

# Royals

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## Requirements:

1-2 Decks of Standard Playing Cards with Jokers.

## Introduction:

Royals is a game for two players designed by committee over many years to provide the greatest depth and ease of play to the TCG enthusiast who finds themselves with only a deck of poker cards. You may be surprised to discover an experience just as strategic and addictive as any Trading Card Game hiding within a single static deck shared between players.

In Royals, two kingdoms build their armies, starting only small skirmishes before engaging at full force. Commanders rise and fall, trading blows, blocking assaults, and rising from certain defeat. If the fates decide, victory may be had by the use of a devastating but fragile weapon. When the dust settles, the kingdom which has suffered the most will raise the white flag, and a victor is determined.

## Setup:

The deck is first shuffled, jokers in. Each player will then draw 5 cards. If a player lost the previous game, they go first, otherwise any method of determination will do. The deck is placed to the side of the players, with the discard pile forming next to it. In front of each player is their **Field**, which may contain up to 3 royals and two jokers at any one time. On the opposite side of the deck, players will keep their **Score Pile**.

## Phases:

Royals consists of 3 phases:

1. **Cold War**: This phase begins the game. During it, players cannot attack using royals, only with arrows. This phase ends when both players have had at least one royal on the field.
2. **Battle**: This is the main phase. All standard turn rules are in effect during this phase.
3. **Last Round**: This phase begins when the last card is pulled, after **Final Reshuffle** has been called. Each player will use the cards they have to do a final turn, and then the game is over.

## Player Turn:

At the beginning of a turn you must have 5 cards in your hand. You will then right any royals turned

diagonally to indicate their ability to attack.  
During a turn you may perform as many actions as you wish, and as is possible with your hand.

The following actions are possible:

1. Discarding:

You may place any number of cards into the discard pile, up to your entire hand. This is often done to quickly cycle the deck, but does limit options on the current turn.

2. Firing Arrows:

You may fire arrows by placing down a pair, trio, or quartet of numbered cards which match either in suite or number. These cards deal an amount of damage equal to the number of cards played.

In order to deal damage to the opposing player directly there cannot be any upright or diagonal royals on their field. If royals are present, they must be the target of your attack. In order to defeat a royal your attack must be greater than or equal to their Rank. Damage is not persistent between attacks, which is to say that any attack under their rank has no effect.

Jack has a rank of 3, Queen has a rank of 2, and King has a rank of 1.

If damage is dealt to the opposing player directly, place the cards used for the arrow attack in your score pile. If used on a royal, simply place the cards in the discard pile.

3. Recruiting a Royal:

You may place a Jack, King, or Queen in one of the three available spots on the field. They are placed diagonally to indicate that they cannot attack until the next turn.

#### 4. Attacking With a Royal:

You may take a number card from your hand and place it with a Royal on your field. This does damage to the target equal to the card number divided by the Royal's Rank, rounded down.

Jack has a rank of 3, Queen has a rank of 2, and King has a rank of 1.

If damage is dealt to the opposing player directly, place the number card under your royal, it will be used for scoring at the end and is out of play. If used on a royal, simply discard the card.

The royal is then turned diagonally to indicate that they cannot attack again until their next turn.

#### 5. Revive a Royal:

If a royal on your field was defeated by your opponent on their last turn, and is therefore sideways to indicate this, then you may give them any card in your hand which matches the suite of the defeated royal. They will then add this to their score pile. You may now right your royal, and attack with them during this turn.

#### 6. Bury a Royal:

If a royal on your field was defeated by your

every single card in the deck out of play, rendering both players incapable of taking action. However, this is a miserable exercise in practice, and three reshuffles is a recommended limit.

### Scoring:

Once the game has ended it is time to tally up the score. The following explanation will give the easiest order in which to do this without having to pull out a pen and paper.

First, take a royal in the score pile and calculate the amount of damage they did using the usual method with each card below it. Add this damage to your tally, and repeat this with each royal.

Next, take any jokers in the score pile and double the number of the card below it, adding that to your tally.

Finally, count the cards given as tribute for revival, as well as the cards used as arrows against the player. These all count for one point on top of your current total.

Now you should have your score. Whichever player has the higher score has won this particular game of Royals, congratulations!

Royals is a game where anything can happen, and the luck of the cards plays a significant role. For this reason many players keep a tally between games of how many times each has won, playing multiple games in each sitting as a true comparison of skill.

may choose the jack of a suite available in your hand.

### 3. Receiving Tribute:

When your opponent revives a royal on their field, you will take the card they provide, check that it matches the suite of the royal being revived, and then place it in your score pile. Remember to keep your tribute and arrow cards together, as they will both be counted for one point per card.

### 4. Accepting Defeat:

When your opponent defeats a royal on the field, you must turn this royal sideways. This indicates that they will be out of play next turn unless revived. Keep in mind that a defeated royal does not provide defense, and your opponent may attack you directly if all royals are in this state.

## Reshuffling:

At the moment the last card is drawn from the deck all players must stop what they're doing and shuffle the discard pile. It then replaces the deck, after which play may resume.

At any time during this process a player may call "Last Reshuffle" if they so choose. This means that the next time the last card in the deck is drawn the "Last Round" phase begins, after which the game is over.

It is technically possible to end the game by taking

opponent on their last turn, but you do not wish to revive them, you must bury them. If they have no number cards under them they are simply discarded, but if they do have a number cards they are placed in the score pile and are out of play.

Note: In order to keep your score pile legible, it is recommended that you separate each royal and its associated cards from the others in some way.

### 7. Reveal a Joker:

You may take a joker from your hand and place it on either side of the royals on your field. The joker may not attack during this turn.

## The Joker

The joker has a number of special rules. It may be understood as a bomb, as it does great damage, but does not provide defense and is destroyed by its use.

1. It cannot be destroyed by the opposing player.
2. Both jokers can be on your field at once.
3. If only jokers are on the field, the opposing player may still attack you directly, as it is not a royal.
4. After use it is immediately discarded if it does no damage to the player, or put into the score pile with the accompanying number card if it does.
5. When using it to attack a single royal or the player directly it does double the damage on the number card provided.
6. It may also be used to "Wipe The Floor". If the rank of all royals on the opposing players field combined is equal to or greater than the number on the card you supply, then they are all defeated.

## Opponent's Turn:

You may perform a small number of actions in

response to the actions taken by your opponent during their turn.

The following actions are possible:

### 1. Blocking With an Ace:

Any kind of attack from your opponent on any kind of target may be blocked by discarding an Ace from your hand. Additionally, your opponent must still discard any number cards used in the attack. However, Jokers are not destroyed if their attack is blocked.

The opponent may respond by discarding an ace from their own hand in order to block your block, and go through with the attack. If possible, you may respond with another ace. They may then respond with a second ace, but seeing as there are only four aces in a deck, this is an extremely rare sequence of events.

If one or more aces are used during your opponent's turn, you must draw back up to 5 cards directly before beginning your next turn.

Ace cards may also, of course, be used as a number card with a value of one in other circumstances.

### 2. Jackrifice:

If your opponent attempts to defeat a royal when you have a jack on the field, you may choose to have your jack take the fall instead. This goes for other jacks as well, meaning you can effectively choose which jack is defeated. This is useful for revival in your next turn, as you