Blade Chronicles Game Manual

Version: 1.00

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Introduction

Blade Chronicles is a tactical dueling game for 2 players that plays in 20-30 minutes. Each player only need their unique deck to engage in a series of dramatic clashes using swords, sorcery, and cunning. What makes the game unique is its reverse plan mechanic - players start by playing their final blow, then work backwards to establish the sequence of events leading up to it. Once the clash is planned, it resolves chronologically from start to finish. Victory requires careful management of resources and the ability to outmaneuver your opponent through clever timing and strategic play.

Setup

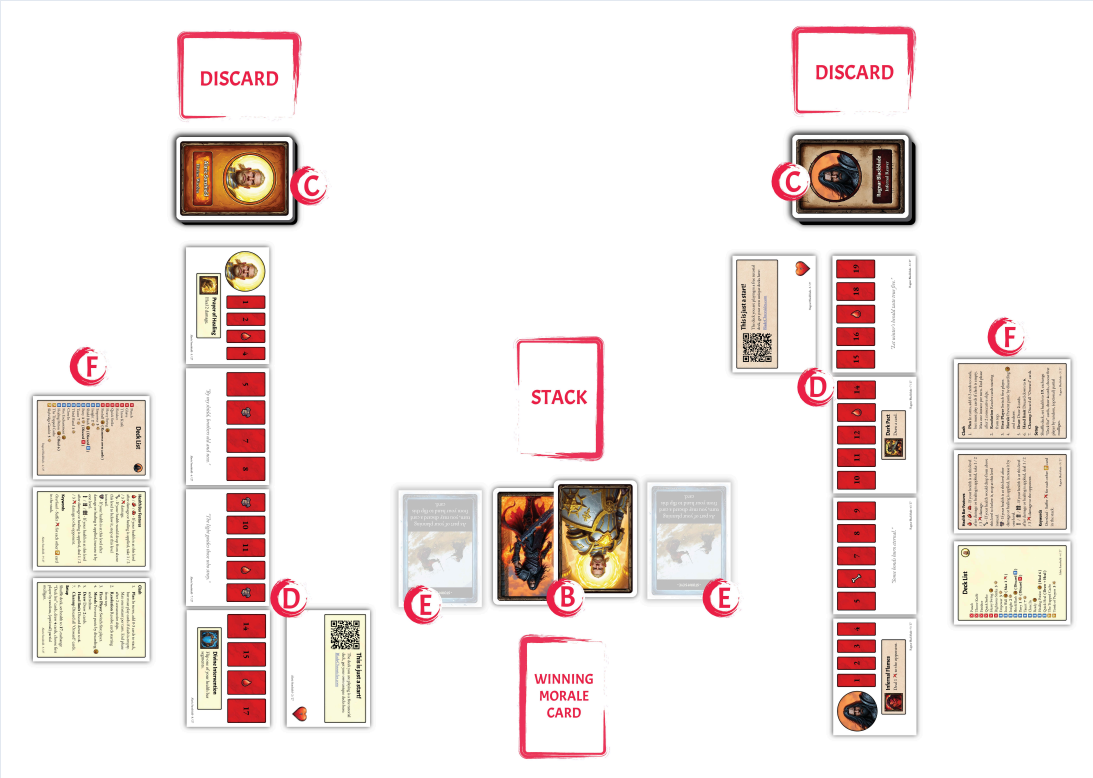


Diagram showing steps B to F of the setup.

A. **Prepare components**

Each player needs their own unique deck. Take your deck out of its game box to begin.

B. **Randomly choose first player**

Place the two character cards depicting each player hero in the middle of the table, randomly choose which one overlaps the other. The player whose card is on top is the first player. As show below, one card should be visibly on the left and the other on the right.



C. **Shuffle decks**

Each player takes the cards which share a common card back, shuffle them and place them in a face down pile in order to form their deck. Note that the cards you discard during the game will be placed to the side of your deck.

Note that you can setup your deck, discard pile and reserve on the right side of your health bar as well.

D. **Health bars**

Place the health bar segments in a line with consecutively increasing numbers, those form the health bar. Each player takes their health marker card and puts it above their health bar. With the arrow pointing to the maximum value on their health bar.

E. **Status cards**

Players place status cards near their character cards (if any). The initial side that is face up, should be the one with dots before and after the name of the card.

F. **Helper cards**

Players exchange one of their „Deck List" cards with the opponent and place the received card along with their remaining helper cards in front of them for easy access.

G. **Draw 4 cards**

Each player draws 4 cards from their deck and places them in their hand, those cards are hidden from their enemy.



If there is any divergence from the usual 4 cards drawn, it's marked on the back of the „Deck List" card.

H. **(Optional) Partial Mulligan**

If you are not happy with the cards you have in your hand, you can discard any of them and then redraw the same ammount. Do not play with this rule if any of the players is playing for the first time.

Review the back of the „Deck List" card for any additional deck specific setup steps, and make sure that they are performed.

You can now start the game.

Clashes

A single game consists of series of rounds called clashes. Repeat them until someone wins. A clash, consists of 7 stages, perform them one after another:

1. Plan
2. Resolution
3. First Player
4. Morale
5. Draw
6. Hand limit
7. Cleanup

1. Plan

During the Plan stage, players take alternating turns planning their moves. The first player goes first, followed by their opponent.

Those turns are called *planning turns*.

You may add 1 to 3 cards to the stack per turn, resolving each card's *Instant:* effects before adding the next card.

Note, that added cards are not immediately resolved, most of them won't have an *instant* ability. Instead, they form a clash stack, with each subsequent card placed on top of the previous ones. Cards will be resolved in the descending order. So in our example *Parry* would resolve first, as part of it's resolution it would discard the *Quick Strike*, and then *Taunt* will be resolved.

There are 3 basic types of action cards, ⚔ attack cards, ♜ tactics cards and ? event cards those are added to the clash stack. In normal circumstances, player can only add cards on top of the clash stack.

When adding event cards to the stack, you may notice that most of them have the *Overload* keyword as an *Instant* effect. If they do, and you are adding such event to the stack, suffer ⚔⚔ (damage) if there is another ? event card in the stack.





Instead of adding cards to a stack, a player can activate one player abilitity during a planning turn.



Player abilities are the boxes on health bar cards, they are located on some of the cards below the actual health bar, they trigger some effect at the cost of flipping that health bar piece. They can only be activated as a planning turn.

You must do one of these actions: play at least one card or activate at least one action for it to count as a planning turn. If you do neither, you are *skipping* your turn instead.

If both players *skip* their turns in sequence, this stage ends. However, if you *skip* your turn and your opponent does not, you still get to do your turns until both players *skip* consecutively.

If the clash stack is empty, you can not skip your turn, unless you have no cards in your hand.

Note: Note that a skipped turn does not count as a planning turn, if a character decides not to skip a turn and perform a normal turn, and some effect relies on the decision of that player whenever they skip or not, the effect related to that is applied prior to the actual character's turn.

2. Resolution

During this stage, players resolve the effects of the cards they played during the previous stage. Each card in the clash stack is resolved one by one, from top to bottom, but only apply effects that start with *Resolve:* or *Onward:* keyword.

The *Resolve:* effect is applied as part of resolving that card.

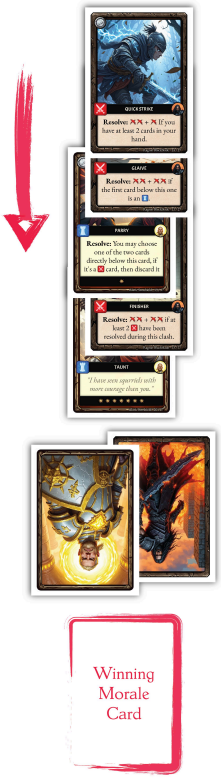
The *Onward:* effect is in effect until the card is discarded, set it next to the clash stack.

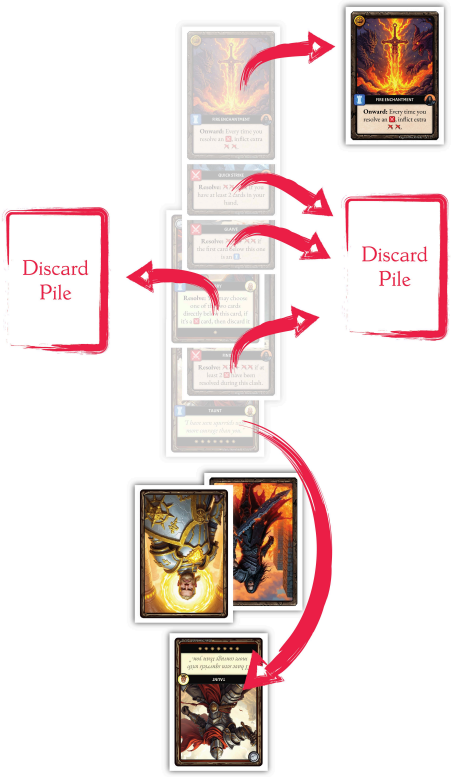
If a card does not have a resolve or an Onward effect, it's still considered to be resolved.

Morale is checked after resolving each card. A card's morale value is shown by ✸ icons at its bottom. Compare this value to the current winning morale card. If no winning morale card exists, or if the new card's morale value is higher, the new card becomes the winning card. Discard the previous winning card, unless it has an *Onward* effect - in this case, set it aside.

After resolving a card, keep it if its Onward effect is active or it is the current winning morale card. Otherwise, discard it. Note that it's sometimes useful to keep discarded cards around the clash stack to easily track effects, but they are still considered to be discarded.

This stage ends when all cards in the clash stack have been resolved.





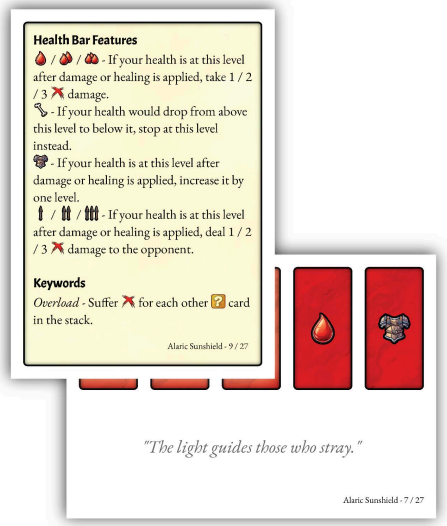
Damage & Healing

If a card instructs the player to deal damage, the player reduces their opponent's health by the specified amount. If a card instructs the player to suffer damage, they reduce their own health instead. All damage that is applied during a card resolution, is considered to be applied at the same time.

If multiple cards modify the damage output of a given card resolution, the person dealing the damage chooses the order in which those modifiers are applied. Example of such modifiers: double the damage, add 2 damage, a player would probably add 2 damage and double it. Note that applying the damage to the health bar happens after all modifiers are applied.

In order to reduce health, move the health marker above the health bar a given amount of spaces to the left. In order to heal damage, move it to the right.

If a player's health drops to zero or below, they immediatelly lose the game.



Health Bar Features

Some spaces on the health bar have special features, which are described on one of the helper cards.

All effects applied during one card resolution, during one player action in a planning turn, during one *Instant:* effect or during a single clash step (outside of Plan and *Resolution* stages) - are considered to be happening at the same time, unless otherwise specified. This is especially important for health bar features and when do they activate.

Positioning within the clash stack

Cards often refer to vertical positioning of cards in the clash stack, this is done by using words like 'above', 'below', 'topmost', 'at the bottom', etc.

Those refer always to the physical position in the stack, if a card overlaps another card, it's always above it.

3. First Player

In this stage, the top character card is taken and placed below the other one, effectively changing the first player. This means that the player who previously was not a first player will get to go first in the first planning turn of the next clash.

It is important to note that being a first player can have a big impact on the game, as it forces and allows the player to play the first card during the planning turns.

After the first player is changed, the game moves on to the next stage of the clash.



4. Morale

During this stage, the player with the winning morale card (located below their character cards), wins the morale. The other player is considered to have lost morale. If no card is present there, nobody wins or loses the morale.

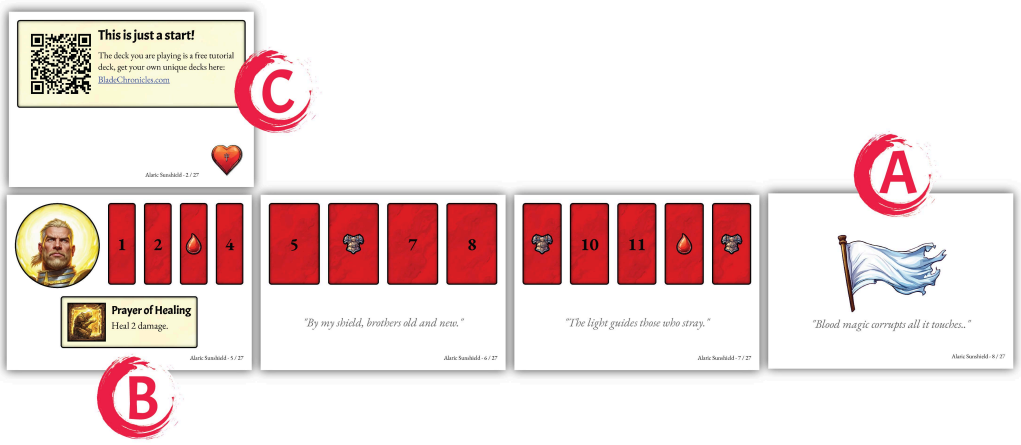


If a player wins morale, they flip back the one of segments of their health bar that was flipped to the white flag side. They choose which one. If all of them are already on their normal side, their enemy is panicking.



A character who is panicking, must flip the first not-flipped segment from the left, to the white flag side.

A player may avoid panic, by showing and discarding a card with a ✊ symbol. If they do, they draw another card as a replacement. It's far easier to recover your lost morale than to succesfuly panic your opponent.



If Lothar Steelcloak would win morale he would flip the only flipped health bar segment he has (A) to its normal side. If he loses he would have to turn the most left segment to the flag side (B). In our example he would immediately lose the duel because. the health marker would be pointing at the segment with the white flag (C).

5. Draw

In the Draw stage, each player draws 2 cards from their deck and adds them to the cards already in their hand. This gives players more options for planning their next moves in the game.

If you need to draw but your deck is empty, shuffle your discard pile to create a new deck and continue drawing. You can review discard piles at any time.

Note that some decks have an alternative version of this phase, review the back of your deck list card, for any deck specific instructions to perform during this stage.

Keep in mind that this game is not about playing all of your cards each clash, it's about playing the right cards at the right time.

6. Hand Limit

During this stage, each player must make sure they only have a maximum of 6 cards in their hand. If a player has more than 6 cards, they must choose which cards to discard. The excess cards are placed in a discard pile near their deck. The player gets to choose which cards to keep and which ones to discard.

Again, this limit can be different for a specific deck, and is described on the back of your deck list card.

7. Cleanup

During the Cleanup stage, discard all set aside cards with *Onward* effects.

The Cleanup stage marks the end of the current clash. Players will move on to the next clash by starting again at the Plan Clash stage.

How to Win

In order to win, a player must either physically defeat their opponent or put so much psychological pressure on them that they surrender. The game ends immediately when a player's health reaches zero or their health marker is pointing at a health segment that is flipped to its white flag side (including when the marker just enters the health bar segment). That player loses the game.

If both players would lose the game simultaneously, the first player wins the game.

In summary, to win Blade Chronicles, players must either reduce their opponent's health to zero or break their morale by causing them to surrender.

Miscellaneous Rules

If there is no optionality mentioned on the cards, then all actions are mandatory as long as they are legal. For example if the text says that you have to discard a card from your hand, and your hand is empty, you just skip that step.

Team Battle Variant (2vs2)

Put the two teams on opposite sides of the table.

Setup
Normal setup rules apply, the only difference is that each player secretly chooses their initial "Tank" player. That player will receive all damage from resolved cards. Only use character cards of tank players to determine first player. Place the other cards next to them.

First player is the one that takes the first turn, then play proceeds clockwise. Plan ends when all players pass in succession.

Each time a players card is resolved, they may choose to change their "Tank" player instead. Replace the old "Tank" card in the among the stacked cards showing who the first player is with the appropriate card.

All damage and healing effects are applied to one of the "Tanks" as if they would be dueling by themselves. Any time an 'opponent' is mentioned it must be Tank, but if an effect can apply to any player, it can affect other players as well.

The moment one players loses the game, his entire team loses.

Note: This variant has not been fully developed yet, and there might be some issues with card effects. It's a promising concept in early testing.

NPC decks for solo and cooperative play

NPC decks are special decks which are not designed to be played by a person, instead they are designed to be played as an automated opponent for player(s). They play similarly to normal decks, but with key notable differences:

- During planning, an NPC plays one card from their hand (you choose, but normally you can only see the card backs). If you ever reveal cards in opponent's hand, keep them face up in the opponent's hand.
- If an NPC card mentiones that it's a *Skip*, then treat the entire turn of the NPC as if they would skip (even though they played a card) this is not considered a normal planning turn.
- When winning morale, and the NPC has some flipped segments on their health bar, they will flip the right most flipped segment to the normal side.
- NPCs never discard epic cards to avoid panic.
- If the NPC has no card left in their hand, they will skip each of their turns.
- Abilities on health bar segments work differently for NPCs, their trigger and effect is described in the ability text. Do not automatically flip the segment on which the ability is described, as with player abilities.

Conclusion

Congratulations on completing the Blade Chronicles game manual! We hope that this guide has helped you understand the rules and mechanics of the game.

Blade Chronicles is a dynamic and engaging card game that combines strategy, tactics, and a bit of luck. The innovative gameplay of plan clashes from the end to the beginning and resolving them chronologically creates a unique and exciting experience every time you play.

Remember to shuffle your decks, set up your play area, and exchange deck lists before starting the game. The game consists of a series of rounds called clashes, and each clash has seven stages that must be performed in order. The first player to reduce their opponent's health to zero or force them to surrender by winning morale is the winner.

We hope that you have a lot of fun playing Blade Chronicles and that this game will bring you many hours of entertainment with your friends and family. If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to contact us on our discord.

Thank you for choosing Blade Chronicles and we wish you all the best in your dueling adventures!