

# **GUARDA**

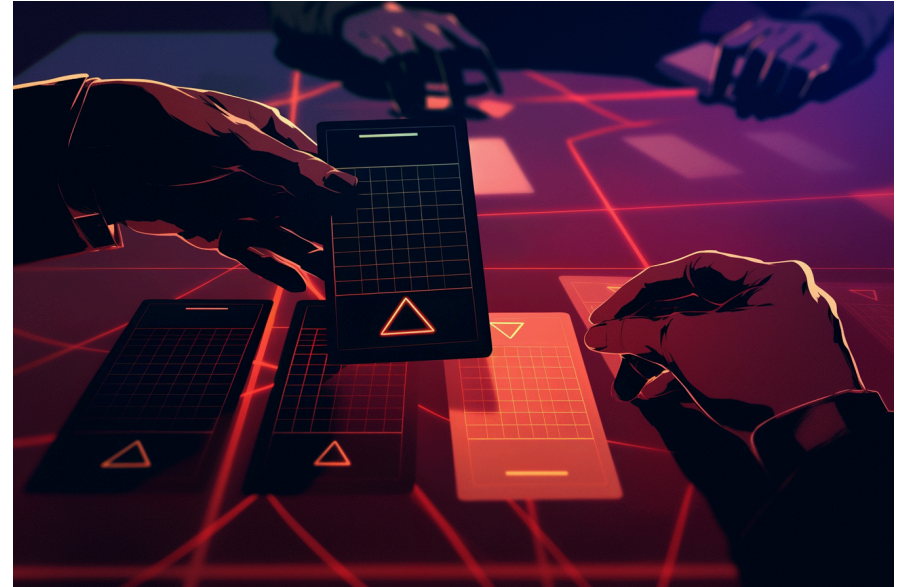
Instruction Manual

v0.1

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Notes:



## Introduction

Guarda is a tactical card game from the CODA Universe, originating during the Dark Decade. The game rose dramatically in popularity during GATA's expansion over the course of the Reconstruction era.

Known for its direct, competitive gameplay, short matches, and its signature trap-like card called a "guard".

Guarda is easy to learn, but difficult to master, as evidenced by the tactical sophistication displayed at the peak of competitive play.

While it was traditionally played with a 6x6 grid and 6-card hand, a number of variants have become popular over the years, including the modern, fast-paced 5x5 variant described herein.

# The Basics

Guarda can be played with 2-8 players in free-for-all or teams.

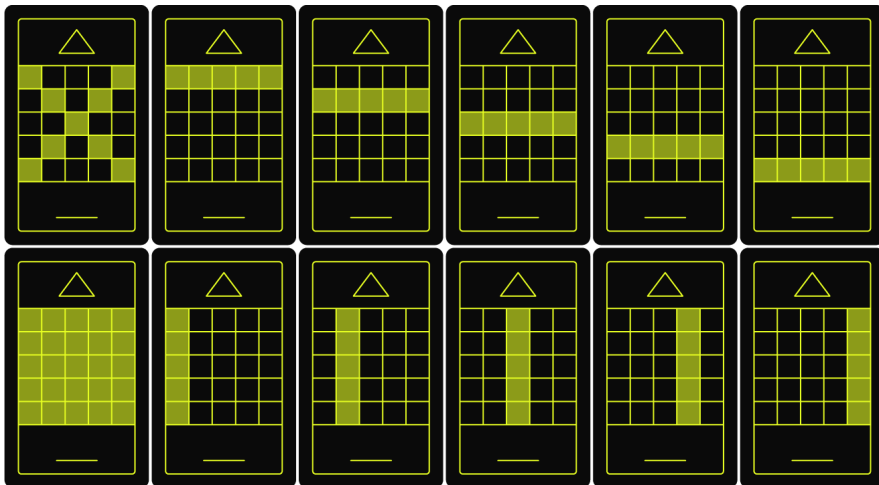
In the center of the play area is a grid called "the field". Players each sit facing one side of the field, and control a singular game piece which they will move around the field throughout the game.

On every card is the same grid as on the field, and a single arrow (or other directional indicator). The card's grid displays a pattern corresponding to spaces on the field that the card affects when it is played.

Players take turns drawing, moving, and fighting on the field until a winner is decided. Uniquely, each player can set a secret card called a "guard" face-down, waiting to be activated.

Well-managed hands, strategic movement, and the tactical use of the trap-like guard are the signatures of Guarda.

## The Cards



Guarda decks contains 4x copies of each of the 12 different Guarda cards. Each card type depicts a different pattern that can be formed by highlighting the cells of the card's 5x5 grid.

## ⚡ Lightning never strikes twice

If you were attacked by your opponent on your previous turn, it is not likely they still have cards that would attack your space, so it may be strategic to remain still.

## ↔ It cuts both ways

Consider where your opponent is on the board, and avoid resting on the inverse space as them, as they may be collecting cards to play defensively that they can then repurpose to launch a devastating attack.

Alternatively, you can use that same principle to bait them into wasting those cards by activating your guard.

# Strategy Tips

## Hand management

When you draw your hand, orient all of the cards in your hand in the offensive orientation with the arrow pointing toward the field.

Determine if you have any cards that attack your opponent(s), and separate those to one side of your hand.

Then flip the remaining cards to the defensive orientation and determine if any of the remaining cards will successfully defend you. If so, separate those to the side as well.

The remaining cards can be burned for movement, or might be useful as a guard.

## Know when to hold 'em

If you plan to move on your next turn, consider where you'd like to move and if any of your remaining cards will become useful when you are on that space.

## Know when to fold 'em

If you still have undesirable cards at the end of your turn, remember to burn them so that you can draw more new cards on your next turn.

## Push and shove

Pushing opponents is a strategic move allowing you to put them where you want them for a follow-up attack, or to disrupt their defensive options.

## Be water

Prepare yourself for other players to push you by considering which direction you are likely to be pushed based on your positioning. Favor defensive cards that follow that line, ensuring you can still react to their follow-up attack.

The 12 Guarda cards are as follows:

- 5 cards highlighting the 5 possible vertical lines.
- 5 cards highlighting the 5 possible horizontal lines.
- 1 card highlighting an "X" pattern.
- 1 card highlighting all cells.

The grid cells that are highlighted on the card indicate which spaces on the field are being attacked or defended.

The orientation of the card's pointer when it is played indicates whether the card is attacking or defending; toward the field when attacking, or toward the player when defending.

Each deck also contains 6 grid cards that can be arranged to make a field.

## Getting Started

Before the game begins, decide who will draw first. Proceed clockwise taking turns drawing a card from the top of your deck and placing it face up pointed toward the field.

Once you've drawn two cards with overlapping spaces, place your game piece (a 10-sided die) on any such unoccupied space.

Your game piece will be used to keep count of your health or victory points, depending on the win condition you've chosen.

After placing your piece, place any cards drawn in this process face down in your burn pile.

Once every player's piece is placed, players each draw a hand of 6 cards.

First on the field is the first to play.

# Turn Phases

Each player's turn has 4 phases: (1) Draw, (2) Move, (3) Act, (4) Settle.

## 1. Draw:

Draw or burn cards until you hold 5 cards in your hand. If you run out of cards in your draw pile, shuffle your burn pile and draw.

Your guard does not counts toward your hand size.

## 2. Move:

You may burn as many cards as you wish from your hand in order to move one space for each card burned.

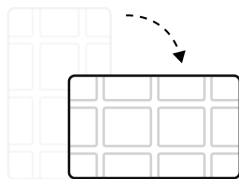
If you are on a space adjacent to an opponent, you may burn cards from your hand to "push" the opponent, moving them one space in the opposite direction for each card burned.

You may only move or push in straight lines.

## 3. Act:

You may either (a) prepare your guard *OR* (b) attack the field.

### a) Prepare your guard



You can prepare your guard by playing a card from your hand face down. It is laid sideways to indicate it is still preparing.

If you are on a space overlapped by your guard's pattern, this is a "critical block"; gain one health point and return your guard to your hand. You may immediately play a new guard in the preparation state, which can be set on your next turn.

### b) Counter:

If your guard is set offensively, then it counter-attacks; one point of damage is negated, and the attacking player takes two damage.

If the attacking player is on a space overlapped by your guard's pattern, this is a "critical counter"; the attacking player takes one additional point of damage.

Once your guard is activated, it is burned immediately after taking effect.

If you are the attacking player, you cannot activate your guard in response to an opponent's guard.

# Winning the Game

**Elimination (Standard):** Each player begins the game with 10 health. Players take turns until there is only one player, or team, left standing.

**Victory:** Each point of damage to an opponent earns the attacking player or team, 1 point. First to 20 points wins.

**Exhaustion:** Players have 5 health. If a player exhausts their draw pile, they are eliminated.

**King of the Hill:** Players have 10 health. For every turn that a player occupies the center space, they accumulate one victory point. First player or team to 5 points wins. Ideal for multiplayer free-for-all.

# Reacting to Attacks

If you are under attack you may choose to react by (1) defending with cards from your hand *OR* (2) activating your guard.

If you don't react, then the attack is successful and you lose one health point for each attacking card.

If you are attacked with two or more cards at once while your guard is still preparing, your guard is "broken" and burned. One point of damage is negated.

## 1. Defending with your hand



You can defend against an attack with cards in your hand so long as the card's pattern overlaps with your position on the field when oriented defensively (with the arrow facing toward you).

Each card played defensively negates one point of damage.

You cannot offensively counter-attack with cards in your hand.

## 2. Activating your guard

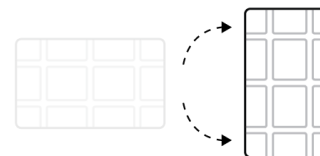
You can respond to an attack by revealing your concealed guard, activating it. Guards can either (a) block *OR* (b) counter.

The guard's effect is determined by its set orientation.

### a) Block:

If your guard is set defensively, then it blocks; you take no damage regardless of the number of cards used in the attack.

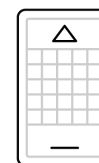
At the beginning of your next Act phase, you may "set" your guard, secretly orienting it offensively or defensively.



The guard remains face down, its orientation a secret to your opponents, ready to be activated at a later time when you are under attack.

You can have only one guard at any time and its set orientation cannot be changed. If you wish to set a new guard, your existing guard is burned, and the new guard is laid in the preparation state until your next turn.

## b) Attack the field



You can attack the field by playing one or more cards from your hand face up, pointed toward the field.

Your attack will deal one damage to any and all opponents for each attacking card overlapping that opponent's position on the field.

Opponents who are under attack may then react, in clockwise order, by blocking with cards in their hand, or activating their guard (if it is set).

## 4. Settle:

Burn any cards that were played face up during your turn. You may also burn as many additional cards from your hand as you wish. Cards burned during this phase do not grant movement.

When you are done, the player to your left is free to begin their turn.



