



V1.1.

A playing-card version of the fantasy strategy game by Gareth Mottram

PURPOSE OF THE GAME

MOVE, STACK, ATTACK OR PACK TO WIPE OUT YOUR ENEMIES, CAPTURE KINGS AND INVADE STRONGHOLDS

You move your cards around the playing area individually or in stacks to take your opponent's cards. If you take their king or reach their back line with your king, the game stops and you earn bonus Victory Points to add to the value of the cards you have taken.

Game Components (for 2 players)

- 1 pack of normal playing cards

PREVIEW/REMINDER RULES

Setup: Lay out 4x8 play area with face-down clubs and diamonds. Choose hearts or spades, remove King and Squire, shuffle your suit. Lay out 8 cards face-up in front of your **stronghold** (back row of face-down marker cards). Place your King and Squire anywhere on your stronghold (first mover places first – see next). Lay remaining cards face-down off the play area (**reserves**).

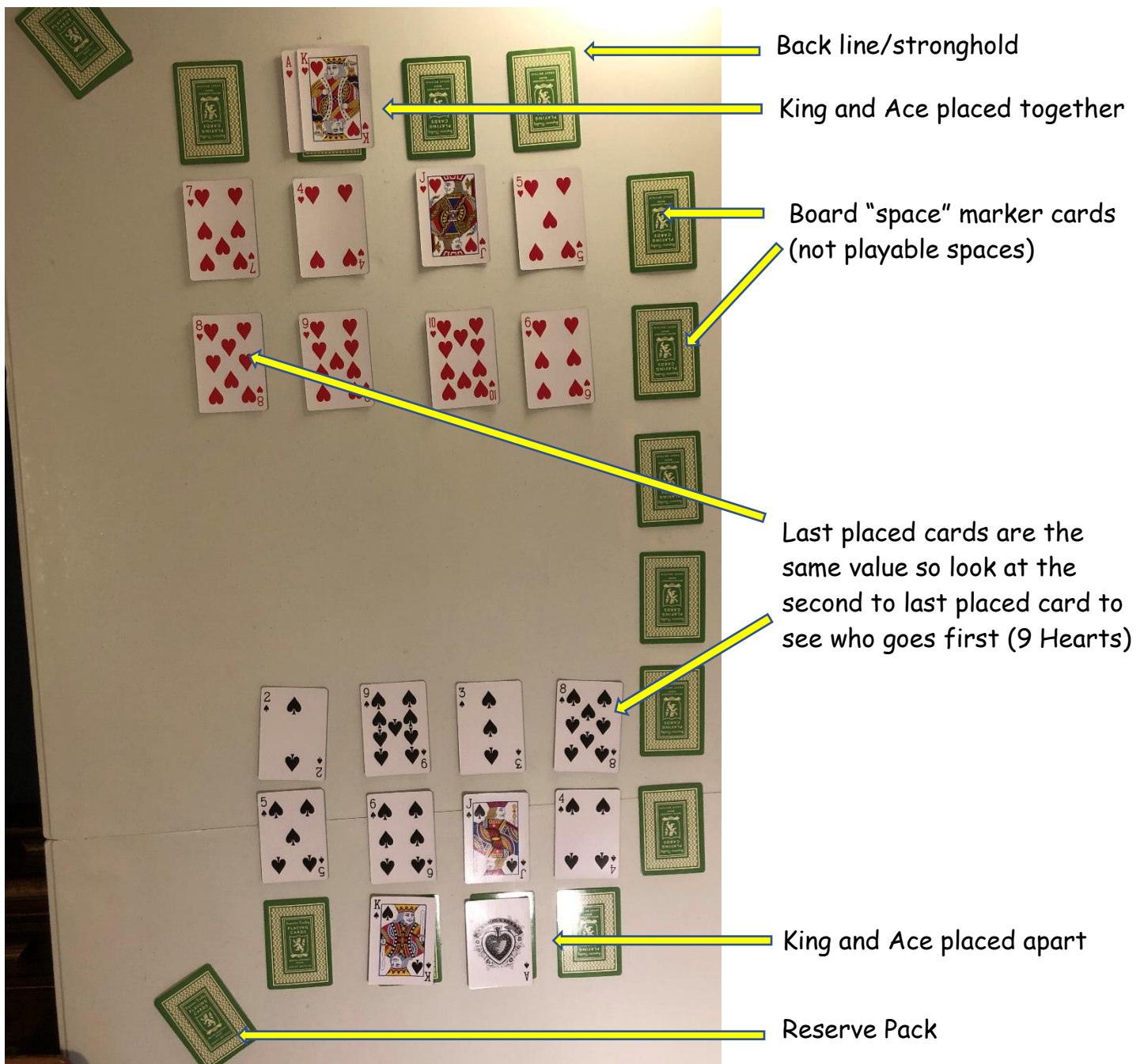
Take Alternate Turns: Highest **melee ability** (face value) of the last-laid card goes first (Face cards [Royals] = 10, Ace =1). Choose one action from:

- **Move:** One card or stack up to the maximum rate orthogonally – Royals move max. 3, number cards move max. 1. Can move over friendly cards as long as the move does not (even temporarily) exceed the space maximum (see stack). Cannot move over enemy cards.
- **Stack:** Move a card(s) onto a friendly card(s). Maximum 3 cards, Royals count as 2. Can now move as one unit. Stack movement is limited to the slowest card but a Royal may **split off** - carry on, leaving a number card behind. **Royal Rider:** A Royal can stack with an Ace and both move up to 3 spaces.
- **Attack:** Move your card or stack onto an enemy card or stack. Highest total melee ability wins. Stacks add up each of its card's melee abilities. Losing card(s) removed from play. Exact draw => all cards removed from play.
- **Pack:** Place top card from reserves face-up anywhere on your stronghold (OK to stack or attack).

Winning: Game stops when either a King is killed, or a King reaches the enemy stronghold. You receive 20 bonus victory points (VP) for either condition. Add this bonus to the total melee abilities of all enemy cards you have killed (inc. King) to give your total **Victory Points**. Highest total VP wins.

SETUP

1. One player takes all the hearts, the other takes all the spades.
2. Use the rest of the pack (diamonds and clubs) face-down to mark out the edges of a 4 (wide) X 8 (long – between players) area. (See diagram) The 4-wide row of face-down cards in front of you represents your stronghold. The 6 cards between the players are markers only – not available spaces.
3. Each player takes out their king and ace then shuffles the rest of their pack.
4. Each player lays out their shuffled cards, face up, in 2 rows of 4 cards just in front of his/her stronghold. Laying out should run from left to right, closest row first for both players, then second row etc (i.e. you can't choose which position to place each of your cards in).
5. The player who's last card has the highest melee ability (picture cards = 10) will go first. If it is a tie, look at the 2nd to last cards placed etc.
6. The first player places his/her king and ace anywhere on his/her stronghold. They can be separate or in the same space (Stacked – see below). The second player then does the same.



HOW TO PLAY

7. The players take alternate turns. They can do one of the following actions on their turn:

- **Move:** move an individual card or stack into a clear space or
- **Stack:** move an individual card or stack onto another friendly card/stack or
- **Attack:** move an individual card or stack onto an enemy card/stack or
- **Pack:** add a card to your stronghold from your reserves pile.

MOVE

8. Individual Number Cards

- a) can move one space forward, backward or to either side (no diagonals)

9. Individual Royal Cards

- a) (King, Queen, Jack) may move up to (and including) three spaces to the front, behind or either side *{to reflect their mounted status}*
- b) They may repeatedly change direction (eg an L or dog-leg shape) during their move
- c) They may pass through friendly cards or stacks (see below) subject to stack maximums (see below)
- d) They cannot ride through an enemy card or stack – they have to attack (see below) if they want to move onto an enemy-occupied square.

STACK

A stack is simply allied cards stacked on top of each other (but laid so all individual values are shown).

10. Forming a Stack

- a) An individual card or stack simply moves onto another allied card or stack.
- b) Stack Restrictions
- Maximum of 3 number-cards in a stack (*Only so many warriors can fight in one space*)
 - A Royal can only stack with 1 number card (*horses are big!*) – *exception: Royal Rider (see below).*

11. Moving a Stack

- a) All cards in a stack can move together in the same direction in a single turn.
- b) A stack can move one space forward, backward or to the side. It can only move one space even if it has a Royal in it. *{Royal has a horse but the infantry doesn't!}* *Exception: See splitting off and Royal Rider.*

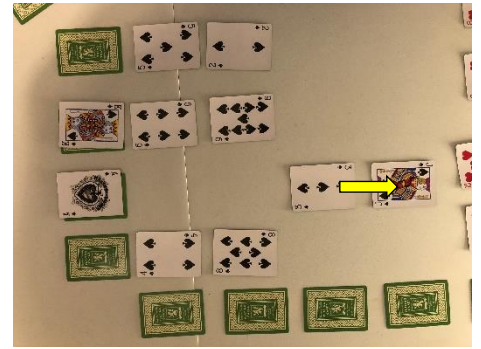
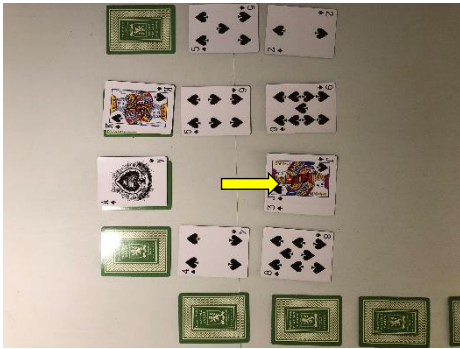
12. Picking up a Stack

- a) A mounted Royal (face-card) may form a stack with one number card and immediately move that stack 1 space **IF** the Royal has enough movement points left (i.e. it only had to move 1 or 2 spaces to form the stack). Additionally, the Royal could then Split Off (see below) if it still had a movement point remaining.
- E.g.: If a Queen (move maximum of 3) moves 1 space to stack with a Six (move maximum of 1), that new stack can move on 1 space as the original mover (Queen) still has 2 moves left. Further, the Queen could then drop the 6 and move on 1 final space.
 - This follows the “**original mover**” principle – the movement of any stack is always limited to the maximum movement of the card(s) that began the movement as well as by the slowest card in the stack.
 - Number-cards can't move to form a stack then move the stack on, as the original mover can only move 1 space per turn.

13. Splitting Off from a Stack

- a) **Split Off – number-cards:** One or two number cards can move off a stack during their turn. All cards splitting off must go in the same direction.
- b) **Split Off – Royals:** Royals in a stack have a few options:
 - I. Move one space with the stacked number-card and then stop.
 - II. Move one space with the number-card and then leave it and carry on for 1 or 2 spaces.
 - III. Leave the number card and move for 1-3 spaces.
- c) The “left-behind” card(s) does not also get a move when a card(s) splits off.

E.g. Pick up and Split



1. The Jack (original mover) moves 1 space to stack with the Three.

2. The new stack moves on 1 space as the Jack still had 2 moves left and the Three has 1.

3. The Jack drops the Three (as number cards can only move 1 space) and carries on using up its last move.

14. Royal Rider

A royal rider is a special case of a stack.

- a) Any Royal and the Ace may stack without restricting the Royal's movement rate of 3 {*this represents a small, lightly armed squire riding/fighting pillion with a Royal*}
- b) The Ace does not count towards a stack maximum (i.e. one other number card may also stack with a Royal-Rider).
- c) Apart from the movement allowance, normal stacking rules apply to royal rider.

ATTACK

15. Attack

To attack, your card or stack simply moves onto an enemy card or stack within movement range.

- a) Battles are resolved immediately – highest total Melee Ability wins (see below).
- b) The losing card/stack is removed from play and the victor stays on the attacked space.
- c) If the combat ability totals are exactly equal, all cards on both sides are killed and all removed from play.

16. Melee Ability

- a) The number cards are worth their exact value in melee ability regardless of suit. Aces are low (1 point).
- b) The Royals - King, Queen and Jack (prince) cards each have a melee ability of 10.
- c) The melee ability of a stack is simply the sum of all its card's melee abilities.

WINNING

17. Game End and Bonus Points

The game finishes when:

- a) One king is defeated (and removed from the battlefield as normal) = **20 Bonus Points** or
- b) One king (alone or in a stack) reaches the opponent's stronghold = **20 Bonus Points**
- c) NOTE: It is possible for an opponent's king to be defeated on its back line by the enemy king (in a stack or Royal Rider) – all bonus VP apply.
- d) Occasionally, it might appear there is a stalemate position e.g. Neither king can be realistically killed by the other side and neither king can reach the opposing back line without being killed. In this case, the game stops and there are no bonus points awarded.

18. Winning and Victory Points

- a) Once one of the Game End conditions has been met, simply add up the melee abilities of all the enemy cards you have taken (inc. King) plus any bonus points. This gives you your total **Victory Points**.
- b) The winner is the player with the most Victory Points.

19. 3-4 Players

- a) Simply add in the other two suits, reds on one side, blacks on the other – control a suit each or 1 player controls both red or both black suits.
- b) Double the width of the play area – 8 card stronghold. You'll need a second deck as markers.
- c) Alternate colour play eg hearts – spades – diamonds – clubs.
- d) Mixed-suit stacks of the same colour are allowed.
 - I. The stack is "controlled" by the highest card: Ace => King (Tie: Spades > Clubs, Hearts > Diamonds). Thus, the stack can move on the "controller's" turn. Exception – a non-"controller" card in a stack may split off on its turn.
- e) Game-end conditions are the similar but not the same as in the two-player game:
 - I. One king reaches the enemy stronghold: 20 bonus points **or**
 - II. Both red or both black kings are killed. When the first king on a side is killed, that suit misses its next turn (command confusion!) and the other side gains 20 bonus points.

What Ever Next?

Optional and Extension Rules

There are many ways to extend and modify the Battle Ace game (using standard decks of cards). I'll release my optional rule ideas on the Battle Facebook page and would be delighted to hear any suggestions. How about...

- **Campaign Rules:** Players agree to play a set number of games in a campaign. Victory points from each game are totalled for both players – highest total wins.
- **Bloodbath:** Take out one or two rows between the set-out armies – see how quickly the killing starts!
- **Joker:** The joker is a magical doppelganger and can take on the melee ability of any non-royal inc. the squire's (Ace) Royal Rider ability. Alternatively, it's an assassin with all direction movement and melee value of 10 (poison).

Further Information

Join me on the Battle Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gmbattlecards>) to find out the latest news, optional rules and write comments and suggestions on the game.

Enjoy Battle Ace and...

Unleash the Pack