



Cyber Wars: How to Play

Overview

Cyber Wars is an engaging and strategic cybersecurity card game designed to immerse players in the world of global cyber operations. Players represent different nations or cyber entities, each striving for cyber dominance through the strategic deployment of assets, defences, and attacks. The game not only offers an exciting challenge but also serves as a powerful tool for developing critical cybersecurity skills, such as strategic decision-making, risk management, and incident response.

Through gameplay, Cyber Wars enhances players' ability to balance offensive and defensive strategies, prioritise critical infrastructure protection, and adapt to evolving cyber threats. By simulating real-world cyber scenarios, the game fosters an understanding of cybersecurity frameworks, ethical considerations, and the importance of collaboration and communication in defending against cyber threats.

Deck Composition

Each deck in Cyber Wars is tailored to represent different nations or cyber entities, with unique assets and capabilities. The game includes 5 primary decks and one objectives deck:

Blue Deck (UK)

Purple Deck (USA)

Red Deck (Russia)

Green Deck (China)

Black Deck (Anonymous – Global Threats)

White Deck (Objectives)

Each primary deck consists of the following cards:

5 Defensive Assets: Strategic cyber defensive assets (e.g., National Cyber Security Centre, NSA Fort Meade).

5 Offensive Assets: Offensive cyber capabilities (e.g., APT groups, cyber commands).

5 Cyber Attacks: Notable cyber-attacks (e.g., Wannacry, SolarWinds).

3 Cyber Incident Response Teams: Teams to manage and respond to cyber incidents.

2 Active Defence Cards: Measures to actively defend against ongoing attacks.

The White Deck consists of 20 Objective cards, each outlining specific victory conditions.



How to Play

Game Setup

Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) Strip: Each player receives a strip containing 5 areas of Critical National Infrastructure: Energy, Transport, Healthcare, Telecomms, and Military. At the start of the game, place FIVE tokens on each area, representing your initial level of control over that infrastructure.

Shuffle the Objectives Deck: Each player draws one card from the deck and reveals it.

Initiative Draw and Deck Selection: The player with the highest value on their objective card chooses their deck first, followed by others in a clockwise direction. Return the objective cards to the deck and shuffle it thoroughly.

Objective Card Draw: Starting with the player who won the Initiative Draw, each player draws an objective card from the top of the Objectives Deck. Keep your objective secret.

Draw Starting Hand: Each player shuffles their chosen deck and draws 5 cards to form their starting hand.

Game Phases

The game consists of rounds with 4 distinct phases:

Untap Phase

At the start of a players turn untap any tapped assets.

Draw Phase

At the start of each players turn they draw a card from the top of their deck until they have draw all their cards.

Asset Phase

Deploy Assets: Starting with the first player, each player takes turns to play one asset card from their hand. Assets include offensive, defensive, and incident response teams.

After the asset phase has ended a player may chose to launch a cyber attack against any of the other players.

Attack Phase

Initiate Attack: Players may choose to attack an opponent by "tapping" (turning sideways) their offensive assets. The goal is to apply "Stress" to the opponent's cyber defences.

Defend: The defending player taps their defensive assets to build "Resilience" and attempt to mitigate the attack.

Resolve Attack: If the attacker's Stress exceeds the defender's Resilience, the attack is successful. The attacker may then deploy a Cyber Attack card to damage one or more of the defender's Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) areas. Remove a token from the damaged CNI area to reflect this.

Free Targeting: A player may attack any other player in the game, regardless of turn order.



Once a player's attack phase is over the player next in turn begins their turn.

Note: Tapped assets cannot be used to defend against or launch cyber-attacks.

Turn Rotation

End of Round: Once all players have taken their turns, the round ends. The next round begins with the first player and continues clockwise.

Winning the Game

Achieve Objective: The game continues until a player successfully achieves the objective outlined on their Objective card. This could involve disrupting opponents' CNI, maintaining defences for a set number of turns, or executing a successful series of attacks.

Game Strategy

Balancing Offence and Defence: Players must carefully balance the use of offensive and defensive assets, anticipating opponents' moves while striving to achieve their own objectives.

Resource Management: Effective use of assets, especially in critical moments, is key to outmanoeuvring opponents and securing victory.