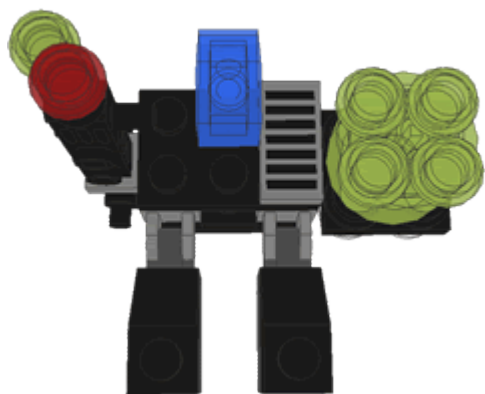


Hi there!

I'm proud of this little game. I woke up Labor Day morning and said to myself, "self, no work today, let's build a game. In fact, self, let's build a game to play using lego mecha and a hex map." Glen came over and helped, and by dinner we had a dozen cute little lego mecha and the funnest miniatures battle game I've ever played. (I haven't played that many. Your mileage may vary.)



MECHA TON

by Vincent Baker

Instros for [building lego mecha](#).

For those of you who aren't way-gone geeks like me, a mech is a giant fighting robot. You can see mecha in such classics of Japanese anime as [Robotech](#), [Gundam](#), [Visions of Escaflowne](#), [Five Star Stories](#), [Armored Troopers VOTOM](#), and countless others. It's doofy, but what you love when you're seven stays with you.

Rules Overview

The **Object** is to blow up everybody else's mechs! Naturally!

To **Set Up**, build mechs, assign them **Dice**, and lay out a **Map**.

Each **Turn** begins with **Initiative Rolls** for each mech.

The Turn continues with **Action Rolls** for each mech, in either **Battle Sequence** or Initiative Order.

An Action Roll works like this: roll a number of differently colored d6s (the number and colors depend on your mech's applicable Dice). After you've rolled, assign one die to **Move**, one die to **Attack**, and one die to **Shield** if you have shield generators or cover. The colors of the dice matter. Calculate your **Defend** value from your Move or your Shield.

You may **Move** a number of hexes equal to your Move.

You hit your target with a number of **Damage Dice** equal to your Attack minus your target's Defend.

The Turn ends when every mech has made and resolved its Action Roll. The game ends when YOU RULE THE WORLD WITH A GIANT MECHANICAL IRON FIST! Which should take about half an hour, more if you have lots of players with big armies.

The Dice

For d6s, you need white dice, green dice, red dice, and blue dice. The color of a die tells you what you can assign it to.

You can assign a white die to Move, Attack, or Shield (if you have shield generators or cover).

You can assign a green die to Move only.

You can assign a red die to Attack only.

You can assign a blue die to Shield only.

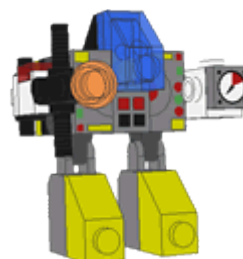
As you can probably guess, your mech gets dice from its features: weapons give red dice, shield generators give blue dice, jump jets give green dice, and so on. A mech starts with 2 white dice and 0, 1 or 2 dice of each other color.

You also need a bunch of d10s for Initiative Dice, and occasionally a d8 as well. (I figure that if you aren't the kind of person with polyhedral dice lying around, you aren't the kind of person who's interested in hex-map mecha battle games. My apologies if you're the exception, but I guess you'll have to go buy some dice. Um, d6s are six-sided, d10s are ten-sided, and d8s are eight-sided. d20s are also big fun, buy a couple while you're at it, though you won't need them for this game.)

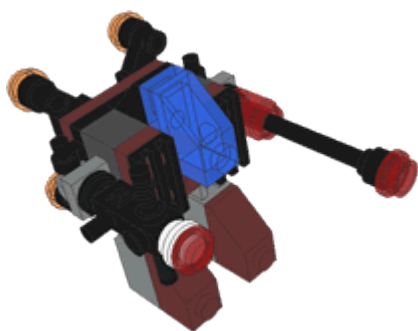
Designing Mecha

When we played, we started by building a bunch of mecha, and then we assigned them their Dice as needed. I suggest you do the same, but look out! Some mechs are simply superior to others.

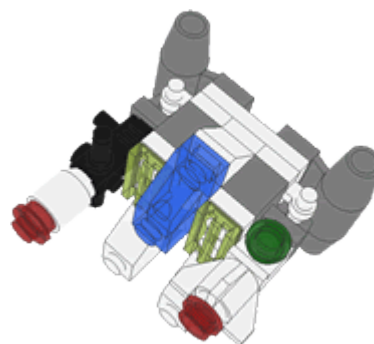
Every mech with some way to move around and some way to fight gets 2 white dice. Here's a mech who gets its 2 white dice and no others. Yes, that's a dial. No, I don't know what it measures.



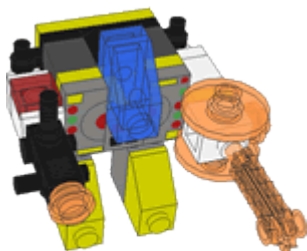
A mech gets green dice for things that improve its ability to move. Jump jets are common; we also had skis and swim fins and hover thingies and wheels and stilts. Any movement parts give 1 green die, even skis in the jungle or swim fins in the desert. Impressive or very appropriate movement parts, like skis in the snowy mountains, give 2 green dice.



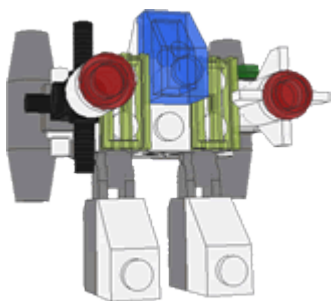
Both these mechs have jump jets. The one on the left gets 1 green die, and the one on the right gets 2. Size matters.



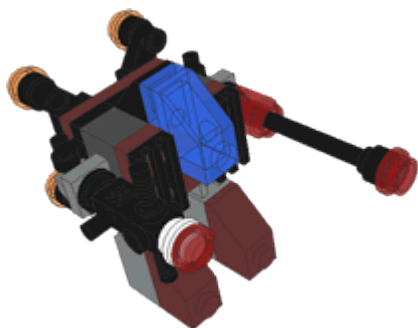
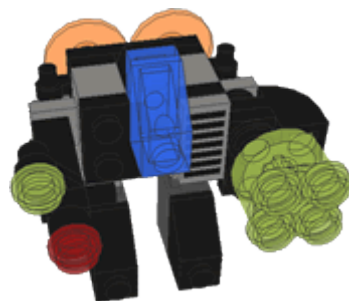
A mech gets **red dice** for weapons. It gets a different number of **red dice** for each of three **Ranges**: Hand-to-hand, Short Range, and Long Range.



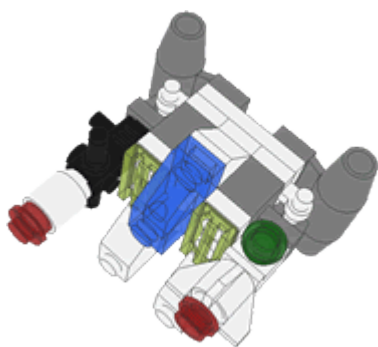
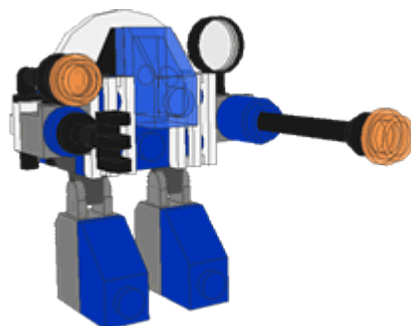
The mech on the left gets **1 red die** at Hand-to-hand for its chainsaw. Hands also count as **1-die** Hand-to-hand weapons. The mech on the right gets **2 red dice** at Hand-to-hand, for its fearsome chainsaw-flamethrower combo.



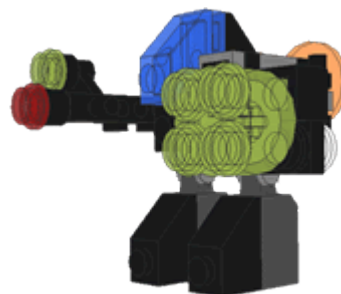
The mech on the left gets **1 red die** at Short Range for its two guns. Neither are impressive enough to warrant a second **die**, but if it had only one of the guns, it wouldn't get a **die** at all. The mech on the right, on the other hand, gets the big **2 red dice** at Short Range, for that monster on its left arm.



The mech on the left gets **1 red die** at Long Range for its left arm, nothing special. The mech on the right gets **2 red dice** at Long Range. Tremble before the sniping action of its magnifying glass!



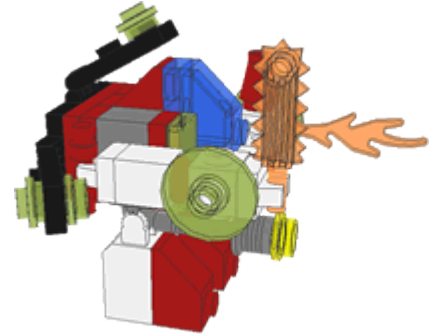
If you have no plausible weapon for your range, you can't fight. The mech on the left can't attack anybody at Long Range. The mech on the right has that thing on its right arm that, okay, might be a rifle thingy with a scope, so it can attack at Long Range, but with no **red dice**. Every mech can fight at Hand-to-hand, by head-bashing, foot-stomping and knee-groining, but unless it has an actual melee weapon it gets no **red dice**.



A mech gets **blue dice** for shield generators, armor, camouflage, or any other sort of defensive feature. A pair of small symmetrical shield generators or one large shield generator gives **1 blue die**, and full body armor or extensive shielding or being covered in leaves like Glen's heinous sniper mech gives **2 blue dice**.



The big white thing on the back of the mech on the left is a shield generator, worth **1 blue die**. The mech on the right is all shieldy for **2 dice**.



Here's a character sheet! After you play a couple of times you probably won't need them; Glen and I sure didn't. All the info's right there on your actual mech. It might be fun to color in the blank mech on the card, though, and draw on all your cool attachments. Plus, if you don't have the Legos you can play the game with chess pieces or whatever and draw mecha from your imagination!

		Descriptions & Comments	
	White Dice : Move, Attack, Shield	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Green Dice : Move	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Red Dice : Attack Hand-to-hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Red Dice : Attack Short Range	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Red Dice : Attack Long Range	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Blue Dice : Shield	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MechaTon	Initiative Dice __d10	Current Initiative	Current Defend

I draw 3 little diagonal dots in the dice boxes for dice my mech gets. As I lose them to damage, I put big Xs through.

Mech Design Constraints, and Initiative

You get to assign your own dice. You don't have to argue with or get the approval of the other players. The character sheets are public. If you did anything weird, that's cool, but make sure that everybody knows and nobody'll be surprised.

That said, look at your dice and figure out how many of them you might roll in any single turn. In other words, 2 white dice, plus how many green dice, plus how many red dice *at your best range*, plus how many blue dice?

If that number is seven or greater, STOP! Back up and give back some of those dice. Jeez Louise.

For Initiative, you roll a number of d10s equal to 7 minus your maximum dice, as you just calculated. Here are some examples:

- Glen's heinous sniper mech: 2 white dice + no green dice + 2 red dice at Long Range + 2 blue dice = 6 maximum dice, for Initiative = 1d10.
- My insane quadruple ripsaw mech: 2 white dice + 2 green dice + 2 red dice at Hand-to-hand + no blue dice = 6 maximum dice, for Initiative = 1d10.
- The brown mech with the 4 little jump jets, above: 2 white dice + 1 green die + 1 red die at Short or Long Range + no blue dice = 4 maximum dice, for Initiative = 3d10.
- The black and gray mech with the 2-die monster, above: 2 white dice + 1 green die + 2 red dice at Short Range + no blue dice = 5 maximum dice, for Initiative = 2d10.

Write your Initiative Dice on your mech card.

Got it? Cool. Oh, but one more thing. Giving yourself 2 dice at 2 different ranges for the same weapon is tacky. You can do it, I suppose, but you'll richly deserve the whupping your co-players give you.

Playing the Game Already!

You've got mechs! You've got dice aplenty! You've got your vinyl hex map, and maybe you've scattered some random crap on it to make cover and obstacles. (Glen and I used batteries and film cans, if I recall.) Throw a couple of your mechs out there on your side of the map and GET READY TO RUMBLE!

The Turn, Detailed

1. Initiative Rolls

For each of your mechs, roll Initiative Dice, and keep the highest if you've rolled more than one. You can put it into the little box on the mech card, or stick it out on the map next to the mech where it'll cause much confusion.

Find the mech with the lowest Initiative. That mech goes first. If two mechs have the same Initiative, just roll off between them. You don't change their Initiative, just determine what order they go in.

2. Action Rolls

When it's your mech's turn:

- a. Choose a target. "None" is fine.
 - b. Roll all your dice. Roll **red dice** based on the range you expect to be from your target (you might decide to move before you attack). If you have no target, don't roll **red dice**.
 - c. Assign your dice. Choose one to be your Move, one to be your Attack, and if you have shields or whatever, one to be your Shield. Discard the rest. Remember, you can assign **red dice** to Attack only, **green dice** to Move only, and **blue dice** to Shield only, but you can assign **white dice** to anything. (Except, not to Shield if you don't have shields! It's easy: if you're rolling **blue dice**, you can assign a **white die** to Shield. If you aren't, you can't.)
 - d. Anyway, calculate your Current Defend. It's either half your Move rounded down (dodging), or your Shield - 1, whichever's higher. Turn a die to the correct number and put it in the little box on your mech card. Or stick it out on the map kind of near your Initiative Die, much confusion, yadda yadda.

(An example of Current Defend. I roll my dice. I put a 6 in Attack, a 1 in Move, and a 3 in Shield. Half of 1 rounded down is 0. 3 - 1 is 2. My Current Defend is 2. Another example. I put the 1 in Attack, the 6 in Move, and the 3 in Shield. Half of 6 rounded down is 3. 3 - 1 is still 2. My Current Defend is 3.)
- If you got no shields, you can only dodge, so your Current Defend is always half your Move, rounded down.
- e. Now look at your Move and your Attack. If your Move is higher, you move first, then fight. If your Attack is higher, you fight first, then move. But! Remember how you chose **red dice** based on your *expected* range to your target? When you attack, if you're not at that range, or if your position makes your attack invalid because of cover or whatever, you lose your attack. Just ignore your Attack die, throw it away to no effect.
 - f. Anyway, when it's time to move, move a number of hexes equal to your Move. Face whatever direction you want.
 - g. And when it's time to fight, go to the Combat rules!

Once everything's nice and tidy and resolved, go on to the next mech's turn. The next mech is your target, unless she moved before you or you had none, in which case it's the mech with the next lowest Initiative. That's what means **Combat Sequence**.

To illustrate. Say we've got 4 mechs, A, B, C, and D, and that their Initiatives are in order: A 1st, B 2nd, C 3rd, D 4th. A goes. A attacks C. C's next. C attacks D. Now it's D's turn. D attacks C. C's already gone, so now, and only now, does it go back to B.

That's what.

3. Combat!

When you attack:

a. **If your target already has a Current Defend** (i.e. she went before you did), go directly to the Damage rules.

b. **Otherwise**, Pretend for a second that it's your target's turn. She chooses a target (which may or may not be you), rolls all her dice, assigns them, calculates her Current Defend, and - STOP! Stop before her step e.

c. Now she has a Current Defend, and you can go to the Damage rules.

d. Either way, after you've hit her with Damage Dice, go back and finish moving if you need to, whatever. Then your turn's done!

Consideration 1: Cover. Cover means obstacles or barriers between you and your target. There's two kinds: hard and soft. When you start the game, look over the map and talk out with the other players where's the hard cover and where's the soft. Soft is usually things like trees and half-walls and other mecha; hard is usually buildings or full walls or boulders or enormous machines.

Anyway, hard cover means you can't shoot at that target. Soft cover means that target gets a free [blue die](#).

Consideration 2: Range. Range in hexes will depend on the scale of your map, but you should all agree to it when you start the game. On my map, up to 1 intervening hex is Hand-to-hand; up to like 12 intervening hexes is Short Range; and beyond that is Long Range.

4. Damage! I do to you now the enormous hurt!

Reduce your Attack by your target's Current Defend. If your Attack is 4, for instance, and your target's Defend is 3, your Attack goes down to 1.

Zero or negative Attacks, now, are misses. No Damage Dice.

If your Attack is still 1 or more, though, you hit! Your target rolls a number of d6s equal to your (adjusted) Attack. These are the famous Damage Dice!

Each one that comes up a 6 is **serious damage**. Each one that comes up a 1-5 is cosmetic damage, structural damage that won't matter until the battle's over, or damage that the mech's driver can fix or work around.

Serious damage costs the mech dice! For each die that comes up a 6, your target crosses one thing's dice off her mech's card. She chooses.

For instance, say I'm the black and gray mech with the monster gun. You give me **1 serious damage**! I can now pull off my jump jets and cross out my [green die](#), or if I prefer I can take off my rifle gun thingy and cross out my [red die](#) for Long Range. What I probably won't do -- until later, when I've got no choice -- is pop off my monster gun and cross out my **2 red dice** for Short Range, or break off my legs and cross out one of my [white dice](#).

(Legos are especially fun, cuz you can pull the blown up bits off your mech and leave them scattered all over the map.)

The important thing is, when you take **serious damage**, you lose at least one die. When you're out of dice, kablooeey! Bye bye you.

It's called for to shout out slogans, whether you're giving or receiving. "Spakita spakita spakita" is traditional for no sixes; it's the sound of bullets smashing the daylights out of your paint job. "My gosh ... it's full of stars ..." is canonical. "Oh no, I'm a gimping lame-o!" is sure to garner sympathy. "Giant glowing chainsaw? I eat giant glowing chainsaw for breakfast!" has obvious utility. And don't forget the classic: "I do to you now the enormous hurt!"

5. That's It

You know, I think that's it. Have I forgotten anything?

Thing I Forgot 1: Missiles

Oh, right. I think that if you have missiles on your mech, you should get to launch one for a truly appalling **red d8**. I haven't tried it, though. If you have like a missile launcher, not one shot missiles, it only counts as a regular gun, though, for certain.

Thing I Forgot 2: Charging

This is actually a very important rule, and I'm glad I remembered. If your only weapons are Hand-to-hand -- including if all your ranged weapons have been shot off, but not including if you have no weapons at all -- you get a **green d8**. This is so your insane quad-ripsaw mech with no guns can actually sometimes get close enough to people to mack them. This die doesn't count for damage, it can't like get shot off or anything. It's just for moving. But combine it with **2-die** jump jets, and you pretty much own the map.

Thing I Forgot 3: Initiative Defense

This is another rule I like but haven't tried. When someone shoots at you, if you have at least a 4-point Initiative advantage (like, your attacker has a 3 and you have a 7), you get a free **blue die**, as though you had soft cover. From just being faster than them, I guess. Anyhow it might help some of those got-no-dice wimpy mechs with their high Initiative Dice survive.

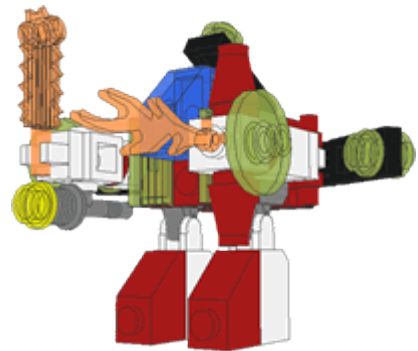
The Coolness of this Game (or, Design Notes)

The way-gone coolness of this game is the part where you roll dice first and assign them to your actions after you've seen how they come up. Lots of games have you roll different-colored dice for your different systems, but I haven't seen any before with the magic of the white dice. They really are magic: they get you to make satisfying tactical decisions pretty much every turn.

Gigantic thanks to Glen and Sebastian, for building mechs and designing and playtesting the game with me. Big thanks to Esther and Meg and Elliot, too, for entertaining themselves for a whole day while we did it. Also Scott didn't have anything to do with this game directly, but if I hadn't played *Down in Flames* and *Heavy Gear* with him all those years, it surely wouldn't exist.

I love Lego! My use of Lego shouldn't be taken as anything but the ravings of a devoted fan. Certainly I have no desire to infringe on their trademarks or anything like that. I'd be sad if they asked me to say something like "building blocks of unspecified brand," but I'd do it.

"MechaTon" is pronounced like "Charleston," not "megaton." It's from Seb's name for the map: Mech City.



[The MechaTon .pdf](#) (not yet available)

Again, [building Lego mecha](#)
[Hello and News](#)