



A BATTLE OF ONIN

OFFICIAL RULEBOOK



WELCOME TO THE BATTLE ♦

A Battle of Onin is a three-player competitive trick-taking card game of influence, prediction, and risk. Players bid on the number of Conscriptions they expect to win, use the round's Ruling Class to seize control, and manage Corruption as they race toward victory. Two- and four-player variants are included later in this rulebook.

♦ OBJECTIVE

Be the first player to reach 35 Influence. A standard game is listed as 30–40 minutes. Players may agree on a different victory threshold before play begins.

将軍 SHOGUN	忍者 NINJA	侍 SAMURAI	僧侶 MONK
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Core Terms

TERM	MEANING
Faction	A card suit/color.
Ruling Class	The trump faction for the current round.
Skirmish	One trick: each player plays one card.
Conscription	A Skirmish won by a player.
Influence	Victory points.
Corruption	A cumulative penalty track created by winning above a bid.

Game at a Glance

01	DEAL Give each player 13 cards and determine the Ruling Class.
02	BID Declare the number of Conscriptions you expect to win.
03	BATTLE Play 13 Skirmishes and follow the led faction when able.
04	SCORE Award Influence, record Corruption, and pass the deal left.
05	CONQUER Continue until a player reaches the agreed victory threshold.

01 SETUP ♦

01	CHOOSE THE DEALER The deal passes to the left after every round.
02	DEAL CLOCKWISE Give each player 13 cards.
03	REVEAL THE RULER Set aside all undealt cards. Reveal one random leftover card; its faction becomes the Ruling Class for the round.

♦ FOUR-PLAYER VARIANT SETUP

Choose the Ruling Class randomly before cards are dealt, then deal the entire deck. The Corruption threshold becomes 5, the minimum bid becomes 2, and the suggested victory threshold is 20 Influence.

02 BIDDING ♦

Beginning with the player to the dealer's left and continuing clockwise, each player declares the number of Conscriptions they expect to win.

- The standard minimum bid is 3.
- After every bid is declared, the player to the dealer's left may raise their bid by 1.
- If that player raises, the same option passes clockwise. When any player declines, all bids lock.

♦ OPEN ROUNDS

There is no bidding in rounds 1, 5, 10, 15, and so on. Every Conscription won in those rounds is added to that player's Influence. No Corruption is calculated in open rounds.

03 PLAYING A ROUND ♦

01	LEAD The player to the dealer's left opens the first Skirmish with one card.
02	FOLLOW Play proceeds clockwise. If you hold the led faction, you must follow it.
03	CHOOSE If you cannot follow, play Ruling Class to compete or another faction to throw off.
04	RESOLVE The highest card wins; Ruling Class defeats any non-Ruling Class card.
05	CLAIM The winner takes one Conscription and leads the next Skirmish.

♦ **BREAKING THE SEAL**

Ruling Class may not be led until a Ruling Class card has been used to win a Skirmish that was led by another faction. Once that occurs, Ruling Class may be led for the rest of the round.

04 CARD ANATOMY ♦

Every card communicates two separate facts: its faction and its strength. Read those signals independently.

The Four Factions

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Faction is identified by the card's field color and warrior: Shogun red, Ninja purple, Samurai blue, and Monk green.

	SHOGUN	NINJA	SAMURAI	MONK
LEGENDARY				
JADE				
GOLD				
SILVER				
BRONZE				

FACTION AND STRENGTH MATRIX

Reading a Standard Card

01	IDENTIFY FACTION Read the card's field color and warrior artwork.
02	IDENTIFY TIER Read the sphere color: Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Jade.
03	COUNT SPHERES Within the same tier, 1 is lowest, then 2, then 3.

♦ DO NOT CONFUSE TIER WITH FACTION

On standard cards, the sphere color identifies the strength tier. The card's field color and warrior identify its faction.

Strength Ladder

LOWEST → HIGHEST	HOW TO READ IT
Bronze 1, 2, 3	Bronze label; count the bronze spheres.
Silver 1, 2, 3	Silver label; count the silver spheres.
Gold 1, 2, 3	Gold label; count the gold spheres.
Jade 1, 2, 3	Jade label; count the jade spheres.
Legendary	One oversized sphere in the card's faction color.

Reading a Legendary Card

A Legendary card shows one oversized sphere in its faction color instead of a tier label with 1–3 smaller spheres. Its field color and warrior still identify its own faction. Legendary play is governed by the strict rules in Section 8.

05 SCORING ♦

After all 13 Skirmishes have been played, count each player's Conscriptions and compare the total with that player's bid.

RESULT	INFLUENCE	CORRUPTION
Meet the bid	Gain 1 Influence for every Conscription won.	Record 1 Corruption for every Conscription above the bid.
Miss a bid of 3	Lose 1 Influence.	No Corruption is added.
Miss a bid above 3	Lose Influence equal to the full bid.	No Corruption is added.

RESULT	INFLUENCE	CORRUPTION
Reach 7 cumulative Corruption	Lose 10 Influence.	Subtract 7 Corruption and carry forward any excess.

♦ **SCORE FLOOR**

Influence cannot fall below 0.

Scoring Examples

- Bid 5, win 4: subtract 5 Influence.
- Bid 4, win 6: gain 6 Influence and record 2 Corruption.

♦ **CORRUPTION ROLLOVER**

Corruption carries over after the penalty. When a three-player game reaches the threshold of 7, subtract 10 Influence, then subtract 7 from the Corruption total. Example: 9 Corruption becomes 2. Use the applicable threshold in the two- and four-player variants.

06 SPECIAL BIDS & BONUSES

Special bids alter when you declare, what you must accomplish, and how the round scores. Use this reference to resolve each one.

BID	DECLARE WHEN	RESOLUTION
Ambush	Before the hand; bid 7 while at least 10 Influence behind.	Success: gain 14 Influence and no Corruption from the round.
Fervor	Before the deal; last place trails by 15+ and first place is within 5 of victory. Blind bid exactly 6.	Success with no Corruption: gain 15 Influence total. If any Corruption is earned, score the hand normally instead and receive no Fervor benefit. Failure: lose 6 Influence.
Famine	At your discretion during a bidding round; bid 0. Not available in open rounds.	Success: no player gains Influence; Corruption may still apply and the bidder's Corruption is doubled. Failure: others score normally.
Fateful 8	After seeing your hand; bid 8.	Success: 18 Influence total. Each excess Conscription adds 1 Influence and 1 Corruption.
First 5	Automatic race during every applicable round.	First player to collect 5 Conscriptions gains 5 bonus Influence.

♦ **CONCURRENT SPECIAL BIDS**

Multiple special bids may exist in the same round. Resolve every declared special bid according to its own success, failure, scoring, and Corruption conditions.

07 CONSEQUENCES •

Cloaking

Cloaking is intentionally or unintentionally failing to follow the led faction when you still hold a card of that faction. If another player catches you, that player chooses one consequence, applied at the end of the round:

- Add 3 Corruption to the offending player; or
- Subtract 3 Conscriptions from the offending player's round score.

Cloaking During Famine

If the Famine bidder is caught cloaking, Famine's negative effect on the other players is canceled. Other players gain the full Influence value of their Conscriptions, and their Corruption is not counted. Every Conscription assigned to the Famine bidder counts as double Corruption.

08 LEGENDARY CARDS •

Legendary cards follow one official ruleset. When played, a Legendary functions either as the highest card of its own faction or as a Ruling Class card. That choice must remain consistent with the information revealed by your earlier card play; Legendary cards are fully subject to Cloaking.

Strict Legendary Cloaking

Your earlier plays communicate which factions remain in your hand. Using a Legendary in a way that contradicts that information is Cloaking.

- If you still hold the led faction, using another faction's Legendary as Ruling Class to take the Skirmish is Cloaking.
- If earlier play showed that you had run out of a faction—because you trumped or threw off—later playing that faction's Legendary as part of its own faction is Cloaking.
- If you have previously thrown off when Ruling Class was led, later using a Legendary as Ruling Class is Cloaking.

♦ LEGENDARY EXCEPTION

If a non-Ruling Class Legendary is the last card of its own faction in your hand, you do not have to use it to follow that faction. By declining, you designate that Legendary only as a Ruling Class card. A Legendary designated as Ruling Class may be led when applicable even if you hold more cards from its own faction.

09 END OF GAME •

- The first player to reach the agreed Influence threshold wins.

- If players tie on Influence, the tied player with more Corruption wins.
- If Influence and Corruption are both tied, continue play until one player takes the lead.

♦ **THRESHOLDS FROM THE SOURCE**

Standard: 35 Influence. Four players: suggested 20. Two players: suggested 50. Players may agree on another threshold before play.

10 OFFICIAL PLAYER COUNT & VARIANTS ♦

PLAYERS	SETUP / CHANGES
3	Deal 13 cards each. Reveal one random leftover card to determine Ruling Class. Standard minimum bid 3; Corruption penalty at 7; suggested victory threshold 35.
4	Randomly choose Ruling Class before the deal; deal the entire deck. Minimum bid 2; Corruption penalty at 5; suggested victory threshold 20.
2	Remove all Bronze-tier cards and otherwise play normally. Minimum bid 4; Corruption penalty at 10; suggested victory threshold 50.

♦ **OFFICIAL FORMAT**

A Battle of Onin is designed as a three-player game. The two- and four-player formats are optional variants.

11 QUICK REFERENCE ♦

SITUATION	RULE
You can follow the led faction	You must follow it.
You cannot follow	Play Ruling Class to compete, or throw off to concede.
Ruling Class has not broken the seal	It cannot be led.
Ruling Class won an off-faction Skirmish	The seal is broken; it may now be led.
You win above your bid	Each excess Conscription adds 1 Corruption.
You miss a bid above 3	Lose Influence equal to the bid.
Your score would fall below 0	Stop at 0.

Round Checklist

01	PASS Move the deal left.
02	DEAL Deal cards and determine Ruling Class.
03	DECLARE Take bids or identify an open round.
04	RAISE Offer the one-point bid increase around the table.
05	PLAY Resolve 13 Skirmishes; track the seal, Conscriptions, and First 5.
06	SCORE Resolve bids, bonuses, penalties, and Corruption.
07	CHECK Apply the victory threshold and tie rules.

12 FAQ •

When may I play Ruling Class?	When you cannot follow the led faction, you may play Ruling Class or throw off. After Ruling Class wins a Skirmish led by another faction, the seal is broken and Ruling Class may be led.
Can Influence be negative?	No. Influence stops at 0.
Must I use a non-Ruling Class Legendary to follow its own faction?	No, if it is the last card from that faction in your hand. Declining designates it only as Ruling Class.
Can we use house rules?	Yes. The source explicitly encourages house rules. Agree on them before play and write them down.
How are ties resolved?	Most Corruption wins the Influence tie. If both totals are tied, continue until one player leads.
Can multiple special bids occur in one round?	Yes. Resolve each declared special bid independently according to its own conditions.
When may I bid Famine?	At your discretion during any bidding round. Famine cannot be declared during an open round with no bidding.
Can we play with 2 players?	Yes, as a variant: remove Bronze cards, use a minimum bid of 4, a Corruption threshold of 10, and a suggested victory threshold of 50.

PROTOTYPE EDITION NOTES ♦

♦ DESIGNER CLARIFICATIONS

The following points were not resolved in the supplied rules. Confirming them will make a production edition tournament-ready.

01	DECK & TIES Confirm the exact deck composition and the tie-breaker when equal-ranked cards compete in the same Skirmish.
02	OPEN ROUNDS Confirm whether open rounds trigger First 5. No Corruption is calculated.
03	TERMINOLOGY Confirm whether “battle points” in the original Fervor rule means Influence.
04	FOUR PLAYERS Confirm whether the dealer chooses a faction directly or reveals a random card before dealing.

♦ EDITORIAL STATUS

This rulebook is a faithful clarity-and-design rewrite of the supplied draft. The clarification list above is intentionally not filled with invented rulings.

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HONOR THE BID ♦ MASTER THE RULING CLASS ♦ CLAIM ONIN