Hit the Deck!

Introduction

Hit the Deck! is a 2-player abstraction of a naval battle using playing cards from a standard 52-Card Poker Deck. The Captains (the players) use the Cards as Ships on a 3x3 grid representing the 9 Seazones comprising the Seamap where the battle takes place. Players attack and defend using 3-Card Poker Hands. The winning Captain will blockade their Enemy's Seaports.
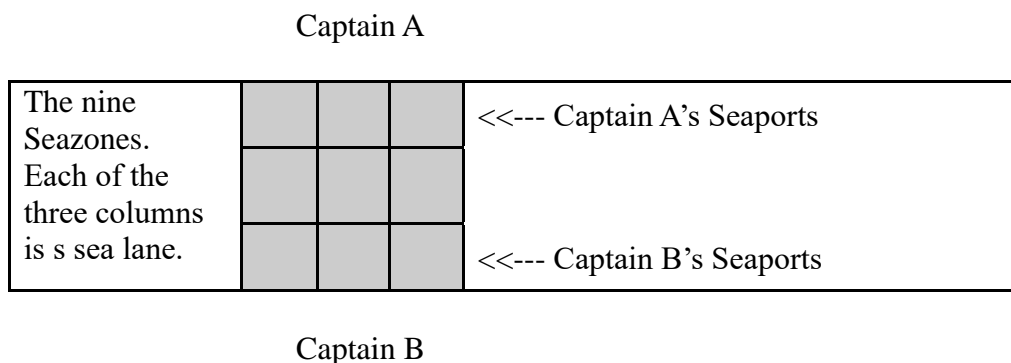
Overview and Objective

Hit the Deck! is played by two players (Captains) on a 3x3 grid called the Seamap. Each Space on the Seamap is called a Seazone. The three Seazones closest to a Captain are the Seaports used by that Captain to launch attacks. A battle between opposing Card Ships is called a Sea Battle.

The Sealanes are the three columns of Seazones stretching between the two Captains.

The Captains Draw a Hand of Cards (Card Ships) from the Deck of Cards and use their Card Ships to attack, and defend against, their Enemy.

Figure 1.

Captain A

The nine Seazones. Each of the three columns is s sea lane.				<<--- Captain A's Seaports
				<<--- Captain B's Seaports

Captain B

To win the game of Hit the Deck! a player must either:

1. Blockade the Enemy's 3 Seaports (the 3 Seazones closest to the Enemy), by using Card Ships to occupy all 9 Seazones. This is called a Blockade Victory.

or

2. Occupy the most Enemy Sealanes when there are no more Ships (cards) remaining in the Deck of Cards. If neither Captain occupies more Sealanes than the other, the winner is the Captain with the most number of Cards in hand. If there is still a tie, the Captain with the highest ranking Poker Hand (in their hand) wins.

3. Alternate Win Condition: For the advanced play, we suggest instead of a tiebreaker with the Captain with the most number of Cards in hand, it should be the Captain with the most Seazones controlled that wins the Game. If there is a tie, then the Captain with the most Cards in hand wins, and so on. This alternate win condition is best used with the optional rules.

Setup

1. Shuffle a standard 52-card Poker Deck, and place it to the side of the 3x3 Seamap area.

2. Each Captain Draws a Hand of 7 Cards.

3. Each Captain has the option of Discarding their 7 Cards and Drawing a new Hand of 7 Cards. After one or both Captains have Drawn 7 new Cards, any Discarded Cards are shown to both Captains and then reshuffled into the Deck.

4. Choose a Captain to go first and point the Compass Active Player Token towards that Captain.

Turn Structure

1. Draw 1 Card from the Deck. (The Captain taking the first Turn of the game skips this step but Draws a Card on all subsequent turns.)

2. Deploy, Attack, or Pass.

3. Deploy, Attack, or Pass. However, a Captain may not Deploy or Attack more than once per Turn.

For example, the Captain might decide to Attack and then Pass instead of Deploying another Card Ship.

4. Draw 1 Card.

Start of Turn

At the start of one Captain's Turn, the Captain Draws a Card from the Deck, and the Compass Active Player Token is rotated towards him. (The Captain taking the first Turn of the game skips this step but Draws a Card on all subsequent turns.)

Deploy Action - A Captain Deploys a Ship by Placing a Card faceup on the Seamap grid. The first Card placed by a Captain in any of the 3 Sealane columns must be placed in the Captain's Seaport (one of the three Seazones closest to the Captain). Subsequent Cards in that Sealane must be placed in the next Seazone towards the Opponent. See Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Captain A

The nine Seazones labelled A-I.	G	H	I	G, H, I: Captain A's Seaports
	D	E	F	
	A	B	C	A, B, C: Captain B's Seaports

Captain B

Figure 2 example. On Captain B's first Turn, Captain B places a Card in Seazone A. On Captain B's second Turn, Captain B may place a Card in Seazone B or C (Seaport Spaces) or in Seazone D, because

there is already a Card in Seazone A. Captain B would not be able to place a Card in Seazones E (or F) until Captain B has placed a Card in Seaport Space B (or C).

Attack Action - A Captain may only attack Ships that are orthogonally adjacent (not diagonal) to a Card Deployed by the Attacking Captain. To perform an Attack:

1. The Attacking Captain may use a Normal Attack, Ramming, or a Broadside Attack. In each of these Attacks, the Attacking Captain chooses a Card from their hand and places it facedown next to the Card on the Seazone from which the Captain is Attacking. The Attacking Captain must state:

      1.a. Which of the Enemy's Card Ships is under attack and
      1.b. Whether it is a Normal Attack, Ramming Attack, or Broadside Attack.

2. The Defending Captain then has the option of whether to add a defensive Card to assist the Card Ship that is under Attack. If the Defending Captain chooses to assist the Card Ship under Attack, the Defending Captain chooses a Card from their Hand and places it facedown next to the Card under Attack.

3. The Captains reveal any facedown cards and calculate the value of the Attacking Cards and the Defending Cards along with any Supporting Cards, based on the table below.

4. Victory in each Sea Battle is awarded to the highest ranking Poker Hand.

The Attacking Captain's Attack may be enhanced by the existence of other Cards in the Seazones previously Deployed by the Attacking Captain, based on the following table:

Normal Attack Unless the Attacking Captain is using a Ramming or Broadside Attack (described below), the Attack is considered a Normal Attack…	The Attacking Captain may choose a Card from their Hand and place it facedown next to the Attacking Card Ship, as described above. The value of the Attacking Captain's Poker Hand will be calculated based on only these two Cards.	The Defending Captain uses a Normal Defence and has the option (as described above) to choose a Card from their Hand and place it facedown next to the Card Ship being Attacked. The value of the Defending Captain's Poker Hand will be based on only these 2 Cards. If the Defending Captain decides not to choose a Card from their Hand, the value of the Defending Captain's Poker Hand will be based on only the Ship Card being Attacked.

Ramming Attack If the Attacking Captain has 2 Ship Cards in the same Sealane as the Opponent Ship being Attacked...	The Attacking Captain uses both of the Captain's Deployed Ship Cards in that Sealane in addition to the facedown Card played from the Captain's Hand, when calculating the Poker Hand value. The value of the Attacking Captain's Poker Hand will be calculated based on only these 3 Cards.	If the Defending Captain has a Card adjacent to the Rammed Card Ship, the Defending Captain may include the adjacent Card Ship, along with the Card the Defending Captain played from their Hand, if any, in calculating the Poker Hand value. (Bastion Defence.)

Broadside Attack If the Attacking Captain is targeting a Card Ship in the same horizontal Row…	The Attacking Captain Draws an additional Card from the Deck and places it facedown next to the Attacking Card, along with the facedown Card chosen from the Attacking Captain's Hand. He may shout "Hit the Deck!" for luck. All 3 Cards are used in calculating the value of the Attacking Captain's Poker Hand.	If the Defending Captain has a second Card in the same Row that is adjacent to the Card Ship being Attacked, the Defending Captain may use both Cards in forming the Defending Captain's Poker Hand, along with the Card chosen by the Defending Captain from their Deck, if any. (This is called a Broadside Defence, the fourth Formation.)

Poker Hand Rankings

In Hit the Deck! Aces are low when part of a High Hand, Pair or Three of a Kind. For example, 3-3-3 would beat a hand of A-A-A.

However, Aces may be used as either low or high when used as part of a Straight. Thus, both A-2-3 and A-K-Q are both valid Straights. However, K-A-2 is not a valid Straight.

The value of the Poker Hands in Hit the Deck! are, from highest to lowest, as follows:

High Royal Flush (A-K-Q)
Low Royal Flush (K-Q-J)
Straight Flush
3 of a Kind
3-Card Straight
3-Card Flush
Pair, regardless of the number of Cards. For example, a 9-9 Hand defeats a Hand of 7-7-4
High Card, regardless of the number of Cards. For example, a single King defeats a Hand of Q-7-3.

In case of a tie, suits are ranked Spade>Heart>Diamond>Club. For example, a Straight Flush of 7-6-5 of Hearts would defeat a Straight Flush of 7-6-5 of Diamonds.

Results of Combat

If the Attacking Captain wins the Sea Battle, the Defending Card Ship is removed from the Seazone it was occupying and is Discarded.

If the Attacking Captain is successful in a Broadside Attack, any Enemy Card Ships further forward (from the Defending Captain's perspective) in the Sealane are also removed. See Figure 3.

Figure 3.

<div style="text-align:center">Captain A</div>

The {			A	<<--- Captain A's Seaports
nine {			6♣	
Seazones {		B	A	
{		5◊	3♣	
{		B	A	<<--- Captain B's Seaports
{		5♣	7◊	

<div style="text-align:center">Captain B</div>

Example: Captain A has Card Ships spanning the right-most Sealane. Captain B performs a Broadside Attack on Captain A's 3 of Clubs Card Ship. Captain B provides a Supporting Card of a 4 of Diamonds and from the Deck Draws a 6 of Diamonds. Captain A chooses not to add a Supporting Card. Captain B's Poker Hand of the 6-5-4 of Diamonds beats the Defending Hand of the 3 of Clubs. Captain A's 3 of Clubs is removed from the Seazone. Additionally, because the 3 of Clubs was behind Captain A's 7 of Diamonds in the bottom right Seazone, Captain A's 7 of Diamonds is also removed from its Seazone.

If the Defending Captain wins the Sea Battle, nothing happens and no Card Ships are removed from the Seazones.

A Captain winning a battle using a high Royal Flush (A-K-Q) may destroy any 2 orthogonally adjacent Enemy Card Ships.

Post-Battle Cleanup

After the Sea Battle, remove and Discard any Cards used for Attacking and Defending added during the Battle.

Pass Action

A Captain may choose to Pass and not take an Action.

End of Turn

At the end of one Captain's Turn, the Captain Draws a Card from the Deck, and the Compass Active Player Token is rotated towards the other Captain and play continues until one of the Captains achieves naval superiority!

Terminology:

Blockade: A Blockade is formed when one of your Card Ships Occupy the Enemy's Seaport Seazone. Should all of the Enemy's Seaport Seazones be Blockaded, you win the game.

Broadside Defence: During a Broadside Attack on the Defender, if the Defender has a second Card Ship in the same Row that is adjacent to it, they may use both Cards in the Defence.

Captain: The Captain is the term for a Player on either side of the game.

Cutting Supply Routes: Should you Destroy an Enemy Card Ship that are in Rows behind other Enemy Card Ships, those that are in front of this Card Ship gets Destroyed too.

Deck: The Deck refers to the Draw Pile from which you Draw more Card Ships.

Formation: Formations are the arrangements of Card Ships on the Seamap, that have adjacent Cards in legitimate positions for them to Support your Cards Attacking or Defending, for instance Ram, Bastion, Broadside and Broadside Defence.

Foundation: Foundation refers to the Deployment of Card Ships before you can place advanced Card Ships on the Seamap, basically Card Ships placed foremost in your Seaports first, before any Card Ships can be Deployed further down the Sealanes.

Rows: Rows are the horizontal Seazones on the Seamap.

Seaport: The Seaports are the three back Row Spaces nearest to a Player on the Seamap.

Bastion: A Bastion is formed when two Card Ships are placed adjacent to each other in the Seaport. Both Card Ships Support each other in the event of an Attack on either position.

Sealanes: Sealanes are the vertical columns on the Seamap.

Seamap: The Seamap is the name for the 3x3 grid board for the game.

Seazones: Seazones are the Areas and Spaces you place Card Ships on the Seamap.

Supply Routes: Card Ships can only be placed in Seazones that are already connected to your Seaports.

A, Aircraft Carrier is Ace.
B, Battleship is King.
C, Cruiser is Queen.
D, Destroyer is Jack.
Frigate is 10.
Gunboat is 9.
Skiff is 2.
Dinghy is 3.
Corvette is 4.
Schooner is 5.
Keel is 6.
Barge is 7.