RULES

Tactical Card Game

Berserk

The world of Laar. In that world blue ocean used to lazily beat its waves on the beach and one could admire the immense virgin forests. Magic was known in this world but in a very simplified way – there were no magicians that could burn enemy troops or incinerate the whole city with eldritch fire. Wizards brought down the rain, drove away hot winds, cured the cattle and performed other trivial tasks. It used to be like that. And then the Cataclysm came.

Components

30-card Plains deck
30-card Mountains deck
30-card Forests deck
30-card Swamp deck
30-card Fire deck
30-card Dark forces deck
63 cards for customizing
Rulebook
Comic strip
2 game boards
2 reference cards
2 six-sided dice
Damage and effect tokens:

Damage tokens	Extra life point	Poison	Positive modifier	Negative modifier	Can't attack

The Legend

Laar, as any other world, had its strong people and its weak ones. Southern sloughs of Ishara were inhabited by thin and vanishing tribe of ungar people. Long time ago they ruled vast fertile valleys. Though, little by little they have been forced by the Ancient Races out from their primordial domain. Every year the population of the Ungars was decreasing, and their extinction seemed to be inevitable. But Ungars' destiny saved them from ruin.

In a tribe neglected and lost, dying in the grip of poverty and misfortune, a boy was born – his name was Arhaal. He was to become the most powerful wizard of Laar. No one knew exactly how he found his gift but they said he could light and put out the stars in the sky. This boy became the last hope of the declining tribe – a hope for revenge. The Ungars struggled out from their sloughs.

Young Arhaal led the small army from one victory to another. But every time he used his sorcery Arhaal had to draw more power from the mystical well of magic, and threatening omens became more and more explicit. Other wizards stood up against the Ungars. Arhaal was so eager to destroy them all in one stroke that he overestimated himself. He opened the gate for tremendous forces that invaded Laar and changed the face of the world once and for all.

The Cataclysm came. The sun of Laar has extinguished in blinding flash and turned to faint scarlet star. Fire downpours rained down on the world. Oceans boiled, and sand deserts turned to plains of black glass. Myriads have died. The Northern Laar has plunged in everlasting darkness. Only the most horrible monsters could survive there.

Throngs of dreadful creatures have born from firestorms and death throes of Cataclysm. Those monsters knew no other passion and no other toil than murder. Unfortunately, hardships of that dark age have evoked monstrous aspects in many humans and other peoples.

However terrifying magic torrents that ran through Laar have brought more than calamities. The magic available to wizards became much stronger than before. Still now it depended on runic crystals created in the flame of fire rains tormenting Laar.

Using these crystals wizards were able to create powerful spells, for example, they could lift water from the depths of lands that had avoided the Cataclysm. Inevitably those precious crystals became the main reason for merciless and unstoppable wars among the few survivors of the

Cataclysm. The more crystals had a city, a village or a clan – the more water it could get, the more fecund was the ground and the better was the cattle yield. People did not care about the fate of Laar, all they wanted was the power, and they were ready to destroy anyone who stood in their way. Lonely and weak could not survive in the world torn by magical fights...

Perhaps, Laar would have perished scorched by flames of the Cataclysm and finished off by raging storms of envy and greed. Fortunately, there is the way to revive the world. Not long before the disaster Star Guards, most far-sighted and mightiest Arhaal's opponents has created an artifact imbued with the power of the old world. The wizards gathered in the Tul-Bagar tower in Hallan mountains to complete their work just before the Cataclysm. They sacrificed themselves to give an unprecedented power to their creation. People believe that with the artifact recovered the sun of Laar will shine brightly again, new oceans will appear and forests will rise in place of deserts. Alas, Hallan mountains belong to the dark side of Laar where horrific monsters for many years sharpen their ability to kill. A tiny group of magicians who own rune crystals, made a vow not to fight with each other and try to reach the enchanted tower. Many of them have gone there, but no one returned. Maybe you are lucky enough to find your way.

Preparation to the Game

All you have to do is to press the tokens out of the punchboard (you will need them during the game) and to read these Rules.

«Berserk» is a Tactical Card Game for two players. Each player is a powerful warlord, who must defeat his opponent.

If you are planning on playing a draft and not a duel, please refer to page 15. The description of the draft variant is given there.

Berserk is a battle of two armies on the playing field (5×6 squares). Before the battle players form their troops with the help of card deck and place them on the field face down.

Cards

Dark forces

Mountains

Neutral

Cost

Basic strike

Movement

Life points

Abilities

Card number

Forests

Plains

Swamp

Fire

Edition symbol

Playing the game

Resourses. Players select who will go first. In «Berserk» you purchase cards using «gold» and «silver». By default you have 24 gold pieces and 22 silver. The amount of gold and silver depends on whether you are the first or the second player, and it also depends on how many different realms you use in your army.

Recruiting your army. Each player shuffles his deck and draws 15 cards from the top of the deck. Cards that remain in the deck are set aside.

Players look at their cards. If a player does not like those 15 cards, he can return them to the deck, shuffle again and draw 15 different cards (mulligan). Each mulligan costs 1 🔶.

Your resources		
Number of realms	First Player	Second Player
0	24 22	25 23
1	24 22	25 23
2	23 22	24 23
3	22 22	23 23
4	21 22	22 23
5	20 22	21 23
6	19 22	20 23

From the 15 cards in his hand a player chooses creatures for his army, according to the number of gold and silver he has. All cards in «Berserk» are divided into "elite" and "regular" cards. Elite cards (🔶) can only be purchased for gold pieces. Regular cards (🔷) can be purchased either for gold or for silver pieces. Cost of a particular card is shown as follows: 3 . When choosing your army it makes sense to pick elite cards first because they play a key role in battle. If some gold pieces are left over after choosing elite cards, you may use this gold to recruit regular cards. The remaining cards that were not recruited must be returned to the deck.

Placing Your Army on the Battlefield

Player One uses the central area of his part of the battlefield (3×3 squares) to place his army. Player Two can additionally use all the 5 squares of his first row for placement of his army.

If a player used up all the squares shown on the picture, he can use the remaining squares of his Row 2 and Row 3. If these squares are used up as well, player can use remaining squares in his Row 3. Flying creatures are also initially placed on empty squares on the battlefield, face down.

Other Game Zones

Deck. Player's deck consists of cards that player did not draw initially and those that he did not recruit into his army.

Graveyard. Destroyed creatures are placed in the graveyard.

Beginning the Battle

After both armies are placed on the battlefield, Player One turns his cards face up. Player Two turns his cards face up, except for cards in his Row 3; they remain hidden until the beginning of his first turn. Player One, however, can declare a «blind attack» on one of the hidden cards. If a hidden card in the third row is attacked, Player Two must turn the attacked card face up.

First Player's Turn

Player One moves and acts with his cards.

Movement (🐾). Movement points represent how many squares a creature can move during its turn. Creatures can move to unoccupied square forward, backward, left or right. Creatures cannot move diagonally or trade places with each other. If a creature moves one square, it spends 1 movement point. While a creature has not spent all its movement points it can move. A creature regains all its movement points whenever it becomes alert. The illustration shows one of the most common moves during the first turn of Player One. If a creature has «0» movement points, it cannot move.

Action (⬡). A card acts when it attacks or uses an ability. After a card has acted it is turned 90° clockwise and it is considered an exhausted card. An exhausted card can no longer move or act.

Basic Strike (⬅). Basic strike is a melee, non-magical attack. Each creature in «Berserk» has the basic strike.

Declare a Protector. To avoid receiving damage to one of your creatures (particularly if it is exhausted and cannot fight back) you may declare a protector. Any alert card adjacent to the attacker and to the defender, can become a protector. A protector engages in combat with the attacker instead of the defending card, and then the protector exhausts. Declaring a protector is an instant action. The illustration to the right shows the most common ways of declaring a protector.

Example of movement

Alert card

Exhausted card

1   2   3

Engage in Combat

If both attacking and defending cards are alert, combat results are determined as follows. Attacker rolls a die. Then defender rolls a die. Then a lesser number rolled is subtracted from the greater number and combat results are determined according to the table below. The attacker is exhausted after the attack. The defender does not exhaust.

Attacker rolled higher number		
Dice Difference	Attacker's Strike	Defender's Strike
1	light	miss
2	light *or* medium	miss *or* light
3	medium	miss
4	medium *or* strong	miss *or* light
5	strong	miss

Defender rolled higher number		
Dice Difference	Attacker's Strike	Defender's Strike
1	light	miss
2	miss	miss
3	miss	light
4	miss *or* light	light *or* medium
5	miss	medium

If both players rolled the same number: 1, 2, 3, 4 (or less, considering modifiers) attacker deals a light strike, defender misses. If 5, 6 (or more, considering modifiers) defender deals a light strike, attacker misses.

If the defending creature is exhausted, only the attacking player rolls a die.
- If the result is 1, 2, 3 (or less, considering modifiers) – his creature deals a light strike.
- If it is 4 or 5, it deals a medium strike.
- If it is 6 (or more, considering modifiers), it deals a strong strike.

The attacker does not get hit in return because its opponent's card is exhausted.
Note: as you see from the description above, an attack is always successful against an exhausted card.

Life Points (❤). Any successful attack, spell or effect deals damage to the opponent's card. Damage is represented by damage counters, which are placed directly on the damaged card. A creature dies (goes to the graveyard) when the number of damage counters on this card reaches or exceeds the number of life points that this card has.

Note: you can move your cards and act with them in any order. You can move all your cards and then start acting with them. You can move one of your cards, than act with it and only then move another card. You can even move one card, then a second, then a third, and only then act with the first card. The sequence depends on your strategic decisions.

The Second Player's Turn. When Player One has finished his turn, Player Two begins his turn, during which Player One cannot move his cards or act with them. During his first turn, Player Two begins by turning the cards in his 3 row face up. Then Player Two alerts all of his exhausted cards. Then Player Two moves and acts with his cards.

Winning the game. The battle continues until one of the players loses all his creatures.

Golden Rules

Rule of the Axe. If text of the card contradicts the text of the rules, the text of the card has priority.

Rule of Legality. If an action cannot be performed according to those rules or to the text on the card, it is considered illegal and it is cancelled without payment of its cost (for example, a card does not exhaust).

Rule of Cyclical Sequences. If a certain sequence of actions would be repeated an infinite number of times, then this sequence must be interrupted after the first repetition.

Glossary

Ability. A card's ability is anything, that a card can do during the game. This information appears in the text field of the card. Description of each single ability is one sentence that starts with a capital letter or a symbol, and ends with a dot.

Act/Action. Acting with a card means attacking with it, casting a spell, using an effect, or using one of the card's abilities. In the table to the right there are all types of actions in «Berserk». Melee attacks are dealt only against cards adjacent to the attacker. Ranged attacks are dealt at a certain range, while adjacent cards cannot be targeted. Other abilities (spells and effects) are not attacks and so they are neither ranged, not melee actions. What a particular spell or effect does is described in the text field on the card. Sometimes names of actions appear in quotes: e.g. «bonds of pain» or «aether wave». This is merely a flavor text.

Action Types		
	non-magical	**magical**
melee attack	basic strike special strike	magical strike
ranged attack	shot throw	blast
not an attack	effect	spell

Adjacent. An adjacent card is a card on a nearby square (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally).

Aimed Strike (⊕). A protector cannot be declared from an aimed strike.

Alert Card. An alert card is turned vertically, meaning the card can move and act. All player's cards become alert at the beginning of his turn. After a card acts it must exhaust, i.e. be turned sideways.

Armor X. Each turn Armor prevents first X wounds dealt to this card by non-magical attacks.

Attack. An attack is an action, whereby a creature declares or performs one of the following: Basic strike, Special strike, Magical strike, Blast, Shot or Throw.

Attacker/Attacking creature. A creature, which declares or performs an attack.

Attacked creature. A card, which was selected as a target for an attack or ability.

Attack Skill. When a creature with attack skill attacks with a basic strike, it gets +1 to its die roll. If card text reads «Attack skill X», the creature gets +X to its die roll. Attack skill is a modifier.

Attacker/Attacking creature. A creature, which declares or performs an attack.

Attacked creature. A card chosen as a target for an attack or ability.

Basic Strike (⬤). A melee, non-magical attack. Each creature in «Berserk» has a basic strike.

Basic Parameters of the Card. They are the card's cost (gold or silver), life (♥), movement points (🌀), and basic strike (⬤).

Blast X. Is a ranged, magical attack that deals X damage. Damage from a blast is determined by standard combat roll.

Bless. Blessed creature gets a bonus +1 to all its die rolls.

Block. Blocked ability does not inflict any damage. Any abilities associated with blocked attack, spell or effect does not work too. Meanwhile, attack, spell or effect should be paid for in full even if it has been blocked - exhaust the attacking creature.

Deck. A starter deck consists of 30 cards. Players can improve starter decks by combining different cards from various expansions of the game. A player's deck cannot contain more than 3 copies of the same card. Each deck should contain a maximum of 50 cards and a minimum of 30 cards.

Defense Skill. When an alert creature is defending against a basic strike it gets +1 to its die roll. If a card's text reads «Defense skill X», the creature gets +X to its die roll.

Destroy. Move a creature to graveyard without dealing wounds. All «When it dies»-abilities trigger.

Dies. Creature dies when it has wounds equal to its life points. There are some spells and effects able to destroy a creature at once, without dealing wounds.

Exhaust/Exhausted (🌀). An exhausted card is turned 90 degrees sideways, which means that this card can no longer move or act this turn.

Graveyard. A game zone located next to the battlefield. Destroyed creatures are placed there.

Heal X. An effect which removes X or less damage from a target creature.

Incarnation X. In the beginning of your turn put an incarnation token on this card if it is on your graveyard. Put this card exhausted on any square of your third row once there are X incarnation tokens on it. Usable once per card each game.

Jump, range X. Use instead of movement. Jump spends all creature's movement points. Move a creature to any empty square in a range X.

Magical Attack. Magical strike or blast.

Magical Strike. Is a melee, magical attack. Damage from a magical strike is determined by standard combat roll. A protector cannot be declared from a magical strike.

Melee Attack. Attacks against an adjacent card: magical strike, basic strike, or special strike.

Non-magical Attacks. These are basic strike, special strike, shot, throw and polearm strike.

Poison X. Is an effect. A poisoned creature gets X damage when it becomes alert at the beginning of its turn. If a creature is already alert in the beginning of its turn, damage is still dealt. If a creature could not become alert (due to some effect or spell) the damage is not dealt.

Protector. Any alert card adjacent to the attacker and to the target of the attack, can be declared as a protector. A protector engages in combat with the attacker instead of the defending card, and then the protector exhausts.

Protection from ... If a target of the attack, spell, or effect has protection from this action, then the action is blocked (damage is not dealt and dependent abilities do not work).

Protection from Blasts (⬢). Blocks blasts.

Protection from Shots (⬡). Blocks shots.

Protection from Magic (⬢). Blocks blasts, magical strikes and spells (even your own).

Protection from Poison (⬢). A creature with this ability cannot be poisoned.

Protection from Spells (⬢). Blocks spells (even your own).

Ranged Attack. These attacks are dealt at a certain range, and cannot target an adjacent card. Most ranged attacks have a range parameter.

Range X. Range is a parameter of shots, throws, blasts, spells or effects. It is the maximum radius of a ranged attack, spell or effect in squares of the battlefield (the square where the card stands does not count). If range is not specified on the card, it is unlimited.

Rank. Two creatures with this ability, which are adjacent to each other vertically or horizontally (but not diagonally) activate their abilities that follow the word «rank». If the rank is broken (one creature moved away or died), rank-associated abilities are lost.

Regeneration X (🔵-X). Is an effect. A creature with regeneration heals itself for X damage when it becomes alert in the beginning of its turn. If a creature is already alert, regeneration also works. If a creature could not become alert (due to some effect or spell), regeneration does not work.

Scale. Creature with scale can be dealt wounds only by basic strikes, while it has 5 wounds or more.

Shot X. A shot is a ranged, non-magical attack that deals X damage. Damage from a shot is determined by standard combat roll.

Standard Combat Roll. Whenever you see three numbers, separated by dashes (3-4-5), these are 3 different grades of damage: light – medium – strong. Roll a die to determine the type of damage:
  • If the result is 1, 2, 3 (or less, considering modifiers) – light.
  • If it is 4 or 5 – medium.
  • If it is 6 (or more, considering modifiers) – strong.

Special Strike. Is a melee, non-magical attack. Damage from a special strike is determined by standard combat roll. A protector from a special strike cannot be declared.

Spell. A card's magical ability, which is not an attack. Its effect is described in the text of the card.

Teleportation. Use instead of movement. Jump spends all creature's movement points. Move a creature to any empty square.

Throw. Is a ranged, non-magical attack that deals X damage. Damage from a throw is determined by standard combat roll. Protection from shots (⬤) does not protect against throws.

Vampirism. Whenever this creature deals X damage to a creature by basic strike, it heals itself for X. If attacked creature had less wounds than damage dealt, vampirism heals wounds equal to the damage dealt. If attacking creature has maximul life, it gets an extra life point for each extra damage.

Note: Abilities that are listed in the Glossary are not cumulative. Abilities with different names, however, do add up.

Draft Variant

for 4 or more players.

Set-Up

Shuffle all cards and make three stacks of 12 random cards each per player, so each player gets 36 cards in three stacks. Don't reveal any card to anyone to keep the game interesting.

Draft Procedure

Each player takes one of his stacks, chooses one of 12 cards, passes the rest out to his left neighbour and takes 11 cards from his right opponent simultaneously. In such a manner players choose one card at a time, passing and taking repeatingly decreasing stacks.

Once first stacks are out of cards players repeat this roundabout with their second and third stacks. We recommend to alternate direction of stacks' passing.

Deck construction

Once each player has got a pool of 36 cards he has to construct his deck. Game deck should contain 30 cards of more (so a player is allowed to remove 6 cards from his pool).

Game rules

Draft games don't differ from regular games. Players have to remember that their amount of gold and silver depend on the number of realms in their army.