



The World

This isn't the future that people talk about in polite society.

While the world wallows in its ignorance, here we stand: those of us who have been thrust into a war that has been boiling underground for decades. With the expansion of human civilization, the creation of mutants and constructs, as well as First Contact, were all inevitable. But while the world at large remains blissfully ignorant, we're fighting against a bigger threat. The sentient cloud of rogue nanites that arose as a combination of AI advancement and extraterrestrial engineering now threatens our existence, and humanity at large won't have the strength to stop them.

So it falls to us, the Earthlings, Cybernet, Xenophage, and the Unneeded, to stop them before they can multiply beyond what we can fight. But chaos... is an opportunity. This is a chance to definitively take control. We will succeed... our way.

An Invitation to the Cyber Underground

Welcome to the world of *Waves of Struggle*, a card game in which you and your friends are competing to lead your faction to be the last one standing. This challenge of strategic backstabbing will test your ability to plan ahead (and get just lucky enough) to become the dominant force in this future noire world.

How to Play

Waves of Struggle is a constantly shifting battle against a rogue cloud of sentient nanites. While your factions will be directly confronting this force, you'll also be trying to advance your own agendas to become the strongest underground force... or maybe even take the nanites' place. Play smart! Aggressive takeovers may leave your faction vulnerable, as others respond in kind when you're the next one in trouble.

Before You Play

You'll need somewhere between one and four players, the deck, and enough space to lay out your defenses. You should also probably set aside an hour the first time you play, but you'll get used to the

pace as you go.

Objective

The key to winning *Waves of Struggle* is to ensure your faction is the last one standing. If you're playing alone, then you win by surviving the entire nanite onslaught. If you're playing with a group and you run out of enemies, you may either reshuffle the enemy deck and continue until there is only one left standing, or you may decide the controlling faction by whoever has the strongest combined defenses at the end of the war.

The Field and the Basics

Your faction's strength is defined by its preparations. The different factions go about the war with a number of advantages and disadvantages, so choosing a faction to represent is a tactical choice all by itself. However, all factions will have to work within the same basic rules.

[Artistic depiction of the field]

There are three zones leading up to your faction's base. Your field will be occupied by a combination of static defensive structures, clever traps, and boots-on-the-ground soldiers. Each of these will be explained in more detail a little later on. If the nanites make it through these defenses, they will attack the faction base directly, dealing permanent damage to your headquarters. If your base's health reaches zero, your faction leader is killed and you are out of the game.

The Cards: Faction Leaders

The faction leaders are the ones in charge of all the defenses on the field, and they're the people you'll represent in the game. The factions each have resistances and weaknesses that will affect how well they can deal with certain enemy units. They each also have a certain bonus that relates to the defense, mercenary, trap, or action cards. [Each faction also has a specific field layout, which is depicted on the bottom of the card.]

The Cards: Defenses

Defenses are the main way that you will be able to protect your faction leaders. These static buildings provide a bulwark against incursions, and cannot be destroyed unless they are built upon or targeted specifically by certain cards. Each defense card adds a static amount to your total defense. Some defense cards may be lacking in actual defense, but more than make up for it by having special effects.

The Cards: Mercenaries

Every army needs muscle. Defenses are all well and good, but the objective is to destroy the nanites, not just hold them at bay. Mercenaries allow you to damage and ideally destroy the enemy before they become too big of a problem. Some of them are part of the factions partaking in the war, while some are only helping because they're mundane forces that have been dragged or manipulated into helping you. Regardless, these forces may die in the line of duty if overwhelmed.

The Cards: Traps

Traps are the most physically devastating cards that you can play. They can have powerful effects, or at the very least deal a lot of damage. However, they are expended once triggered. Trap cards are played face down, and only when the prerequisites needed to activate are reached can it be used and flipped over.

The Cards: Actions

Sometimes, a quick strategist can turn the tide of even the most dire battles. When used, action cards have various special effects that can either charge your abilities or directly hinder another rival faction. Forging quick alliances, artful stabbing in the back, or just plain lucky ideas, these cards have great potential. But they can be costly, so use them wisely to maximize your faction's standing.

The Cards: Enemies

Enemy cards represent the primary force that the players will face in the game. Each card will have a Defense, Damage, and Health stat. Defense is static and will not change unless a specific effect has been put in place, this stat is used to protect the enemy from attacks, if you wish to damage an enemy, a player must make sure that their attack stat is higher than an enemy's defense, or the damage will be soaked. An enemy's attack is usually static as well, and like defense, is not subject to change unless a card states otherwise. Finally, the health stat is used to determine the overall health of the enemy. Unlike the previous stats, the health is liable to change, depending on whether the players can get past an enemy's defense. For example, if an enemy has two health and three defense, and a player has a total of four damage from the mercenaries he has put in play, when the damage is applied, the enemy will soak three of the four damage with his defense, leaving a total of one damage to be applied to the enemy's health, now putting his health at one, with the enemy's defense staying at three.

Setting Up and Playing the Game

To get the best setup, try as hard as you can to play *Waves of Struggle* in a circle. Enemy cards sit in the middle of the players, and the faction leaders sit in front of each player. Bases are built out from the center towards each faction leader.

At the beginning of the game, each player draws five cards. Whoever has the highest pitched voice takes the first turn, and you can decide if you'd like to proceed clockwise or counterclockwise from there. All faction leaders begin with 30 Health Points.

Each turn begins with the players drawing one card and only one card, unless some effect dictates otherwise. This is known as the Draw Phase.

After that, the Preparation Phase begins. Each card in the normal deck has a certain number of stars that represent their value. During the Preparation Phase, players have a choice between two actions. The first being to build up their defenses using the cards in their hands. This is done by discarding a certain amount of cards whose sum of stars is equivalent to the defense, trap, or mercenary the player wishes to build. For example, if a player wanted to build a three-star defense card, he or she could choose to discard another card in his or her hand that had the same number of stars. Alternatively, the player could discard a 2-star and a 1-star card to meet the requisite price.

The second option is the decision to pay for and draw an action card. There are three action decks with

the corresponding cost listed on the backs of the cards themselves. They are paid for the same way as the preparation cards, with players discarding cards in their hands equivalent to the cost. Once the cards have been paid for the player can draw from the corresponding deck.

After the Preparation Phase, the Action Phase starts. If a trap card has been placed on a player's field and the prerequisites needed to activate it have been met at any point during the phase, then the trap can in turn be flipped over and put into play. It is also at this point that player should consider playing action cards in order to lower an enemy's defense stat, raise a player's attack value, or whatever else the action card lists its effect as. An action card can be played at any point in the Action Phase.

Aside from this, the Action Phase truly begins with the first enemy entering the fray. The enemy will attack the player starting from the first row of the players' fortifications. Each player will deal with an isolated version of the enemy. The enemy will attack the player with its damage stat, which will be subtracted from the total defense of all three rows. After the enemy attacks, if all of the damage isn't nullified by the defenses, the same amount of leftover damage will be applied to the player's overall health as well as the first mercenary in line. For example, if three damage gets through the defenses, then three damage is subtracted from both the player and the first mercenary in line. After damage from the enemy has been applied, the player will attack with their mercenaries, trying to overwhelm their defense.

If none of the players are able to defeat an enemy, then said enemy moves forward to each of the players' next row, and a new Draw Phase begins followed by another Preparation Phase. Once the new Action Phase is reached, the enemy will attack again, only now from the second row. Since the enemy has moved past the first row any defensive bonus that was present there may no longer be applied to the player's total defensive stat. For example if the player had a defense building in the first row that had a value of three, which was added together with another defense building with a value of two in the second row for a total defense stat of five. But now that the enemy has moved past the first row, the defense building in that row is no longer applicable, making the total defense now two against the enemy.

If the enemy is not killed on the second row by any of the players, then it will continue onto the third row, where the same rules apply regarding defense, only now regarding the third row. If the enemy has still not been defeated by any of the players on the third row, then it finally dies, and is discarded. Alternatively, if any player defeats an enemy at any point, then the enemy is discarded after it has interacted with all of the players. For example, if in a four player game, the second player defeats the enemy, then it will be discarded after the third and fourth players fight it as well. If at any point you lose all your health, your faction leader is slain, and your faction is no longer a threat.

Aside from this, after the final player has participated in the Action Phase, it will end and a new Draw Phase will begin, followed by another Preparation Phase and Action Phase respectively. If an enemy was discarded at the end of the previous Action Phase, then a new one is drawn. The game will continue until all of the players have been eliminated except one.