two traits which formed your pair, replacing them and changing their power value.



3 ♦ Finally, draw a card from the center into your hand. Remember that you may only hold 1 card of each trait in your hand. If you already have 1 card of each trait in your hand, do not draw a card.



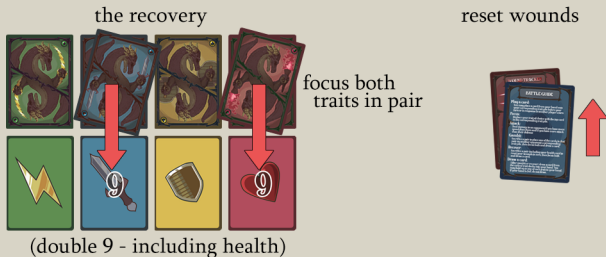
Tip: While any pair may be part of a triple, it is generally not beneficial to perform a Gambit in that scenario. (see Special Combinations section below).

Tip: You may want to place a card down from your hand at the beginning of your turn (before officially taking an action) to form a pair to use in a Gambit.

Action - Recover

To Recover is to sacrifice a pair among your traits, which must include your Health trait, in order to heal your wounds and reduce your damage to nothing.

- 1 ♦ First, tell the other players that you wish to recover. Other players may choose to make a response at this point.
- 2 ♦ Cover all wounds on your Wound Tracker card to indicate that you are now healed and have no more wounds, then Focus the two traits which formed your pair (including your Health trait), replacing them and changing their power value.



- 3 ♦ Finally, draw a card from the center into your hand. Remember that you may only hold 1 card of each trait in your hand. If you already have 1 card of each trait in your hand, do not draw a card.

Once you have made one of these actions, your turn ends, and it is the next player's turn.

III ♣ Special Combinations

Onslaught - If you have a triple among your trait cards, the matching 3 cards become as strong as a 14 without actually being 14. This is true even when setting up and determining which player has the lowest speed trait. If this triple is broken (by an opponent's Gambit, by your own Gambit, or even by Focusing or playing a card from your hand), your trait cards no longer have this bonus.



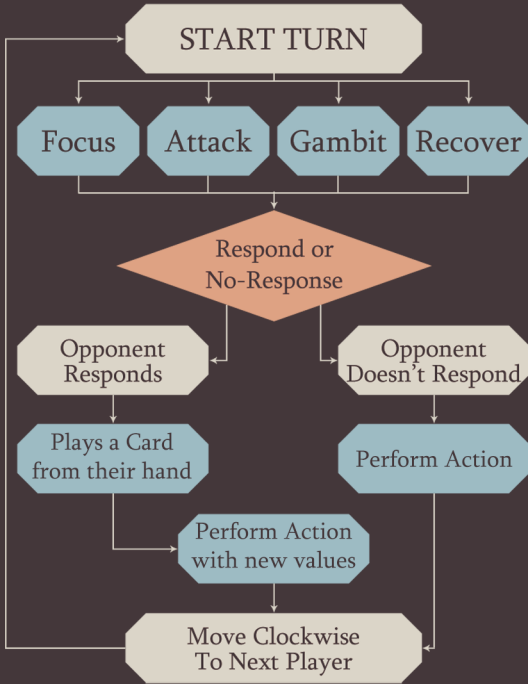
Victory - You win the game instantly if all four of your trait cards have the same number (quadruple) at any time during the game. Victory is considered even when players make a response to an action, such as an Attack or a Gambit. In cases where multiple people are able to respond with a quadruple, the first person to do so (in respect to turn order) achieves Victory first.



IV ♠ Glossary of Terms

- Trait Cards:** Cards representing Speed, Attack, Defense, and Health. Each trait card has an associated power value (number).
- Trait Deck:** Stack of trait cards (separated by trait), placed face-down, from which players Focus and draw.
- Trait Piles:** A player's trait cards, placed face-up in front of them (including their history). Also referred to simply as a player's traits.
- Restock:** When a trait deck runs out of cards (from Focusing), take all the cards in the players' histories and shuffle them back into the trait deck.
- Focus:** The action of flipping a card from the trait deck onto your trait pile.
- Attack:** The action of dealing damage to your opponent. You may attack if the chosen opponent's Speed is equal to or less than yours, and if their Defense is less than your Attack.
- Gambit:** The action of sacrificing a pair to place one of your trait cards (in that pair) on a player's trait pile. You may do this whether it is detrimental or beneficial to them.
- Onslaught:** When you have a triple among your traits, the power values for those traits are considered 14.
- Victory:** When you have a quadruple among your traits, you win the game immediately.
- Recover:** The action of healing by removing all your wound(s). In order to Recover, you must have at least a pair among your trait piles which includes your Health.
- Wound(s):** These indicate the damage you have taken from opponents' attacks. Having wounds equal to or more than your health when you take damage indicates your elimination and loss.

V ♥ Turn Flow



We salute you, o Gladiator! May Victory be with you!