8-quilibrium

Official Game Manual

Chase the Equilibrium, Out-Think Your Friends

Version 2.1

8-quilibrium – *a quick and tactical card game about balance*
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1 Overview

8-quilibrium ("Equilibrium") is a fast card game about ending the round with the most *balanced* 8-card hand. On your turn (Section 6) you either **Give** a card to someone with the fewest cards (Section 9), or spend a token to **Swap**. Players can spend tokens to **Reject** an incoming card or **Cancel** a player-to-player swap (Section 7). Hands may never exceed 8 cards (Section 5). The **Market** is always 4 face-up cards (Section 8). **Players:** 2-6.

2 Components

- A standard jokerless 52-card deck.
- Space for the **Market**: a face-up row of 4 cards.
- **Reject tokens**: 2 tokens per player (*e.g.* coins, poker chips, paper bits).

3 Glossary

Term	Meaning / Where used
Accept	A Given card you keep (you did not Reject). May trigger variant effects (Sections 14.B and 14.E).
Bottom / Bottoming	Place a Market card on the bottom of the deck to restore Market size to 4 (Section 8).
Cancel	Reaction: spend 1 token to stop a *Swap with Player*; causes a **Forced Give** from the deck (Section 7.B).
Forced Give	Non-reactable Give from the top of the deck after a canceled *Swap with Player*. Targeting uses Section 9 (Section 7.B).
Give	Action: take one card from the Market or the top of the deck and assign it to a fewest-cards player (Sections 6 and 9).
Market	The 4-card row; maintain via refill/bottoming rules (Section 8); becomes hidden slots in Section 14.D.
Rank Powers	Variant where accepting J/Q/K/A triggers effects (Section 14.E).
Reaction	Off-turn response (**Reject** or **Cancel**) with per-turn limits (Section 7).
Reject	Reaction: spend 1 token to refuse an incoming Give; card goes to Market, possibly bottoming; active turn ends (Section 7.A).
Skip marker	You will skip your next turn (used by Quick Toss in Section 14.A).
Slots	Fixed Market positions used in Section 14.D.
Stock	Face-up top card of the deck in Section 14.B.
Swap with Market	Spend 1 token to exchange one hand card with one Market card (1-for-1; no refill) (Sections 6 and 8).
Swap with Player	Spend 1 token to exchange one hand card with a player who has at least as many cards; target may **Cancel** (Sections 6 and 7.B).
Wind marker	Table marker for once-per-round Section 14.C.

4 Setup

1. Shuffle the deck.

2. Deal **3** cards to each player.

3. Reveal **4** face-up cards to form the **Market**.

4. Give each player **2 Reject tokens**.

5. Choose a starting player; play proceeds clockwise.

5 Core Invariants

- **Hand limit 8:** No player may ever hold more than 8 cards. You cannot Give to a player who already has 8.

- **Market size 4:** The Market always contains exactly 4 face-up cards (maintain via Section 8).

6 Turn Structure

Choose **one** action:

A) Give (no token)
Take **1** card from either the **Market** or the **top of the deck**, then **Give** that card to a player tied for the **fewest cards** (Section 9).
Maintenance: If the card came from the Market and is *accepted*, immediately **refill** per Section 8. If the target *Rejects*, resolve per Section 7 (card to Market; bottom if needed) and your turn ends.

B) Swap (spend 1 token)
Choose exactly one:

1. **Swap with Market:** Exchange **1** hand card with **1** Market card (1-for-1; see Section 8). No refill.

2. **Swap with Player:** Choose a player who has **at least as many cards as you**. Each secretly selects **1** hand card; reveal simultaneously and exchange (1-for-1; legal even at 8 cards).
   Cancel option: Before reveal, the target may **Cancel** per Section 7.B. If canceled, both cards return to hands unrevealed and you must perform a **Forced Give** from the top of the deck (Section 7.B).

7 Reactions (Reject & Cancel)

Reaction limits (per active player's turn):

- Each player may **react at most once**.

- Each individual event (a single incoming Give or a single attempted Swap with Player) may be **reacted to at most once**.

- The active player **cannot** react to their own action.

7.A Reject a Give (reaction)

When a card is Given to you, you may spend 1 token to **Reject** it:

- Place the incoming card into the **Market**. If that would make 5, **you** (the rejector) **bottom** any one Market card (Section 8).

- The active player's turn ends; no replacement Give occurs.

7.B Cancel a Swap (reaction) & Forced Give

When another player attempts *Swap with Player* with you, you may spend 1 token to **Cancel** it:

- Both chosen cards return to hands unrevealed.

- The active player must immediately perform a **Forced Give** from the **top of the deck**: reveal the top card and Give it using Section 9. This Forced Give **cannot be reacted to**.

- If the canceler is among the fewest-cards players, the Forced Give **must target the canceler**.

8 Market Maintenance (Refill & Bottoming)

- **Refill after accepted Market Give:** Draw the top card of the deck to return the Market to 4.

- **Rejects place into Market:**

  - If the incoming Given card *came from the deck*, add it to the Market; if the Market now shows 5, the rejecting player *bottoms* any one Market card.

  - If the card *came from the Market*, return it to the Market (it will be 4 again; no bottoming).

- **Swap with Market:** 1-for-1 exchange. No refill.

9 Targeting the Fewest Cards

When Giving, determine the minimum hand size at the table. Your recipient must be among those players, and you cannot target any player who already has 8 cards.

- If a **single player** is uniquely fewest, that player **must** receive the card.

- If **multiple players** are tied for fewest, the **active player chooses** any one of those players. *You may choose yourself only if you are tied for the fewest* (see Section 10 for 2-player).

- If all other players have 8 and you do not, you must Give to yourself.

10 Two-Player Adjustment

In a 2-player game, if both players are tied for fewest cards, a **Give must target the opponent** (self-Give while tied is not allowed). If a *Swap with Player* is **canceled** while both are tied for fewest, the **Forced Give** (Section 7.B) **targets the canceler** and **cannot be reacted to**. All other rules are unchanged.

11 Round End

The round **ends immediately** when **every player has exactly 8 cards**. With fewer than 6 players, leftover cards may remain in the deck; the Market remains at 4.

12 Scoring

Check Out: alfaoz.github.io/8qsc for a score calculator

Compute three scores; sum them. Higher total wins.
A=1 (odd), J=11 (odd), Q=12 (even), K=13 (odd).

Suits (max 10):

$$\text{Suit Score} = \max\left(0,\ 8 - \sum_{\heartsuit,\diamondsuit,\clubsuit,\spadesuit} \left| \text{count}_{\text{suit}} - 2 \right|\right) + \begin{cases} 2, & \text{if suits are exactly } (2,2,2,2), \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Color (max 3):
$$\text{Color Score} = \max\left(0,\ 3 - |\text{reds} - 4|\right).$$

Parity (max 3):
$$\text{Parity Score} = \max\left(0,\ 3 - |\text{evens} - 4|\right).$$

Total max: 16 points.

Tiebreakers:
(1) Sum of ranks closest to **56**, (2) Higher Suit Count (3) Lower same-numbered card count.

13 Worked Examples

13.A A Typical Give (accepted)

Market: $\heartsuit 9$, $\clubsuit 2$, $\spadesuit K$, $\diamondsuit 6$. Hands: You (6), Alfa (7), Biden (7), Zelensky (6).
Fewest = 6 $\Rightarrow$ tied recipients: You and Zelensky. You choose Zelensky and Give $\clubsuit 2$. Zelensky accepts (under hand limit; Section 5). Refill per Section 8. Turn ends.

13.B Rejecting a Give from the Deck

You reveal $\diamondsuit 7$ and choose Alfa (tied fewest; Section 9). Alfa spends a token to *Reject* (Section 7.A). Place $\diamondsuit 7$ into the Market; because it shows 5, Alfa *bottoms* any one Market card (Section 8). Your turn ends.

13.C Swap with Player (Canceled → Forced Give)

You (6) spend a token to *Swap with Player* targeting Marci (6). Before reveal, Marci *Cancels* (Section 7.B). Both cards return to hands unrevealed. You must immediately perform a **Forced Give** from the deck to a fewest-cards player (Section 7.B); because the canceler is among the fewest, it **must** target Marci. This Forced Give is *unreactable*.

13.D Swap with Market

You spend a token to *Swap with Market*: trade your $\heartsuit 9$ for the Market's $\spadesuit 2$. Market stays at 4; no refill (Section 8).

13.E Scoring a Hand

Suits: $\heartsuit$=3, $\diamondsuit$=1, $\clubsuit$=2, $\spadesuit$=2; reds= 4, evens= 3.
Suits: $8 - (1 + 1) = 6$; Color: $3 - |4 - 4| = 3$; Parity: $3 - |3 - 4| = 2$. **Total:** 11.

14 Variants

Variants add optional layers. Unless a variant explicitly overrides a base rule, the base rules in Section 1 and Section 11 take precedence. When multiple variants interact, follow Section 15.

14.A Team Play

Enables cooperative teams with open table talk, bluffing, and a few teamwork tools. Use with 4 players (2v2) or 6 players (3v3).

14.A.1 Seats, Setup, and Scoring

- **Seats:** Teammates sit as opposite as possible at the table. Hands remain hidden.
- **Setup:** Use base setup (Section 4). Each player starts with 2 Reject tokens. Market size and hand limit unchanged (Section 5).
- **Turn Order:** Clockwise (there will be an opponent between teammates).
- **Communication:** Any *public* table talk is allowed, including exact identities, plans, and code words. Bluffing and overt "signals" are allowed but must be public.
- **Team Scoring:** At round end, each player scores via Section 12. Team score = sum of teammates' scores. **Tiebreakers doesn't apply, ties are possible.**

14.A.2 New Team Abilities

These add teamwork without changing the base engine. Market size/hand limits unchanged.

A) Assist (On-Turn Token Transfer) At the start of your turn (Section 6), before choosing an action, you may give exactly 1 Reject token to a teammate. **Cost:** Your turn immediately ends (no other action). **Limit:** Once per turn. Not a reaction; opens no reaction window.

B) Quick Toss (Off-Turn Token Transfer) When your teammate is targeted by a *single* event (Give or attempted Swap with Player) and is about to decide whether to react, you may pass them exactly 1 Reject token. **Timing:** Declare after the event is announced but before the target decides to Reject/Cancel; the token immediately becomes the target's to use (or not). **Cost:** Place a personal *Skip* marker: you skip your next turn entirely. Multiple Quick Tosses before your next turn still cause only one skipped turn. **Limits:** At most one Quick Toss may occur for a given event; if multiple teammates offer, the target chooses whose token to take. Not itself a reaction and does not count against reaction limits; only the target may react (Section 7). (Forced Gives from canceled swaps remain unreactable.)

C) Relay Swap (Team Exchange Action) On your turn, instead of a normal action (Section 6), spend 1 Reject token to exchange 1 hand card face-down with exactly one teammate; reveal simultaneously and exchange (1-for-1). Then immediately perform a *Forced Give from the top of the deck* (Section 7.B). **Legality:** The 1-for-1 exchange is always legal even if one or both are at 8 cards (hand sizes unchanged by the exchange). The subsequent Forced Give must still respect hand limits. **Limit:** At most once per round *per team*. **Notes:** The Forced Give preserves pace and prevents stalling.

14.A.3 Turn Skips

Place a visible marker when you must *skip* your next turn (from Quick Toss or future effects). When your turn would begin, remove the marker and skip; play proceeds. Skipping does not change hand sizes, Market, or turn order. Multiple pending skips condense to a single skipped turn.

14.A.4 2v2 and 3v3 Clarifications

In 3v3, you may Assist or Relay Swap with either teammate. For Quick Toss, if both teammates offer a token, the target chooses whose to accept; only one Quick Toss may occur for the event. Team abilities do not create additional reaction windows beyond those in Section 7.

14.A.5 Worked Examples

Quick Toss Save (2v2). Your teammate at 7 cards is targeted by a top-deck Give and has no tokens. You Quick Toss them a token; they immediately Reject, placing the revealed card into the Market and bottoming any one Market card to return to 4 (Section 8). You will skip your next turn.

Relay Swap Setup (3v3). On your turn, you spend 1 token to Relay Swap your ♣4 for your teammate's ♢Q. As the penalty, you immediately reveal the top card and perform a Forced Give to a fewest-cards player (unreactable; Section 7.B).

14.B Open Stock Economy

Makes the top of the deck public and ties token economy to accepting randomness. Works at 2-6 players; Market size and hand limits unchanged (Section 5).

14.B.1 Seats, Setup, and Scope

Use base setup (Section 4). After revealing the Market, flip the top card face-up to form the *Stock*. Each player starts with 2 Reject tokens. All base rules apply.

14.B.2 The Stock (Public Top of Deck)

- The top card of the deck is always face-up as the *Stock*.
- Whenever any effect would draw *from the top of the deck* (a top-deck Give, a Forced Give from a canceled Swap with Player, or a Market refill after an *accepted* Market-origin Give), take the Stock instead, then immediately reveal the next top card as the new Stock.
- When a top-deck Give is *Rejected*, the incoming card (the Stock) is placed into the Market. If the Market would exceed 4, the rejecting player bottoms any one Market card to return it to 4. Then immediately reveal the next top card as the new Stock.

14.B.3 Burden Pays (Earning Tokens)

Accepting randomness grants agency.

- **Gain on accept:** When you *accept* a Stock-origin Give targeting you, gain 1 Reject token.
- **What counts:** (i) A Give where the active player chose the deck (the Stock) and you accept it; (ii) a Forced Give from a canceled Swap with Player (these take the Stock and are unreactable). If it targets you, you gain 1 token.
- **Does not count:** Accepting a card that originated from the Market does not grant a token.
- **Cap:** You may hold at most 3 tokens. Excess gains are lost.

14.B.4 New Token Spend: Refresh the Stock

- **Timing:** At the start of your turn, before choosing an action.
- **Do:** Spend 1 token to *bottom* the current Stock to the bottom of the deck, then immediately reveal the next top card as the new Stock.
- **Turn impact:** This does not end your turn; you may still take your normal action afterward.
- **Notes:** Refreshing the Stock does not open any reaction window.

14.B.5 Worked Examples

Token on burden. Alfa is targeted by a top-deck Give (the Stock shows ♡9). Alfa accepts it, going to 7 cards and gaining 1 token (up to the 3 cap). Reveal the next top card as the new Stock.

Reject to Market with Stock refresh.   You reveal the Stock $\diamondsuit 7$ as a top-deck Give to Zelensky. Zelensky Rejects. Place $\diamondsuit 7$ into the Market; because the Market now shows 5, Zelensky bottoms any one Market card to return to 4, then flip the next top card face-up as the new Stock.

Refresh then act.   At the start of your turn the Stock is $\clubsuit K$. You spend 1 token to Refresh (bottom the $\clubsuit K$), revealing $\spadesuit 2$. You then choose to Give from the Stock and target a fewest-cards opponent.

14.C   Wind of Change

A once-per-round, table-wide rotation that shakes up hands without changing hand sizes. Works with 2-6 players.

14.C.1   Scope and Setup

Use base setup (Section 4) & (Section 5). Place a single *Wind marker* near the Market; at the start of each round, it is *unused*.

14.C.2   Calling the Wind

Once per round, and the same player cannot consecutively call the wind in two rounds. one other wind call must happen by a different player. total (table-wide), immediately after your action fully resolves (including reactions), you may spend 1 token to call *Wind of Change*. Then perform:

1. Declare the **direction**: clockwise or counterclockwise.

2. All players **simultaneously** choose 1 hand card face-down.

3. **Resolution:** All chosen cards leave hands simultaneously, then are passed in the chosen direction and added to recipients' hands face-down. Hand sizes return to prior values.

After the pass, your turn ends as normal. Flip the Wind marker to *used*. The Wind cannot be called again this round.

14.C.3   Limits and Clarifications

- **Cost and limit:** Caller spends 1 token. At most one Wind per round (not per player).

- **Not a Give or Swap:** Opens no reaction window; Reject and Cancel cannot be used on it. Does not count against reaction limits.

- **Information:** Passed cards are chosen/transferred face-down and not revealed to the table. Recipients may look at the received card and add it to hand.

14.C.4   Worked Example

After completing a Give with no reactions, you spend 1 token and call Wind clockwise. All choose 1 card face-down and pass. Hand sizes are unchanged; your turn ends.

14.D Fog of War

Make the Market hidden information. Players can pay to peek; only cards seeded by Rejects are public. Raises deduction/timing/bluffing without changing pacing.

14.D.1 Scope and Setup

Use base setup (Section 4). Deal 4 cards face-down to form the Market. Maintain four fixed *slots* left-to-right.

14.D.2 Market Rules

- **Reveals on leave:** When a Market card leaves (accepted or swapped out), reveal it *as it leaves*.

- **Bottoming stays hidden:** Whenever a Market card is bottomed, do not reveal it; place face-down.

- **Incoming cards:**
  - *From deck via Reject:* When a top-deck Give is Rejected (Section 7.A), place that revealed card into a slot *face-up*. If Market would show 5, the rejector bottoms any one Market card *face-down* to return to 4.
  - *All other ways:* Any other card that enters the Market (refill after an accepted Market Give, Swap with Market replacement, returning a Market-origin card after a Reject) enters *face-down*.
  - *Preserve state on return:* If a Market-origin card is Rejected back to the Market, it returns in its current face state (face-up stays face-up; face-down stays face-down).

- **Choosing from the Market:** When you Give from the Market or Swap with Market, you choose a slot (not an identity) unless that slot is currently face-up. A chosen face-down card is revealed only when it leaves.

- **Refills:** After an *accepted* Market-origin Give, refill the emptied slot with the top card of the deck *face-down* to return to 4.

14.D.3 Peeking Mechanic

At the start of your turn, before choosing an action, you may spend 1 token to *peek* at up to 2 Market cards. Secretly look at the chosen face-down cards. This does not end your turn and opens no reaction window.

14.D.4 Clarifications

All base reaction rules apply (Section 7). Only the target may react; each player may react at most once per active turn; each event may be reacted to at most once. Forced Gives remain unreactable (Section 7.B). Round end timing is unchanged: if an accepted Market Give results in every player having exactly 8 cards, the round ends immediately; skip any pending refills or variant effects.

14.D.5 Worked Examples

Rejected deck card becomes public. You reveal $\diamondsuit 7$ from the deck and target Zelensky, who Rejects. Place $\diamondsuit 7$ face-up into a Market slot. Because the Market now shows 5, Zelensky bottoms any one Market card face-down to return to 4. The face-up $\diamondsuit 7$ remains public until it leaves.

Swap from a hidden slot. You Swap with Market, choosing slot 2, which is face-down. Reveal it *as it leaves* (it is $\clubsuit Q$), take it into hand, and place your chosen hand card face-down into slot 2. No refill occurs.

14.E   Rank Powers

Accepting face cards and Aces triggers effects. Adds tactical spikes/tempo swings while keeping turns quick.

14.E.1   Scope and Trigger

- Works with 2-6 players. Market/hand limits and reaction rules unchanged (Sections 5 and 7).

- **Accepting a card:** You *accept* when a Give resolves with you as recipient and you keep the card (you did not Reject).

- **Timing:** When you accept a face card or Ace, resolve its Rank Power *after* any Market maintenance caused by that acceptance (Section 8), unless noted otherwise. Rank Powers are not actions and open no reaction windows.

- **Round end:** If accepting a card makes all players have exactly 8 cards, the round ends immediately; do not resolve Rank Powers (Section 11).

14.E.2   The Powers

- **Jack (J):** After you accept a Jack, you may immediately *Swap with Market*. Choose any Market slot. You may decline the use of this power.

- **Queen (Q):** After you accept a Queen, peek at the top 2 cards of the deck, then put them back on top in any order. If Section 14.B is active, do not change the Stocks face-up state; the top card remains face-up. Otherwise keep them face-down.

- **King (K):** After you accept a King, immediately choose 1 card from your hand and *Give* it to a player using Section 9. This King-Give is **unreactable**. You may choose the just-accepted King.

- **Ace (A):** After you accept an Ace, gain 1 Reject token (maximum 3 tokens held; excess is lost).

14.E.3   Clarifications and Interactions

- Rank Powers trigger only on *accepting* a card from a Give. Cards gained via Swap with Market or Swap with Player do not trigger powers.

- Powers can chain: if a King forces a Give that is accepted and is a face card or Ace, resolve that new Rank Power after any maintenance from that Forced Give, then continue. Always resolve one power fully before the next.

- If a Queen reordered the top 2 and a subsequent effect would draw from the top of the deck, it takes the top card as reordered.

14.E.4   Worked Examples

Queen into planning.   You accept a $\heartsuit Q$ from the Market incoming from your teammate. Refill to 4 (Section 8). Then peek at the top 2 cards, reorder, and continue.

"King's tribute"   You accept a $\spadesuit K$ from a top-deck Give. After maintenance (none), you must immediately Give 1 card to a fewest-cards player (Section 9); you choose to Give the $\spadesuit K$. That Give is unreactable and may itself trigger Rank Powers for the recipient if applicable.

15 Combining Variants

15.A Compatibility

All five variants are designed to be modular. In practice:

- Any single variant works with the base game.

- Most rosters are fully compatible without rule changes.

15.B Timing and Precedence

When several modules apply to the same event, resolve in this order:

1. Resolve the Give or Swap as usual (Section 6). If the recipient accepts, immediately perform any Market maintenance caused by that acceptance (Section 8).

2. If using Section 14.B and the accepted card originated from the Stock, update the Stock display and award the 1 token for "Burden Pays" to the recipient. Don't exceed the cap.

3. If using Section 14.E and the accepted card is a face card or Ace, resolve its Rank Power. These are not actions and open no reaction windows. Ace token gain stacks with Stock-origin token gain but never exceeds the cap.

4. If a Rank Power (e.g., King) forces a Give, perform that Give immediately. It is unreactable as specified. If Section 14.B is active and the Give draws from the deck, it takes the Stock.

5. Section 14.C happens only after the caller's action fully resolves (including any reactions), once per round table-wide.

6. If Section 14.D is active, its face-state rules govern how cards enter or re-enter the Market: top-deck Rejects enter face-up; all other ways enter face-down; returning Market-origin cards preserve their face state.

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15.C Sample Presets

Preset	Players	Variants	Notes
Enigma	4 or 6	Team Play, Fog of War	Off-turn saves (Quick Toss) + Low on Information, high communication and bluffing potential.
Token Day	3–5	Rank Powers, Open Stock Economy	Stock-origin Aces can yield two tokens. Kings may create unreactable pressure.
Deduction Night	3–5	Fog of War, Wind of Change	Hidden Market + occasional rotation keeps info flowing without extra reactions.
A Pillow of Winds	4 or 6	Team Play, Rank Powers, Wind of Change	Big tempo swings; easy to loose track of the game.
Socialist Capitalism	4 or 6	Team Play, Rank Powers, Open Stock Economy	Deep but thinky. Hard on econ and teamwork.

15.D Use with Care

Combination	Why / Tips
Team Play + Wind of Change	Multiple non-reaction exchanges can inflate analysis time. Keep cadence: resolve, then Wind (once per round), and respect the per-team Relay Swap limit.
Open Stock Economy + Rank Powers + Wind of Change	Many timing layers. Respect Section 15.B. Favor simple Wind calls.