Vlaada Chvátil

Tash-Kalar

Guidebook

Tash-Kalar is the ancient art of magical combat performed in arenas and combat pits throughout the known world.

Tash-Kalar is also the name of the oldest and most famous arena, the place where the game began.

And Tash-Kalar is an exciting board game that confronts players with the same intellectual challenges that dueling mages have faced for centuries.

You can play the game with 2, 3, or 4 players, in teams or individually. Whether you are playing the High Form or a deathmatch, all games of Tash-Kalar have the same basic rules: Players take turns creating magical stones and placing them in patterns that allow them to summon fantastical beings. Your beings can move around the arena, disrupt opponents' patterns, and form new patterns that allow you to summon more beings. Each form of Tash-Kalar has its own means of scoring and deciding on a victor.

About the Rules

This GUIDEBOOK is designed to teach you how to play. It has 3 main chapters:

- The OVERVIEW introduces you to the game through the perspective of a wizened master. You may read it to get familiar with the components and learn what they represent.
- HOW TO PLAY presents your first game of Tash-Kalar. You can play along as you read through the chapter.
- FORMS OF TASH-KALAR explains various ways to play. The chapter assumes you have already read the chapter on How to Play.

The FULL RULES of Tash-Kalar are printed on a double-sided sheet, separate from this guide. The sheet is more than just an overview. It truly contains all rules for all forms of the game, as well as explanations of words used on the cards. If you have any question about any rule, you can find the answer there.

Overview

So my young mage-ling, welcome to Tash-Kalar, the arena where the game began. I know you've seen it played in small arenas all over the empire, but until you see it here, you haven't seen Tash-Kalar.

Use this side of the arena for the High Form and for your first game.



The High Form of Tash-Kalar is a cerebral contest of strategic positions. The game was thus even in ancient times, and the form has proven itself through centuries of competition.

Certain cards may refer to red squares or green squares.

Life and death, creation and destruction – a summoner must learn to wield two forces in opposition.

Use this side for a deathmatch.



Deathmatches are straight-forward contests of destruction. They seem more primal than the High Form, but they were invented later. Emperor Trago wanted to make the game more comprehensible to the masses. A boisterous deathmatch presents quite the spectacle, but do not let yourself be misled – even a deathmatch requires cunning and finesse.

The Four Schools

No doubt you've seen enough matches to recognize the different schools.

Highland School



Sylvan School



Southern Imperial School



Northern Imperial School



Your first game should be a 2-player game. Each player should take one of these two Imperial decks.

By tradition, we begin by studying the two Imperial schools. Do you think they are the same? Well, yes, that is true. The two schools have borrowed from each other for centuries, and now they use the same techniques. That is because they are good techniques. You would be wise to master them.

PIECES

Each player should take a full set of pieces in the same color as the chosen deck.



These are pieces of kalarite, the stone created by concentrating magical energy. Because you are so bold as to seek my wisdom, I assume you already know how to make it, how to mold it, how to imbue it with the fleeting essence of legendary beings. Perhaps someday, you will even begin to understand it.

Players place pieces on the board to make patterns for summoning beings.

17 two-sided common/heroic pieces

common piece



lowest rank

heroic piece



middle rank

3 legendary pieces



highest rank

BEINGS

Consider this painting of an infantry captain from the Southern Empire. Can you feel the sword in his grip? Can you sense his resolve to lead his soldiers to victory?

When you cast a piece of kalarite, you need to do more than create a statue. You need to delve into the very essence of the being and summon it into the stone. Paintings such as this will guide you.

To summon a being, you need to have your pieces on the board in a certain pattern.

The white framed square is where the being appears.



This is the rank of the being. When you summon the being, represent it in the arena with a new piece of the corresponding rank.

After summoning, you perform the being's effect.

An interesting question, little mage-ling. No, I don't think the being that infuses the kalarite is actually a soul. I suspect, rather, that it is the psycho-magical essence of all those beings that the painting represents. But whatever it is, it vanishes within seconds.

After the being's effect is resolved, it turns into a motionless piece, ready to be part of future patterns.

LEGENDARY BEINGS

All players share the deck of legends.



However, in your first game, you will not use these cards.

The patterns of the legendary beings are challenging to construct. And, as far as I know, no one has discovered a new legendary pattern in over a century. The four schools keep evolving, but most legendary techniques are unchanged since the dawn of Tash-Kalar. They belong to no school.

FLARES

Have you seen what a titan can do? Any mage can have his plans destroyed in an instant. The masters are those who can turn catastrophe into victory.

How? By invoking special magical techniques called "flares". You see, my young mage-ling, kalarite wants to be in balance. When the arena has too much of your opponent's color, it becomes easy to use his advantage against him. Learn these techniques and learn them well. Even when your patterns lie in ruins, victory may yet be within reach.

All players share the deck of flares.



Invoke a flare if your opponent's pieces overbalance the arena.

TASKS

I see your gaze has fallen on the imperial box, where sit the Lords of the Arena. The tasks they assign are displayed on banners, so that all may see how well the contestants fare.

non-advanced task



advanced task



These cards specify how you can score points. They are used in the High Form of the game. In your first game you will use only non-advanced tasks.

These two boards go together to make the task board used in the High Form of the game. Use them for your first game.



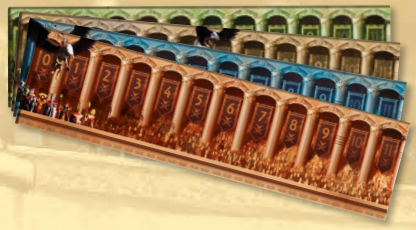
SCORE BOARDS

But if you should find yourself in a deathmatch, you need to worry about pleasing the crowd. They want to see destruction and legendary monsters. As Emperor Trago said: "Bread and circuses and dragons."

These two boards go together to make the score board for a deathmatch duel.



In a deathmatch melee, each player needs his or her own score board.





And now that we have come to the end of our tour of Tash-Kalar, show me what you can do. There, in that central square, create a common piece of kalarite.

... Hm. Not bad. You have talent, my young mage-ling. Of course, that kalarite isn't stable enough to endure an entire match, but you show very good form for one so young.

Here is my advice: Return home. Explore your talent. Practice every day, until the creation of kalarite is as natural as breath itself. You and I shall meet periodically so that I can assess your strength and decide when you are ready for the next level of training. Does that sound good?

Good. I'll meet you right here, on this spot, once every three years. Fare well!

Here we shall leave the wise master and his hopeful student. Fortunately, you do not have to study the nature of kalarite and the psycho-magical essence of fantastical beings. You do not have to make a pilgrimage to a far-off arena. With these game boards, pieces, and cards, you can learn to play Tash-Kalar right now.

How to Play

This chapter explains the basic game mechanics of Tash-Kalar. You can play your first game as you read along.

A few rules are simplified so that your first game will be fast-paced. If you want to begin by playing with the full rules, you can find them on the sheet entitled "Full Rules". However, we recommend reading this chapter first because it explains those rules with helpful examples.

We introduce Tash-Kalar as a 2-PLAYER GAME, but there are many ways to play. If you want to play your first game with more than 2 players, you should also read about team play or deathmatch melees. The different forms are explained in the Forms of Tash-Kalar chapter.

Author's note: Tash-Kalar is a game with simple rules, but it offers a variety of possibilities and combinations. This variety slows the game down when players are learning the rules and reading the cards for the first time. We developed some simplifications so we could present a quick game at conventions. Once we saw how much new players enjoyed this version of the game, we decided to include it in the Guidebook. The full game offers greater depth and variability, but these rules are the best and quickest way to begin.

SETTING UP YOUR FIRST GAME







Shared Deck

Shuffle the deck of flares and place it near the arena.



The deck of legends is not used in your first game.

The Arena

Set the arena in the center of the table with this side up.



Tasks

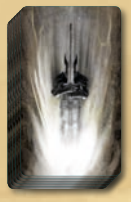


Put these two boards together to make the task board.

For your first game, go through this deck and remove all the cards with this watermark: . Return these cards to the box.

Shuffle the remaining tasks and place 3 face up on the task board, as shown. For your first game, we recommend adjusting the tasks so that the first three are 1-point and 2-point tasks. (Point values are in the lower right corner.) You should also try to get three tasks with different symbols in the upper left corner. These are your CURRENT TASKS.

Shuffle the deck again and place it face down on the task board. Turn up the top card and leave it on top of the deck. This will be the NEXT TASK after one of the current tasks is claimed.







Pieces

Each player takes the pieces in his or her color. You will only use pieces that have ⟍ on one side and ⚔ on the other. The 3 pieces with the ⚔ symbol can be returned to the box.

Discard Piles

Each shared deck and player deck will have its own discard pile.

Player Decks

For your first game, one player takes the Northern Empire (blue deck) and the other player takes the Southern Empire (red deck).

(The two Imperial decks have identical cards, while the Sylvan and Highland decks are unique. In later games, you will be able to test the various schools against each other, and you will always have the option to play a symmetric game with identical Imperial decks.)

Choose a starting player. Both players shuffle their decks, put them in front of themselves, and draw 3 cards. Each player also draws 1 flare from the shared deck. Players keep their cards hidden from the opponent.

THEN THE STARTING PLAYER MAY BEGIN THE GAME.

GAME PLAY

Players take turns. The STARTING PLAYER can take only 1 ACTION on his or her FIRST TURN. But for the remainder of the game, each player takes 2 ACTIONS PER TURN. An action can be either putting a common piece on the board or using pieces already on the board to summon a being.

Placing the First Pieces

Players start with no pieces on the board, so the first player starts the game by placing one piece. The piece can go on any square. It should be placed with the ⚔ symbol up. When that symbol is up, it is called a common piece.

After that, players have 2 actions per turn, so the second player can place 2 common pieces on the board. The only limitation is that each piece must be placed on an empty square.

However, you will probably not want to scatter your pieces all over the board. You are trying to make patterns that will allow you to summon beings from your hand.

Summoning a Being



Each card in your deck represents a being you can summon. IF YOUR PIECES ON THE BOARD MATCH THE PATTERN SHOWN ON THE CARD, YOU CAN USE AN ACTION TO SUMMON THAT BEING.

Let's suppose you have the Swordmaster in your hand. Her pattern is easy to match. You just need two pieces in a row with one square between them.

(The 4 red squares in the corners of the pattern illustrate this card's effect. They aren't requirements for summoning her.)

Let's say you're the first player. On your first turn, you place 1 piece:



Your opponent places 2 on his first turn:



Now it's your turn. For your first action, you place a piece here:



And now you have matched the pattern shown on the card. For your second action, you can summon the Swordmaster.



Look at the symbol in the upper left corner of the card: That tells you the Swordmaster's rank. Look at the white-framed square in the pattern: That tells you where she goes. TO SUMMON A BEING, PUT A PIECE OF THE CORRECT RANK ON THE SQUARE CORRESPONDING TO THE WHITE-FRAMED SQUARE IN THE PATTERN. In this case, the Swordmaster will be represented by a common piece.

Of course, you could have used an action to put a common piece on this square even if you didn't have the card. But you didn't summon the Swordmaster just to get her piece on the board. EVERY BEING HAS AN EFFECT THAT OCCURS AS SOON AS THE BEING IS SUMMONED.



The Swordmaster's effect allows you to destroy your opponent's common piece, if it is on a diagonally adjacent square (one of the 4 squares marked on the card). Your opponent does have a piece diagonally adjacent to the Swordmaster. So you remove it from the board (and return it to your opponent). In addition, the Swordmaster says that if you do destroy a piece, you upgrade the Swordmaster. Flip her piece over so that the ⚔ symbol is on top. Now you have a heroic piece on the board.

(If the card does not say something is optional, it is mandatory. The Swordmaster's effect says, "You may destroy..." That means you can choose to not do so. However, if you do choose to destroy a piece then you must upgrade the Swordmaster.)

This looks like a good play, but you could do something even nastier: A BEING CAN BE SUMMONED ONTO A SQUARE OCCUPIED BY A PIECE OF THE SAME OR LOWER RANK; THIS DESTROYS THAT PIECE.

So you could have played to form the pattern with your opponent's piece in the summoning square. Then, when you summoned the Swordmaster, she would have destroyed that piece. This is all part of the summoning, not the effect.

Next, you can apply the effect and destroy your opponent's other piece. If you do, then you must upgrade the Swordmaster:



Now let's consider some other examples:



In this case, you cannot summon the Swordmaster. She can't be summoned onto the square between your pieces because Blue's heroic piece outranks her.



You are allowed to destroy your own pieces. In this situation, you can summon the Swordmaster. The summoning destroys your common piece in the middle. Then you can apply the Swordmaster's effect.



Pieces in the pattern can be matched by higher-ranking pieces. In this case, your two pieces match the pattern and you can summon the Swordmaster. However, you cannot use her effect, because she can destroy only a common piece, not a heroic piece.



This is another case where you can summon the Swordmaster but you can't use her effect. Even if you want to destroy your own diagonally adjacent piece, the text on the card specifies that the effect only applies to an enemy piece (that is, one of your opponent's pieces).

(You should always read the text carefully. If the card had said, "You may destroy 1 common piece on a diagonally adjacent square," then you would have been allowed to destroy your piece. And if the card had said, "Destroy 1 common piece on a diagonally adjacent square," you would have been required to destroy your piece.)

After the Being's Effect

Once you have resolved the being's effect, put the card in your discard pile. The new piece on the board CEASES TO BE THAT BEING. It is now just another piece. Pieces can be either common, heroic, or legendary, but they don't "remember" whether they were summoned or just placed. And once a card's effect has resolved, you don't have to keep track of which piece belonged to that card.

If you summon any beings, draw new cards from your deck at the end of your turn so that you once again hold exactly 3.

(Even in the last example, where you would summon the Swordmaster without an effect, the summoning would still have consequences: At the end of your turn, you would draw a new card.)

More Examples



We have already seen one way to get a heroic piece on the board – upgrade a common piece using a being's effect. Another way is to directly summon a heroic being (one with the ⚔ symbol in the upper left corner).

Look at the Knight. You need 4 pieces to match his pattern. They have to be in some sort of L-shape, but all orientations and even mirror images count as a match.

In each of these configurations, the Knight can be summoned on the white-framed square:



Note that in the last example, squares which are shown as empty in the pattern on the card do not have to be empty. To match a pattern, you just need to match each piece shown on the card with one of your pieces on the board. And remember, a piece of higher rank can match a lower-ranked piece depicted on the card.

Recall that you can summon a being into a square occupied by a piece of the same rank or lower. That is why, in these examples, you are allowed to summon the Knight onto a square occupied by a common or a heroic piece. This destroys that piece and you place a new piece (of yours) on that square with the ⚔ symbol up.



Not only is destroying your own piece possible, sometimes it is even required. Look at the Cannon. To summon it, you need to have one of your common or heroic pieces in the white-framed square – that is, in the square into which the Cannon will be summoned.

(Note: In the full game, if you had a legendary piece in the white-framed square, it would technically match the pattern, but you would be unable to summon the Cannon because a being cannot be summoned over top of a higher-ranked being.)



This picture indicates 3 squares onto which the Cannon could be summoned. In each case, the piece would be replaced by a new heroic piece, and you would be able to use the Cannon's effect.

(Note that the Cannon's text says, "You may choose one of the indicated directions..." If you decide to not choose a direction, then you cannot destroy pieces "in that direction". In other words, you can choose to not use the Cannon's effect. However, if you do choose a direction, then you must destroy all common pieces in that direction, including your own.)

Moves and Leaps

You cannot use either of your 2 actions to move your pieces. MOVES ONLY COME FROM THE EFFECTS OF CERTAIN BEINGS OR FLARES.

A move is always onto one of the 8 ADJACENT SQUARES. The 4 squares on the sides are called ORTHOGONALLY ADJACENT. The 4 squares on the corners are DIAGONALLY ADJACENT.

In general, there are 2 types of moves: standard moves and combat moves.

A STANDARD MOVE IS A MOVE ONTO AN EMPTY SQUARE OR ONTO A SQUARE OCCUPIED BY A PIECE OF LESSER RANK. Moving onto an occupied square destroys the piece that was there. (The higher-ranked piece just tramples it.) You can destroy your own piece or your opponent's piece with a move.



This illustration depicts the possible standard moves for 2 pieces. Note that a heroic piece can do a standard move onto empty squares or onto squares occupied by common pieces. The common piece can move only onto empty squares. There is no lesser-ranked piece that a common piece can trample.

A COMBAT MOVE IS A MOVE ONTO AN EMPTY SQUARE OR ONTO A SQUARE OCCUPIED BY A PIECE OF THE SAME RANK OR LOWER. So a combat move is just a standard move with the additional option of moving onto a square occupied by a piece of the same rank. A heroic piece doing a combat move can go onto any of the 8 adjacent squares – except those occupied by legendary pieces. A common piece doing a combat move can move onto any empty square or any square occupied by a common piece.



Two pieces can never occupy the same square. Moving onto an occupied square (either with a standard move or a combat move) destroys the piece that was there. You can destroy your own piece or an opponent's piece with a move. Whenever a piece is destroyed it returns to its player's supply of pieces.

If a piece can do multiple moves, then you take each one in turn, destroying any pieces on the squares that it moves through.

Some cards put additional restrictions on the types of moves they allow. For example, the Knight does combat moves, but he is not allowed to destroy common pieces. This means he can only move onto empty squares or squares occupied by heroic pieces (of either color).

A LEAP IS LIKE A MOVE, BUT IT IS NOT LIMITED TO ADJACENT SQUARES. So to do a standard leap, you pick up the piece and put it down on any other empty square, or on a square occupied by a piece of lesser rank. And a combat leap can go onto any other square except one occupied by a piece of higher rank. As with moves, a leaping piece destroys the piece it lands on. (But it doesn't destroy any pieces in between, because it didn't "move through" those squares.)

As with moves, sometimes a card will specify additional limitations on where you can leap.

These and other effects of cards are explained on the Full Rules sheet.

Invoking a Flare



Each player has a flare in his or her hand. Your flare represents power you can draw from your opponent's pieces when the arena is out of balance. If your opponent's pieces significantly outnumber yours, you gain options you normally don't have.

A flare has two possible effects. YOU CAN INVOKE THE FLARE IF YOU MEET THE CRITERION FOR EITHER EFFECT.

You meet the UPPER CRITERION if your opponent's upgraded pieces exceed yours by at least a certain number – the number printed on the card. (Legendary and heroic pieces count as "upgraded" pieces. Of course, in your first game, you only count heroic pieces because you are playing without legends.) For example, if your opponent has at least 4 more heroic pieces than you do on the board, you can play the card shown here.

You meet the LOWER CRITERION if your opponent's total number of pieces exceeds yours by at least a certain number – again, the number is printed on the card. So you can play this example card if your opponent has at least 5 more pieces on the board than you do. (Count all pieces, regardless of rank.)

Each criterion comes with its own effect. If you meet the upper criterion, you may play the card to get the upper effect. If you meet the lower criterion, you may play the card to get the lower effect. If you meet both criteria when you play the card, you get both effects, in order, first the upper, then the lower. (Don't worry if the upper effect changes the number of pieces on the board; you check the lower criterion before you resolve the upper effect, not after.) IF YOU MEET NEITHER CRITERION, YOU CANNOT INVOKE THE FLARE.

INVOKING A FLARE IS NOT AN ACTION. You can invoke a flare BEFORE OR AFTER ANY ACTION, but not while an action is resolving. You put it on the table, resolve one or both effects, and then discard it to the flares' discard pile. At the end of your turn, you draw a new flare to replace it. (So you will always start your turn with a flare, and it is never possible to play more than 1 in a turn.)

Let's look at an example:



Blue has 2 more upgraded pieces than Red and 2 more pieces total. RED DOES NOT MEET EITHER CRITERION and cannot play this flare at this time.



Blue has 3 more upgraded pieces than Red. So RED MEETS THE UPPER CRITERION. Red can play this flare to place 1 common piece on any empty square. This does not cost Red an action.





Blue has 8 more pieces than Red, so RED MEETS THE LOWER CRITERION. Red can play this flare to do 1 combat move or 2 standard moves. This does not cost Red an action.



Blue has 4 more upgraded pieces and 4 more pieces total. So RED MEETS BOTH CRITERIA. Red can play this card to get both effects. First, Red places a common piece on an empty square. Then Red can do 1 combat move or 2 standard moves. As always, this does not cost Red an action. (After Red uses the upper effect, Blue outnumbers Red by only 3 pieces. This does not matter. Red will get to use the lower effect because the criterion was met when the flare was played.)

(Note that order is important: In this last example, Red can place a common piece and then move it. But Red cannot move a piece and then place a common piece on the vacated square. The upper effect must be resolved first.)



Here Red meets the lower criterion. If she invokes the flare at the start of her turn, she will gain an action, but she won't be able to use the "upgrade" part of the lower effect. However, she can use her first action to place a common piece. Blue's pieces still outnumber hers by 6, so she can invoke the flare to upgrade the common piece and gain an action. This leaves her with 2 actions (her usual second action plus the one she gained from the flare).



(When a card tells you to "gain an action", that just means you add 1 to the number of actions you have left this turn. For example, if Red had gained an action after using her second action of the turn, she would be able to take one more action before ending her turn.)

(Don't think of a flare as something weak players use when they have been outplayed. A flare is a game mechanic that clever players use to their advantage. If your opponent is focused on destroying your pieces, you may be able to use your flare to accomplish the tasks your opponent is ignoring.)

Take Backs

Suppose you use your first action to place a common piece so you can summon a being with your second action ... and then you realize that you can't summon the being, or that summoning the being wouldn't have the effect you were counting on. Unless you and your opponent have agreed to play by other rules, you can take back your action and do it differently. This applies even to decisions in more complicated situations, e.g., while resolving the effect of a being or a flare.

(You might think that allowing take backs slows the game down. Actually, it makes the game move more quickly because you don't have to figure out everything in your head before you see how it plays out on the board.)

Of course, once you end your turn or start drawing cards or claim a task, it is too late to take anything back.

TASKS

The task board always has 3 current tasks – these are the ones you can try to accomplish. You are also able to see the top card of the deck – the next task that will replace any task that is claimed.

YOU CAN CLAIM A TASK ONLY AT THE END OF YOUR TURN, after you are done using actions. The text on the card describes what you need to have done to claim the task. YOU CAN CLAIM ONLY 1 TASK PER TURN.

There are several types of tasks. (The type is identified by the symbol in the upper left corner.)



Some tasks can be accomplished by having pieces of yours on colored squares. If the task requires an "upgraded" piece, that means a heroic or legendary piece. (So "upgraded" just means "heroic" in your first game.)



Some tasks can be accomplished by having your pieces in a certain configuration on the board. Some of these also require upgraded pieces.



Some tasks can be accomplished by getting into a certain configuration in relation to an opponent's piece.

(To claim any of the 3 tasks above, you have to be in the correct configuration at the end of your turn.)



Some tasks can be accomplished by summoning beings. The "summon a being" action is the only way to summon a being. Pieces that come onto the board because of card effects or "place a piece" actions are just pieces, not summoned beings.



Some tasks can be accomplished by destroying your opponent's pieces. Pieces can be destroyed by summoning beings over top of them, by moving onto their squares, and by effects such as "destroy" and "convert".

(If a task like this is among the current tasks, set destroyed pieces aside to help you keep track. Return them to your opponent at the end of your turn.)

If you meet the criteria of one of the tasks, you may claim it. If you meet the criteria of more than 1, you may claim only 1. (But you might be able to claim another one next turn.)

To claim a task, take the card and keep it in front of you, next to your deck. The number in the lower right corner tells you how many points you earned. Take the top task from the deck and put it in the empty space. It becomes one of the current tasks. Turn the new top card face up so that you can see what the next task will be.

ENDING THE GAME

Your score is the TOTAL POINTS OF ALL THE TASKS you have claimed so far.

The game ends when a player draws the last card from his or her deck, or when either player has 6 or more points. The winner is the player with the most points.

SUMMARY OF YOUR FIRST GAME

- Players take turns. The first player can take only 1 action on his or her first turn, but after that, each player has 2 actions.
- Your possible actions are place a common piece on an empty square or summon a being.
- When you use an action to summon a being, you put a piece of that rank on the board (destroying any piece that was already there), resolve the effect, and discard the card.
- You can also invoke a flare if you meet one of its criteria. This does not cost an action. Resolve the effects of any criteria you meet and discard the card.
- At the end of your turn, you may claim 1 of the current tasks, if you meet its criteria.
- Then draw cards, if necessary, so that you once again have 3 beings and 1 flare. After you draw, it is your opponent's turn.
- The game ends when either player has 6 points or when either player draws the last card from his or her deck.

RULES FOR A FULL GAME

So far, we have presented a special version of the rules designed to introduce new players to the game. Even experienced players should consider using those rules when teaching the game to a new player. In this section, we will explain the differences between the new-player rules and the full version of the game. These rules are common to all forms of Tash-Kalar.

Player Decks and Pieces



In the full version of the game, you can use any of the four player decks. (Each player can choose a deck or they can be assigned randomly.) You use all the pieces in the corresponding color, including the 3 legendary pieces.

(We recommend the Imperial decks for your first game because they are identical – and traditional. But you can play your first game with different decks, if you wish.)

Legends

In the full version of the game, you can summon legends. These come from a deck that all players share.

(Summoning a legend is not easy, and it may happen that you summon none during the game. When you are learning, fulfilling tasks while fending off your opponent is challenging enough. Trying to build legendary patterns at the same time may slow down the game significantly. That's why we leave legends out of the simplified rules.

However, if you plan to play your first game as a deathmatch, do not be afraid to include legends. Deathmatches don't have tasks.)

LEGEND CARDS



During setup, shuffle the deck of legends and set it next to the deck of flares. Each player should draw 2 legends at the beginning of the game.

At the end of every turn, when you draw cards to replenish your hand, you should end up with 3 beings that came from your deck, 2 legends, and 1 flare.

SUMMONING A LEGENDARY BEING



Legends are beings. Summoning a legend is just like summoning one of the beings found in your deck. However, legends require heroic pieces on certain squares in the pattern. If the pattern shows a common piece, then any of your pieces matches it, but a heroic piece can be matched only by one of your heroic or legendary pieces.

LEGENDARY PIECES

When you summon a legendary being, you put a legendary piece on the board. These pieces are ranked higher than heroic or common pieces.

Recall that rank is important when deciding whether a piece can move onto or be summoned onto an occupied square. For example, a legendary being can do a standard move onto a heroic being's square, but a heroic being cannot do a combat move onto a legendary being's square.

If a card refers to a NON-LEGENDARY PIECE, that means a common or heroic piece. If it refers to an UPGRADED PIECE, that means a heroic or legendary piece.

The Discard Action

Most of the time, you will use each of your actions to either place a piece or summon a being. In the full game, you can also use an action to discard cards from your hand. YOU CANNOT DO MORE THAN ONE DISCARD ACTION PER TURN.

(The discard action is rarely needed. It requires some experience to say whether your cards are so unsuitable that discarding them is worth spending an action. That's why we did not include this rule in your first game.)

To begin a discard action, DISCARD 1 BEING THAT YOU DREW FROM YOUR DECK (not the legends deck). It goes on your discard pile.

Then you may also RETURN ONE OR MORE CARDS FROM YOUR HAND TO THE BOTTOMS OF THEIR DECKS (face down). If multiple cards are returned to the bottom of the same deck, you choose their order. No matter how many cards are returned, it still counts as one discard action.

Example: If you want to get rid of 3 beings in your color, 1 legend, and 1 flare, you must first discard a being that came from your deck. This goes on your discard pile. The other 2 beings from your deck go back to your deck on the bottom, in the order you choose. You put the flare and the legend at the bottoms of their decks, keeping the legend you want to keep. This is all one action.

You draw back to your full complement of cards at the end of your turn.

Piece Shortage

DESTROYED PIECES ARE RETURNED TO THEIR OWNER'S SUPPLY OF AVAILABLE PIECES, but even so, it is possible that, after many turns of play, you will have all your pieces of one type on the board (all your heroic/common pieces or all your legendary pieces). In that case, SOME CARD EFFECTS CANNOT BE DONE. (This includes convert, upgrade, downgrade, and place a piece effects. See the Full Rules.) However, IT IS POSSIBLE TO DO A PLACE OR SUMMON ACTION even when no piece of the correct type is available. See the place action and "Summoning a Being" parts of the Full Rules for details about piece shortage.

(This happens very rarely, and usually applies to legendary pieces, so the piece shortage rules are not necessary for your first game.)

Ending the Game

In your first game, you stop when someone gets 6 points or draws the last card in his or her deck. In the full game, you have an end-of-game trigger.

Different forms of Tash-Kalar have different end-of-game triggers, but one rule is common to all: IF THE END OF THE GAME HAS BEEN TRIGGERED, EACH PLAYER GETS ONE MORE COMPLETE TURN.

Usually a player will trigger the end by exceeding a certain point value or by drawing the last card from his or her deck. In some situations, it is even possible to trigger the end by making an opponent exceed the point value during your turn. But the way the end was triggered does not matter: THE PLAYER WHO WAS PLAYING OR FINISHING HIS OR HER TURN WHEN THE END WAS TRIGGERED WILL BE THE LAST PLAYER.

Once the end of the game has been triggered, the following things happen in this order:

1. The player finishes his or her turn and announces that the end of the game was triggered. This player will be the last player.
2. Play continues in the usual order, with each other player getting one final turn. (In a 2-player game, this just means that the last player's opponent gets a turn.)
3. Then the last player gets a final turn.
4. Then players compare scores, according to the rules for the form they are playing.

Of course, if everyone agrees that the outcome of the game has already been decided, you can skip everyone's final turn and go straight to congratulating the winner. But sometimes the final turns can provide exciting reversals of fortune.

(In the High Form, these reversals usually include summoning and destroying legends. That's why we left this rule out of the first game.)

Breaking Ties

All forms of Tash-Kalar use the same tie breakers. (A deathmatch melee, however, has special tie breakers that get applied first.)

If players are tied, break the tie in favor of the player with more upgraded pieces on the board. If players are still tied, break the tie in favor of the player with more pieces on the board.

If players are tied even after these tie breakers, then they remain tied.

Forms of Tash-Kalar

All forms of Tash-Kalar use the rules for a full game that were explained in the previous chapter. They differ in the way they are scored, and each has a few special rules.

The High Form (2 players or teams)

After playing your first game, you already know most of the rules for the High Form of Tash-Kalar. The High Form is different from the deathmatches in that it uses tasks.

Setting Up for the High Form



Use the side of the game board with the marked central squares. These are important for certain tasks. The arena will have no pieces on it when the game begins.

Tasks

Set up the task board as you did for your first game.

Shuffle all the tasks together. You use all the task cards, even the advanced tasks (those with the watermark).

There are two limitations in the full version: there can be NO ADVANCED TASK AMONGST THE FIRST THREE CURRENT TASKS, and THERE CAN NEVER BE THREE OR MORE FACE-UP TASKS OF THE SAME TYPE (denoted by the symbol in the upper left corner). To ensure this:

As you turn up the first 3 CURRENT TASKS, discard any that are advanced, so that you end up with 3 non-advanced tasks. If all 3 tasks have the same type, discard the third one and keep drawing until you get a non-advanced task of a different type.

Then shuffle all discarded cards back into the deck. You should now have 3 face-up non-advanced tasks of at least 2 different types. Turn up the top card of the task deck. This is the NEXT TASK. The next task might be advanced or it might not. It doesn't matter. The rules only prevent advanced tasks among the first 3 tasks.

However, if the next task has the same type as two of the current tasks, you will need to get a different next task. Put the card (face down) on the bottom of the deck and turn up a new top card. Repeat until you get a top card that does not match 2 of the 3 current tasks. Follow this rule whenever you turn up a card as the next task during the game.

Ending the Game

In the High Form, you check for the END-OF-GAME TRIGGER ONLY AT THE END OF EACH PLAYER'S TURN.

Count up the POINT VALUES OF ALL THE TASKS you have claimed and add 1 POINT FOR EACH LEGENDARY PIECE that you have on the board. This is your score.

If either player has 9 points or more, this triggers the end of the game. The end of the game is also triggered if either player draws the last card from his or her deck.

Each player gets one more complete turn as explained on page 7. Because legendary pieces might be destroyed, it is possible that both players will end the game with fewer than 9 points. This doesn't matter. The game ends anyway.

The player with more points wins. Tie breakers are explained on page 7.

Deathmatch Duel (2 players or teams)

The other 2-player form of Tash-Kalar is a deathmatch duel. You can use these rules even for a new player's first game. Deathmatches have a straight-forward scoring system.

Setting Up For a Deathmatch Duel

Game Boards



Use the side of the game board that has the squares marked .

You do not use the task cards, nor do you use the task board. Instead take the other two score boards and put them together to make the deathmatch duel score board, with numbers from 0 to 21. This board will measure how much your performance in the arena is pleasing the crowd.

Players

Each player puts one common piece on the zero space of the score board. Any time the player scores points, advance this piece to represent the new total.

In a deathmatch, players begin with a piece already in the arena. Choose the starting player. The other player takes 1 common piece of each color and puts 1 on each of the two squares marked . As usual, the starting player begins with one action and after that players take full, 2-action turns.

(Choosing the initial squares is mostly a formality. However, it can have an impact on Highland beings which have effects that depend on red or green squares.)

Game Play

During play, you can score points as follows:

Points for Destroyed Pieces

Instead of claiming tasks, players score points by destroying the opponent's pieces. The crowd is here to see destruction!

During your turn, leave all the enemy pieces you destroy beside the board. (Converting an enemy piece to your color also counts as destroying it.) At the end of your turn, return the pieces and score points for the enemy pieces you destroyed:

- 2 points for each legendary piece;
- 1 point for each heroic piece;
- 1 point for each pair of common pieces.

If you destroy an odd number of common pieces, you get no points for the unpaired piece.

You get points only for pieces that belong to your opponent. Neither you nor your opponent gains or loses points for the pieces of yours that you destroy on your turn.

Points for Summoning Legends

If you summon a legend, you get 1 point. The crowd loves to see dragons and elementals.

This is different from the High Form, where you scored points for legendary pieces on the board. In a deathmatch duel, the point is for summoning a being with the symbol on its card. Legendary pieces that come onto the board some other way do not score points. Similarly, you don't lose points when your legendary pieces are destroyed (although your opponent does gain points for destroying them, as explained above).

POINTS FOR FLARES

The crowd loves the spectacle of your flare. However, their applause is not for you, but for your opponent – the crowd is dazzled by the excess magical energy flaring off your opponent's kalarite, and they know that you have decided to invoke a flare to counterbalance your opponent's dominance.

Whenever you invoke a flare, your opponent gains one point. It doesn't matter whether the flare is used for one effect or both.

(It might seem disadvantageous to invoke a flare and give your opponent a point. But it is often necessary. Sure, your opponent will score fewer points if you have fewer pieces on the board, but you will probably not score at all. It's better to invoke your flare and get back in the game. Maybe you can turn the tables and force your opponent to invoke a flare.)

Ending the Game



The end of the game is triggered when either player exceeds 17 points. Note that numerals 18 and higher are shaded to differentiate them. Note also the marks on the pillar between 17 and 18.

(The pillar has 2 marks because it denotes the end of a game with 2 players or 2 teams. A deathmatch melee has different end-of-game triggers for 3- and 4-player games.)

The end of the game is also triggered if either player draws the last card from his or her deck.

After each player has had a final complete turn (see page 7) the winner is the one with more points. Break ties as explained on page 7.

TEAM PLAY

Four players can play as two teams, competing either in the High Form or in a deathmatch duel. Most of the rules are similar to those for a two-player game.

Setting Up for Team Play

GAME BOARDS

The boards you use depend on whether you are playing the High Form or a deathmatch duel.

PLAYERS

Teammates should sit opposite each other. Each player chooses a different deck, but use only two colors of pieces, one complete set for each team.

(We recommend that the two Imperial decks be on different teams.)

After you shuffle your deck, turn the six bottom cards sideways.

(The end of the game is triggered if any player draws his or her last non-sideways card. Each team has twice as many cards as a single player, and this is a way to prevent the game from going on too long.)

Choose the starting player. Each player draws 3 cards from his or her deck and 1 flare.

Legends will be shared between teammates. The teammate who plays earlier should draw 2 legends. The other teammate will have to wait to see them.

If the game is a deathmatch duel, the player to the right of the starting player is the one who puts 1 common piece of each color on the game board, on squares marked .

Game Play

Players take turns, clockwise around the table. Because teammates sit opposite each other, the same team will not get two turns in a row.

On your turn, you use your team's pieces just as you would use your own pieces in a 2-player game. It doesn't matter which teammate put the piece on the board. You can only use the cards in your hand. You should not know what is in your teammate's hand.

However, you do have mechanisms for coordinating with your teammate.

PASSING CONTROL

Before any action or while resolving any card's effect, you can pass control of your turn to your teammate. Announce that you are passing control and hand your team's legends to your teammate.

Your teammate must use up all your remaining actions by placing common pieces on empty squares. That is the only type of action your teammate can take on your turn. Your teammate may not use your actions to discard or to summon a being (not even a legendary being). Your teammate may not invoke a flare.

(Why would you want to pass control of your turn? Well, if you aren't planning on doing anything except placing pieces, maybe it's better to have your teammate place them. After all, your teammate will have a chance to summon beings before you do.)

If you pass control while resolving the effect of a being or a flare, your teammate finishes resolving the effect. (And then your teammate uses up any actions remaining by placing common pieces.)

Once you pass control, you can no longer invoke a flare. You get control of your turn again only after your teammate has resolved any unresolved effect and used up all remaining actions.

Example:



With your first action, you placed a common piece. For your second action, you summon the Knight onto this square. The Knight can do up to 3 combat moves. For your first move, you destroy your opponents' heroic piece. But now you don't know what else to do. You aren't sure where your teammate needs the Knight's heroic piece to end up. So you pass control to your teammate.



Your teammate resolves the effect by making up to 2 more moves. That is all your teammate can do because you already used up your two actions.

(You can pass control at the beginning of an effect. So if you trust your teammate, you can let him or her make all 3 moves. Your teammate knows that destroying the heroic piece is a good move, and if your teammate decides not to do so, there is probably a very good reason. How much you trust your teammate's judgment is up to you.)

(Note that the Knight could have been summoned onto a different square. You are not allowed to summon the Knight and pass control before you have decided which square it will be on. This decision is part of the summoning action, not the card's effect. You can only pass control before an action or while resolving an effect.)

Example:



You meet the upper criterion of this flare. You begin your turn by invoking it. Because you have no way to summon a being this turn, not even after the standard leap, you pass control to your teammate. Your teammate decides how to use the possible standard leap and then uses your two actions to place common pieces. Then you finish up your turn.

FINISHING YOUR TURN

Whether you passed control or not, you always finish your own turn.

In the High Form, this is when you may claim 1 task. Keep tasks claimed by your team in a common pile.

In a deathmatch duel, this is when you count up points for enemy pieces your team destroyed. Advance your team's piece on the score board.

It doesn't matter which player was in control when the task was fulfilled or the piece was destroyed. Points scored by either player belong to both of you. You are playing as a team.

After scoring, draw cards so that you are holding 3 from your deck and 1 flare. If you have not already passed your team's legends to your teammate, hand them over

now. Your teammate should then draw legends so that he or she holds 2.

(Some cards in the Sylvan deck allow you to draw extra cards at this time. If it is an extra card from your deck, you draw it. If it is an extra legend, your teammate draws it.)

At the end of your turn, play passes to the opponent on your left, even if you passed control to your teammate during your turn.

Ending the Game

The point values that trigger the end of the game are the same as in a 2-player game. The end of the game is also triggered when any player draws his or her last non-sideways card. (For more on sideways cards, see the next section.)

Once the end has been triggered, each player gets one more complete turn, as explained on page 7. This means each team gets 2 more chances to affect the outcome.

Final scores are counted the same as in a 2-player game. Teammates win or lose (or draw) together.

Sideways Cards

The six sideways cards at the bottom of your deck are not just taking up space. They actually have a chance to come into play. There are two ways this can happen:

YOU CAN DRAW A SIDEWAYS CARD. The end of the game is triggered if you draw your last non-sideways card, but the sideways cards are still there for you to draw. For example, if you need to draw 2 and the top card is the last non-sideways card, you will draw the top sideways card as well.

SIDEWAYS CARDS GET STRAIGHTENED WHEN YOU RETURN CARDS TO THE BOTTOM OF YOUR DECK. Recall that, as an action, you may discard one card that came from your deck and then return any number of the remaining cards to the bottoms of their respective decks. When you return a card to your deck in this way, it becomes one of the six bottom cards. It should be sideways. And the top sideways card should be straightened so that you still have exactly six.

Communication

Teammates are not supposed to talk about their strategy. They should communicate only through the mechanism provided, passing control. It's up to you to decide how strict you will be about this. Players don't have to be absolutely silent; the game is a social occasion. But players should definitely not show each other their cards or communicate secretly.

Take Backs

Once you pass control of your turn to your teammate, it's too late to take back any decisions you made earlier this turn.

DEATHMATCH MELEE (3 OR 4 PLAYERS)

A deathmatch melee allows you to play Tash-Kalar with 3 or 4 players, each fighting against all the others. The goal is to destroy your opponents' pieces, with a strong incentive to spread your destruction evenly.

This form was developed primarily for 3-player games. If you play it with 4, you may find that the game is longer and the battle is harder – by the time you get your next turn, all your pieces might have been wiped off the board. If that doesn't bother you, jump right in and enjoy a fierce battle full of twists and reversals! But if you prefer a game with less chaos, you should consider team play when you have 4 players.

Setting Up for a Deathmatch Melee

GAME BOARDS



Use the same side of the game board as you would for a deathmatch duel.

You do not use the task board, nor do you use a common score board. Instead, each player has his or her own score board.

PLAYERS



Each player chooses a school and takes the cards, pieces, and score board in that color.

Take one heroic piece from each other player and place it on the zero space of your score board. Be sure these pieces are heroic side up. This will be important later.

(During play, you will score points in your opponents' colors by moving the piece of that color on your score board. At the end of the game, your final score will be determined by the color in which you scored the fewest points. So you will be trying to keep your points balanced among all colors.)

Choose a starting player, then draw cards in the usual way.

The player to the right of the starting player (the one whose first turn comes after everyone else has played once) places the initial pieces on the board:

- In a 3-player game, this player puts 1 common piece of each color on the game board, each on a square adjacent to a different symbol.
- In a 4-player game, this player does the same, except that the piece of the player who will play second is left out. (Even in a 4-player game, only 3 pieces start on the board.)

So for each symbol, the player will have the choice of 2 squares. Each symbol will have exactly 1 piece adjacent to it.

(In case you were wondering, this rule is to compensate for the disadvantage of being the last player to start. In a 3-player game, the first player has the advantage of going first and the second player has the advantage of being the first to use two actions. The third player gets the advantage of placing the pieces.

In a 4-player game, the first player has the advantage of going first. The second player can end his or her turn with just as many pieces on the board as the first player, with the advantage of choosing where both of them go. The third player gets two actions like the second player, with the advantage of already having one piece on the board. The fourth player's advantage over the third is the choice of where to place the first pieces.

In practice, any tiny advantage is overwhelmed by the ebb and flow of the game, but we like it when the rules are fair – and anyway, somebody has to decide where the initial pieces will be.)

Game Play

Players try to gain points in all opponents' colors.

POINTS FOR DESTROYED PIECES

During your turn, leave all the enemy pieces you destroy beside the board. (Converting an enemy piece to your color also counts as destroying it.) At the end of your turn, return the pieces and score points for the enemy pieces you destroyed:

- 2 points for each legendary piece;
- 1 point for each heroic piece;
- 1 point for each pair of common pieces in the same color.

Points are scored separately for each color. Use the pieces on your score board to keep track.

Example:



Red has destroyed these pieces during her turn. She scores 3 points in blue and 2 points in green. She scores no points for the unpaired common piece.

After making same-colored pairs of common pieces, you might have 2 (or 3) unpaired pieces of different colors. If so, you choose one of those colors and score 1 more point in it.

Example:



Red scores 1 point for blue and 1 point for brown. This leaves 1 green common piece and 1 blue common piece unpaired. Red may either score 1 point in green or score an additional point in blue.

(Players naturally choose the color in which they are farthest behind. However, part

of mastering Tash-Kalar is learning to predict the course of the game and recognize which color will be hardest to score on later turns.)

POINTS FOR SUMMONING LEGENDS

As in the deathmatch duel, you get 1 point for summoning a legend. You choose the color in which you score this point.

(Summoning a legend allows you to score a point in a color that would otherwise be difficult to score points in. Use this power wisely.)

POINTS FOR OPPONENTS' FLARES

When a flare is invoked, THE INVOKER DECIDES WHICH OPPONENT is compared against. This determines whether the invoker can use the upper effect, the lower effect, or both. (If the invoker doesn't meet either criterion, the invoker can't choose that opponent.)

The player compared against SCORES 1 POINT in the invoker's color.

Example:



Red can invoke her flare only against Blue. If she does, she resolves both effects and Blue gains 1 point.



Example:



In this situation, Red can invoke her flare against either Blue (upper criterion) or Green (lower criterion). Red may choose either opponent. She can base her choice on which effect she wants to use or on which player benefits less from a point in her color. She cannot choose them both and use both effects.

(And one more thing to consider: Sometimes, giving someone a point in your color has advantages. An opponent who has a lot of points in your color will be more focused on destroying other players' pieces.)

The choice of opponent determines which effects the invoker can use and who gets the point for the invoker's flare. It does not limit choices that can be made when resolving effects. For example, if an effect allows the invoker to do something to "an enemy piece", the invoker may choose any opponent's piece, regardless of who was chosen for comparison.

IMPROVISED SUMMONING

In a deathmatch melee, you have the (limited) possibility of using an opponent's piece in your summoning pattern. Each opponent's color can be used once per game.

When summoning a being, you can choose one opponent's piece and use it as though it were your piece of the same rank. If you do, flip the piece in that color on your score board from ⚔ to ⚔. This shows that you have used that color. You cannot use it again during the game.

Example:

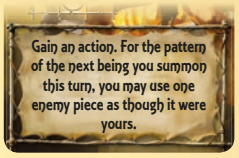


Red has not yet done any improvised summoning, so all the pieces on her score board are heroic side up. Red would like to use an opponent's piece to help her summon the Swordmaster. She can use the lower common green piece and summon the Swordmaster on the green-framed square, but she decides to use the blue piece and summon the Swordmaster on the blue-framed square. On her score board, she flips over the blue piece so that it is common side up. She uses the effect to destroy a green piece and upgrade the Swordmaster.



(Red cannot summon the Swordmaster on the squares marked with ✖ because improvised summoning does not allow her to use more than one enemy piece.)

You can summon any being (even a legend) with improvised summoning. You can use improvised summoning more than once on the same turn, but each summoning can use only 1 enemy piece. And don't forget that each color can be used only once per game.



(Improvised summoning can be used cumulatively with a card's effect. The War Summoner allows you to use one enemy piece as though it were yours. Combining this with an improvised summoning would allow you to use 2 enemy pieces, and only one would count against your "once per game" limit.)

Some patterns require a piece on the square where the being is summoned. Even in this situation, you may do an improvised summoning.

Example:



Red can use the common green piece to summon the Cannon on the green square or the heroic blue piece to summon the Cannon on the blue square. Red chooses the blue square and the summoning destroys the heroic blue piece.



(Note that the Cannon cannot be summoned on the square with the legendary green piece. Heroic beings can never be summoned on squares with legendary pieces, regardless of color.)

An enemy piece used in an improvised summoning does not change sides. During evaluation of the effect, it is still an enemy piece.

Example:



With improvised summoning, Red can summon the Champion onto the green-framed square. The Champion's effect allows Red to destroy the heroic green piece. Even though it was used in summoning, it is still an enemy piece.



(On the card, only 5 adjacent squares are marked, but that does not prevent the Champion from destroying the green piece. The card says "1 adjacent enemy piece" and the card's text has precedence over the illustration. However, if the card had said "1 piece on one of the marked squares", then the Champion could not have destroyed any piece used to summon it because those squares are not marked.)

Ending the Game

Each score board has two marked pillars. In a 3-player game, the end-of-game pillar is the one with 3 marks (the last pillar, after space 11). In a 4-player game, the end-of-game pillar is the one with 4 marks (after space 9).

The end of the game is triggered when any player crosses the end-of-game pillar with any opponent's color.

(In a 4-player game, the end is triggered if any player gets 10 points in any color. In a 3-player game, the end is triggered if any player gets 12 points in any color, which moves that piece off the end of the board.)

The end of the game is also triggered if any player draws the last card from his or her deck.

Once the end of the game has been triggered, each player gets one more complete turn, as explained on page 7.

SCORING

Your score is determined by the color in which you have the fewest points. If players are tied, break the tie according to their second-lowest colors. If players are still tied (in a 4-player game) break the tie by considering the remaining color. If there is still a tie, break it as explained on page 7.

The number of points you can score in a color is not limited by the size of the score board. If a piece moves off the end, keep track of each additional point scored.

(Of course, most of the time, it doesn't matter because the final score is determined by lower-scoring colors.)

Example:



In a four-player game, Red has scored 10 brown points. This triggers the end of the game. Red finishes her turn. Then Blue, Brown, Green, and Red (again) each get one more complete turn, with the depicted result.

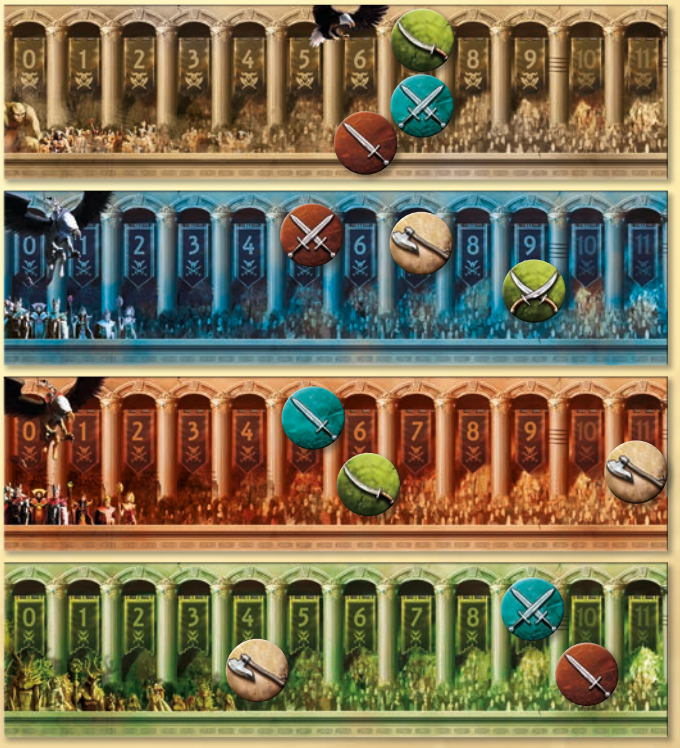
Brown wins. He has 6 points in his lowest-scoring color.

Red and Blue both have 5 points in their lowest-scoring colors. Comparing the next colors, we see that Blue is second and Red is third.

Green is last. She actually has the highest point total, but that doesn't matter. She has only 4 points in her lowest-scoring color.

(Note that the player who triggered the end of the game finished in third place. The end is triggered by one player's highest-scoring color, but it is the lowest-scoring color that counts. If Red had been able to score a blue or green point in her last turn, she would have been second. And if she had scored a point in both, she would have won.)

(Note also that it doesn't matter whether the pieces have the heroic side or the common side up. That has no effect on scoring.)



A Few More Thoughts From Vlaada

The Patterns



For some players, it may be a problem to match the patterns with the formations on the board.

My advice is: do not compare the card directly with the situation on the board. Instead, take a look at the card and analyze the pattern, so it is easy to memorize. For example, the Knight requires four tokens in an L shape. It is much easier to find an L or mirrored-L shaped group of pieces than a group that matches a certain generic pattern.

When examining cards this way, you will probably also note there is some logic behind many of the patterns. Some are graphical and easy to see. Some are more subtle. For example, mounted beings: the Wolf Rider has the same L shaped pattern as the Knight. He is just summoned closer to the "head" of the wolf, while the Knight straddles the middle of the back of his horse. Even the Centaur Spearman (who is closest to a rider from the Sylvan deck) uses a similar pattern, and the Gryphon Rider has a diagonal L shape, sitting behind the neck of his gryphon.



When thinking why the Cavalry Captain pattern has nothing to do with other mounted patterns, you may notice the military leaders have patterns recalling the formation of their units: the Cavalry Captain appears in front of a cavalry formation.



You may try to find your own explanations, or you may learn more info about patterns, background, and effects of particular beings (as well as some strategy tips and interesting facts related to them) at www.tash-kalar.com.

The Decks

We at CGE playtested the decks very intensively. You can win or lose with any deck, and your skill really matters.

You may notice the reverse side of all decks are the same, despite the fact that decks never get mixed. It is for the sake of future features and game modes. Some of them are posted at www.tash-kalar.com already!

A GAME BY
VLAADA CHVÁTIL

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID COCHARD
GRAPHIC DESIGN: FILIP MURMAK
ADDITIONAL GRAPHICS: RADIM PECH
TRANSLATION: JASON HOLT
LEAD TESTERS: VÍT VODIČKA
PETR MURMAK

TESTERS: Vitek, Kreten, Vodka (congrats on winning the playtester tournament!), Rychlik, Filip, Eshu, Tuko, Vytick, Paul, Alne, Marcela, Jirka Bauma, Hrabinho, Aneken, Roneth, Elwen, Min, Juraj, Danielka, Eklp, Plema, Tomáš, Ondra, Dita, Jana Isabella, Honza, Radka, Jacob, Matúš, Dan, Alča, Peťa, Rumun, R.A., Lefi and more from Brno Board Game club and many gamers we met at various Czech and foreign gaming events.

THANKS TO: Miloš Procházka for managing the online playtesting community, Paul Grogan for international support and presentations, Jason Holt for all the great names and terms, David Cochard for the awesome art and all CGE people for making my game happen in this epic form.

SPECIAL THANKS TO: My wife Marcela for her double support (the moral support and the programming support for online playtesting ☺)

© Czech Games Edition, October 2013.
www.CzechGames.com

Czech Games Edition