SEAS OF STRIFE

Designed by Mark Major
Cover & Card Art: Beth Sobel
Graphic Design: Brigette Indelicato
Rules & Production Mgmt: Ken Hill

3–6 PLAYERS | AGES 14+ | PLAYTIME: 45 MINUTES

A clear and beautiful day at sea! That is what you had planned when you left port this morning. Unfortunately, the ocean is often fickle, and today has turned out to be no exception. Now you must face a variety of hazards before you can reach safety! Can you navigate the troubled waters to return to port with your boat (and your sanity) intact?

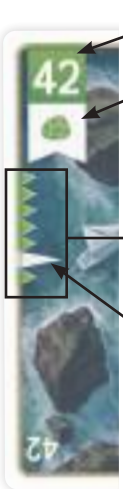
Seas of Strife is a trick-taking card game where the players try to avoid taking tricks!

Components

60 cards in eight different colors (or suits), with the following values:

Orange (Doldrums):	0–10
Red (Reef):	11–20
Gray (Fog):	21–29
Blue (Iceberg):	31–38
Green (Rocks):	41–47
Purple (Storm):	51–56
Teal (Whirlpool):	61–65
Dark Red (Kraken):	71–74

Card Anatomy



Card number

Suit icon

The **number of flags** indicates how many cards there are of this color (there are 7 green cards).

The **white flag** shows how high the card is ranked in its color (the 42 is the second-lowest green card).

Overview

Each player has a hand of cards. In each turn, every player will play one card. Once each player has played a card, the player that played the "best" card takes all of the cards just played, also called a "trick." However, the goal of the game is to take the fewest tricks each round, so avoid playing the best card as much as you can. Sometimes your opponents will conspire against you, forcing you to take a trick against your wishes. But, with clever play, you might be the only one who safely makes it back to port!

Game Setup



In a 3-player game, leave out the orange (doldrums) and dark red (Kraken) cards. Remove them from the deck and put them back into the box. If there are 4, 5, or 6 players, play with all the cards.

Shuffle the cards and deal them out equally to all players. Each player takes their cards into their hand. For 3 or 4 players, each player should have 15 cards; 5 players should have 12 cards each; 6 players should have 10 cards each.

Playing the Game

Seas of Strife is played over several rounds. A round consists of as many "tricks" as the number of cards each player has at the beginning of the round.

A trick consists of each player playing one card from their hand and putting the card face up in the center of the table. The player who has the 0 card opens the first trick of the round by placing it in the center of the table. (Note: In a 3-player game, the player who has the 11 starts the first trick by playing that card instead.)

Play proceeds clockwise from the starting player with the other players each playing one card from their hands into the trick. **The cards played must be the same suit as a card already in the trick, if possible.** If a player cannot play a card in a matching suit, they may play any card from their hand instead.

Who takes the trick?

Once everyone has played a card, the players must determine who takes the trick. To do so, figure out which suit has the most cards in the trick. The player who played the highest-ranked card of that suit takes the trick.

If two or more suits are tied for most cards in the trick, the player who played the highest card of any of the tied colors takes the trick.

When the player takes a trick, they put all the cards in that trick in front of them in a single face-down pile. They put any subsequent tricks that they take in separate piles, so all players can easily see how many tricks each player has taken at any time during the round.

EXAMPLE TRICK 1:

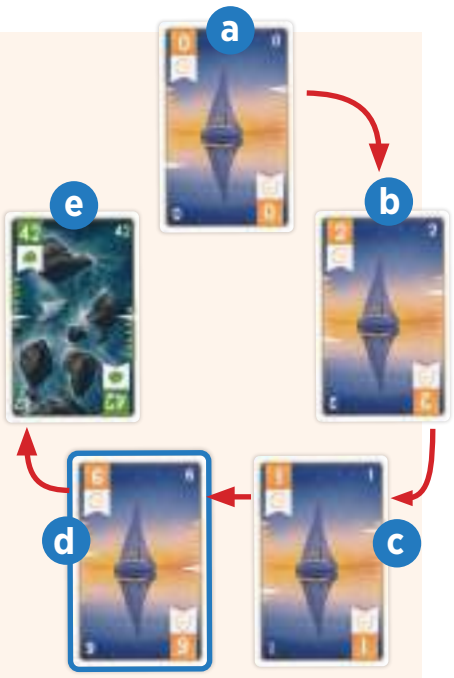
a. Anna starts the first trick of the round by playing the orange (doldrums) 0 card.

b. Beth must play an orange card if she has one, so she plays the orange 2 card.

c. Connor must follow suit, and he plays the orange 1 card.

d. David chooses to play the orange 6 card.

e. Eve has no orange cards, so she can play a card from a different suit. She chooses to play the green (rocks) 42 card.



Orange is the suit with the most cards in the trick, and the highest orange card played was a 6, so David takes the trick.

EXAMPLE TRICK 2:

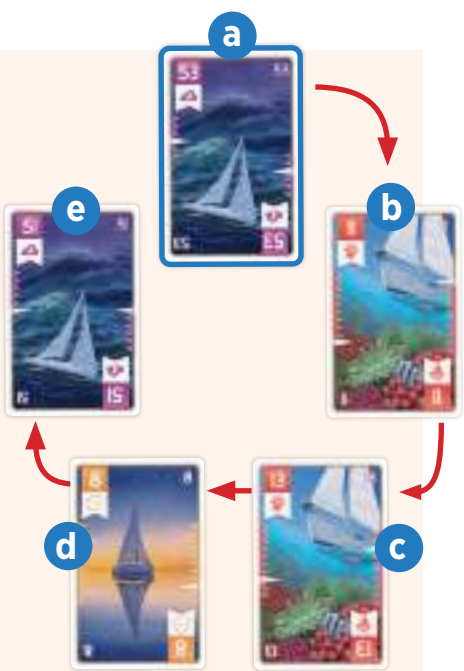
a. David starts the trick by playing the purple (storm) 53 card.

b. Eve must play a purple card if she has one, but she does not. So, she plays an 11, which belongs to the red (reef) suit.

c. Anna must now either play a purple (storm) or a red (reef) card, if possible. She decides to play the 13, which belongs to the red (reef) suit.

d. Beth does not have a purple or a red card, so she chooses to play an orange (doldrums) 8 card.

e. Connor plays the purple (storm) 51 card.



Purple and red are tied with the same number of cards in the trick. In this case, the highest number played among the cards of the tied suits takes the trick. So, David must take the trick.

Who leads the next trick?

As a general rule, the player who takes a trick always opens the next one. That player may freely choose which card to play from their hand.



There is one exception, however: If a player takes a trick with the highest-ranked card of a particular suit, they may decide which player opens the next trick. They may, of course, pick themselves.

The cards that are the highest in each suit are easily recognizable. The color pattern on these cards is reversed (as shown on left), and they also feature a ★ in the rank flag on the sides of the card.

End of a round

When all cards have been played out of each player's hand, the round ends. Each player scores 1 penalty point for each trick they have taken. Note down all the players' scores for the round and start the next one by reshuffling and dealing the cards as before.

Keep playing rounds until at least one player has reached or exceeded a certain number of penalty points at the end of a round:

3 or 4 players: 15 points | **5 players:** 12 points | **6 players:** 10 points

The player with the fewest points wins! If there is a tie, all tied players have won. Players may also choose to play additional rounds until the tie is broken.

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SEAS OF STRIFE

VARIANT RULES

BACKGROUND

Seas of Strife was originally self-published by the designer as "Strife." The game was later released in Germany by Amigo Games in 2015 as "Texas Showdown." The rules represented in the main rules follow the "Texas Showdown" rules. Due to a misunderstanding, Amigo used a different version of the rules than the designer intended. Many players have become accustomed to playing by the "Texas Showdown" rules. However, if players want to try the game the way the designer intended it, they should use the rules below.

Face cards: The highest value of each suit is called the **Face** card (as noted by the star in the flag) of that suit. If a **Face** card is played in a trick, it "zeroes out" the count for that suit so that a card from that suit cannot win the trick.

If all suits are "zeroed out," then all cards played are considered a single suit, regardless of color, and therefore, the highest card played in the trick will win it.

This rule dramatically changes how the game is played. It allows players who have Face cards in their hands to have more control over who wins or a loses a trick.

Note: When playing with the "Strife" rules, if a player takes a trick with a Face card, they are not allowed to pick who leads the next trick.

Here are two example tricks using the "Strife" version of the rules:

"STRIFE" EXAMPLE TRICK 1:

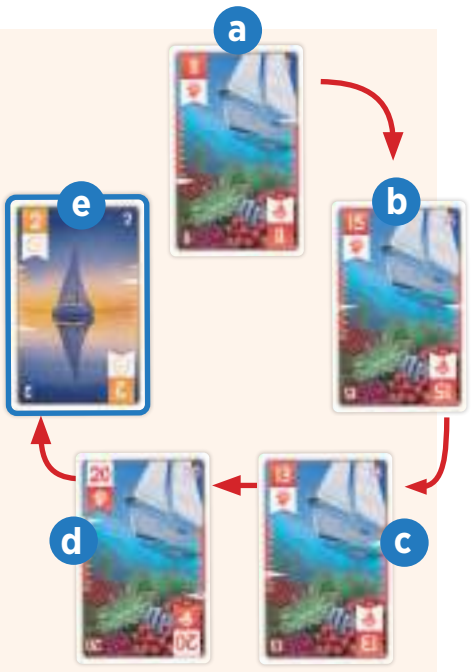
a. Anna starts the trick by playing the red (reef) 11 card.

b. Beth must play a red card if she has one, so she plays the red 15 card.

c. Connor must follow suit if he can, and he plays the red 13 card.

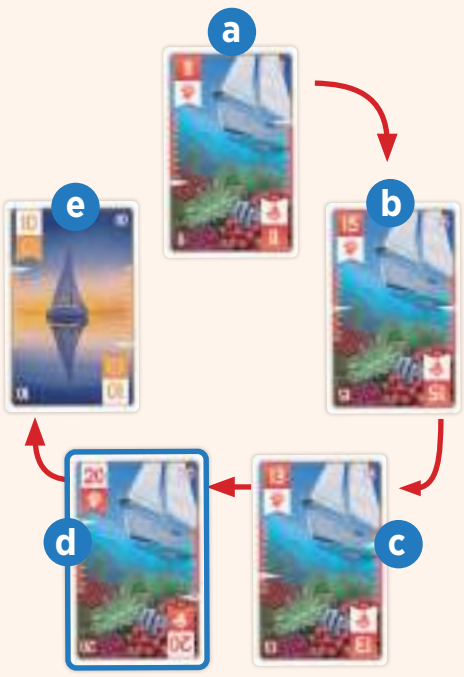
d. David now plays the red 20 card. This is the "Face card" of the red suit, which now "zeroes out" the count for red.

e. Eve has no red cards, so she can play a card from a different suit. She chooses to play the orange (doldrums) 2 card.



In this case, the red suit is no longer considered in the calculation of who takes the trick. Therefore, orange is the only suit considered, and Eve, who played the only orange card, takes the trick.

If Eve had played the face card of orange (the 10), then all suits would have been ignored, and David would take the trick because he played the highest numbered card (20) of all of the cards played in the trick. (See below.)





“STRIFE” EXAMPLE TRICK 2:

a. David opens the trick by playing the green (rocks) 43 card.

b. Eve must play a green card if she has one, but she does not. So, she plays an 11, which belongs to the red (reef) suit.

c. Anna must now play either a green (rocks) or a red (reef) card. She decides to play the 13, which also belongs to the red (reef) suit.

d. Beth does not have a green or a red card, so she chooses to play an orange (doldrums) 8 card.

e. Connor plays the green (rocks) 47 card, which is the Face card of that suit.



Because he played the Face card of green, green can no longer be considered the highest suit. Red now has the largest number of cards, so it is the dominant suit. Anna played the highest card in that suit (the 13), so she must take the trick.

3-player Setup Changes

When playing the “Strife” rules with 3 players, remove the lowest 3 sets of cards from the game (orange, red, and gray). The player who has the blue (iceberg) 31 card plays the first card in the first trick.

Other Variations:

Passing Cards: After dealing cards, each player chooses two cards from their hand and passes them to the player on their left. In each subsequent hand, pass to one player farther than before (two to the left on the second hand, three to the left on the third, etc.) If this would mean passing to yourself, then do not pass cards in that round.

Happy Faces: Each Face card a player has won at the end of a hand cancels out one trick they have taken. Recommended for 3- or 4-player games only.

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