Rules of Standoff

Introduction

Standoff is a deckbuilding game with an area control element which gives rise to a lot of tactics and calculation. Players represent giant galactic empires locked in a bitter stalemate in a protracted war. In order to gain a decisive edge over their opponents, the armies take the battle to the planet Zirconia, which hosts an ancient powerful superweapon (known as "The Red Gun"). Whoever takes control of The Red Gun will be able to turn the tide in the galactic war and overcome all of their opponents.
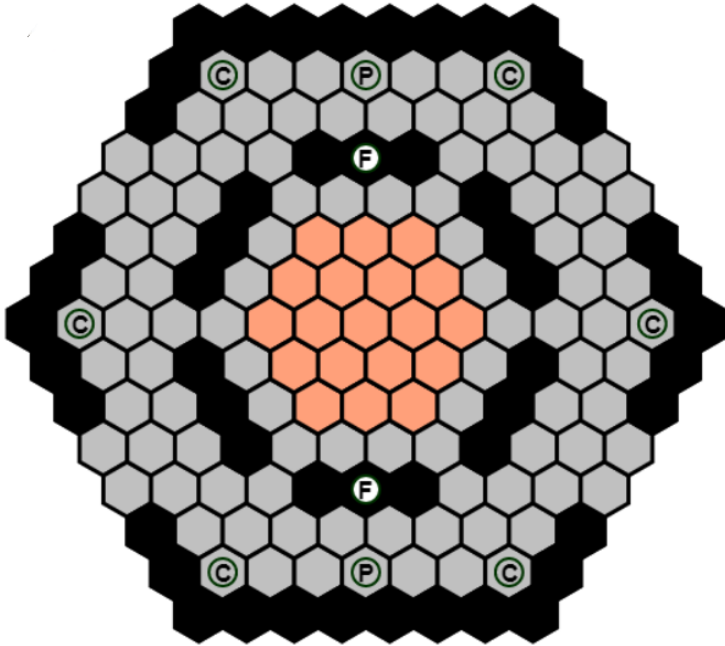
Setup

Figure 1 Initial setup of the board

Place black tiles, 6 credit wells, 2 encampment wells, and 2 forcefield tokens as indicated in Figure 1.

Each player takes six **1-Credit's** and four **1-Hex's** to form their respective 10-card decks. Then sort the **1-Credit's**, **2-Credit's**, **3-Credit's**, **1-Hex's**, **2-Hex's**, **3-Hex's**, **4-Hex's**, and **Tactical Offensive's** into their own piles, these piles comprise of the **permanent market**. Any cards left over are put into another pile – the **temporary market**. Then flip over the top 8 cards of the **temporary market** face-up (see Figure 2 for an example).
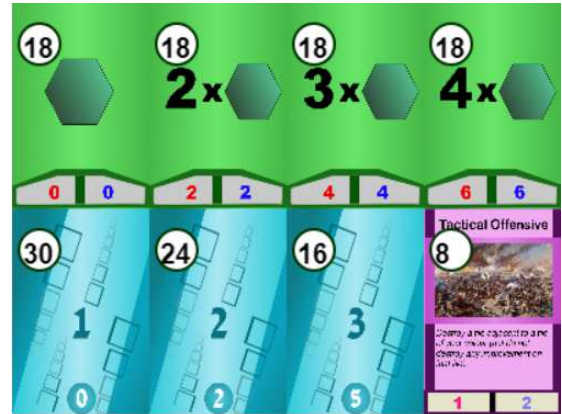
Object of the game

The goal is to achieve a majority of the red zone in the center of the game board, which is known as "**The Red Gun**". The game ends when the red zone is completely filled (which requires 19 tiles). Then the winner is the player with the most tiles of his/her colour in the red zone. If the number of blocks is tied, then the winner is the player with the least number of total blocks of his/her colour on the game board. If that is still tied, the winner is the last player out of the tied players to take his/her first turn (for example: in a 2-player game this scenario means that the second player is the winner).

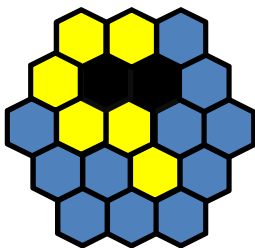Figure 2 A possible market configuration.

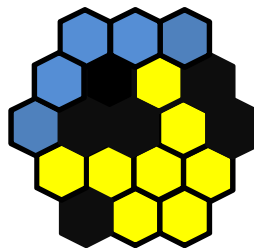Figure 3 The blue player has the majority and wins

Figure 4 Even though neither side has majority, yellow has more tiles than blue by the time The Red Gun is completely filled. Yellow wins
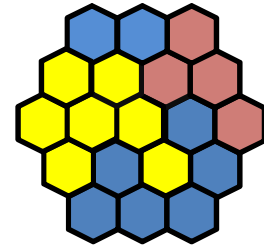
Figure 5 The Red Gun is not yet filled, play on

Resources

The resource for Standoff is the form of **credits**. Credits are usually required to buy or play action, encampment, and satellite cards. Resources are added to your resource pool—known as your **budget**, via resource cards or the +1 credit action (see actions). Your budget **does not carry over** to your next turn, and as soon as your turn ends, the budget automatically becomes 0.

Phases and Actions

Each turn is composed of three phases.

Upkeep phase:

This is the phase during which players have to pay "upkeep", i.e. resolve leftover effects from previous turns. Certain cards will indicate certain effects to happen during the upkeep phases, and all such effects are resolved automatically during the upkeep phase.

Action phase:

This is the phase during which a player may play up 4 actions. An action consists of one the following:

- Drawing a card
- Adding 1 credit to the player's budget (+1 credit)
- Playing an action card
- Playing an encampment card
- Discarding a card
- Buying a card from the market

> There is a special rule regarding encampment cards: **only one encampment card may be played per turn!** (Unless an effect says otherwise, like **encampment wells**)

Most actions require resources (in the form of credits) to play. To add resources, **a player plays resource cards as free actions to gain credits**.

If there are no more cards left in a player's deck and he/she chooses to draw, then first shuffle the discard pile into the deck before drawing. If the discard pile is empty is well, then the draw has no effect.

Discard phase:

Standoff has a maximum hand size of 5. After a player ends his/her turn, he/she must discard down to 5 cards. If the player has less than 5 cards in hand, that player draws up to 5.

Types of Cards

There are 3 major types of cards in Standoff.

Encampment cards:

These cards are the basic building blocks (as well as win conditions) that allow a player to make progress in the game. An polyomino card consists of the following:

- **Pattern** (center): the number of blocks the card allows the player to play in the same action
- **Playing cost** (lower-left corner): the number of credits required to play the card.
- **Price/Deckbuilding cost** (lower-right corner): the number of credits required to buy the card

When you play an encampment card of n tiles, it means that you must place exactly n tiles of your colour onto the field (known as a "group"). Moreover, the n tiles you place must be in one connected piece.

In addition, each group you place can only be placed onto tiles without a block on it. Groups must be placed adjacent either to the edge of the game board or adjacent to blocks of the player's own colour.
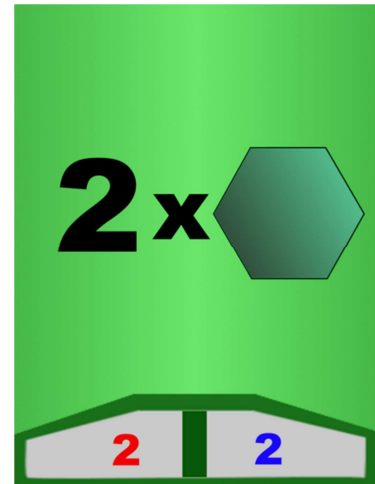
Action cards:

An action card consists of the following:

- **Title** (top): the name of the card; may be referred to by other cards
- **Playing cost** (lower-left corner): the number of credits required to play the card.
- **Market Price** (lower-right corner): the number of credits required to buy the card
- **Effect** (lower half): explains what the card does. If there is more than one effect, resolve them in the order that it is written.
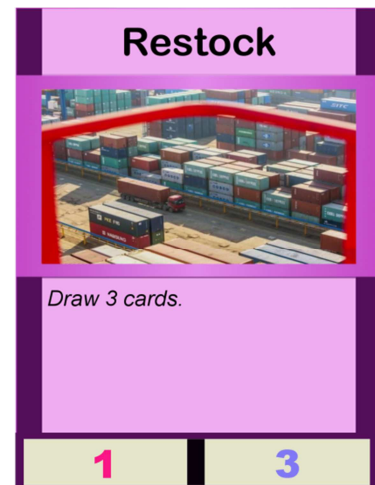
Improvement cards:

Improvement cards are a subtype of action cards. They follow the same rules as action cards except they have effects that can place an **improvement** on a hex, the name of the improvement is called **(name of card) token**. Its effects are dedicated to describing what effects

- **Placement**: Where the improvement can be placed

- **The rainbow hex**: Abilities that can be used on the controlling player's turn (see **Improvements**)
- **The black hex**: Abilities that are active when the improvement is on a **black** tile (i.e. neutral tile)
- **The gray hex**: Abilities that are active when the improvement is on an empty hex.

A resource card consists of the following:

- **Amount** (middle): the number of credits the player will gain upon playing the card
- **Market Price** (bottom): the number of credits required to buy the cardResource cards are played as free actions.
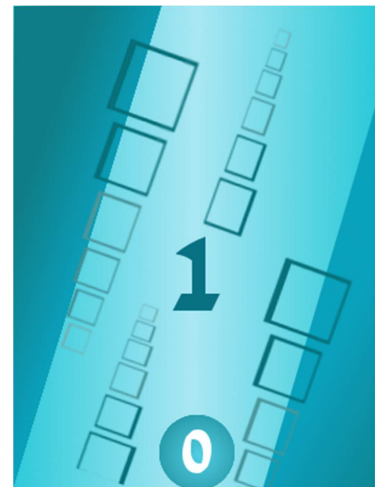
In addition to the above, there is a special card named **Horse**. It does not belong to any of the three major types and it has no effect, it also cannot be played. It is gained by a player's opponent upon the player playing a **Trojan** card.

Buying cards from the market

A player may use an action to buy a card from the **Market.** The price of the card indicates how much resources is needed to buy the card. Once bought, the card immediately goes into the player's discard pile.

There are two markets: the **permanent market** and the **temporary market**. Buying from both markets is the same. However, each time a card is bought from the temporary market, the top card from the **draft pile** is flipped face up to replace it (until the draft pile is empty).

Placements

Placements are the method with which players can put their tiles onto the board and ultimately get to the center. Placements are subject to the following rules:

- **Contiguity:** All tiles from placements from the same card must be in one contiguous group.

- **Collision:** A tile cannot be placed on a hex that already has a tile on it.
- **Adjacency (**only applies to encampment cards**):** Each tile must be adjacent to a tile of the same colour or on an edge hex.
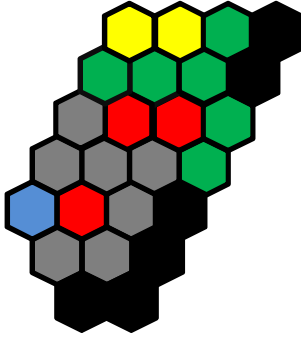

Figure 3 The yellow player cannot place yellow tiles at the red hexes, but can place yellow tiles at the green hexes (adjacency rule)
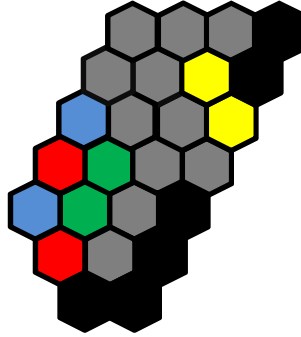
Figure 5 The blue player is playing a 2-Hex. He/she can place the two blue tiles at the green hexes, but not at the red hexes even though they are both adjacent to a blue tile (contiguity rule)
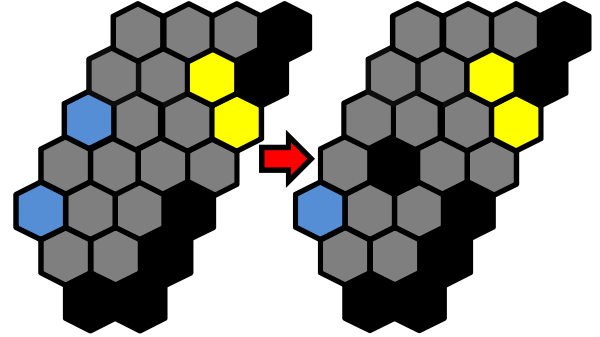
Figure 4 On placing a black tile however, neither player has to worry about adjacency

Improvements

Improvements are tokens that can be added on to a hex (either empty or nonempty). Improvements can be placed with improvement cards. In addition there are certain improvements that are already on the board at the start of the game. There can be a maximum of **one improvement** on each hex. Each improvement will have a corresponding card outlining its abilities, although not all of these cards can be played by the players.

Control: The most important aspect of an improvement. At any given time, an improvement belongs to the player who has a tile of his/her colour under it. The control of an improvement may change throughout the game (with the use of **Tactical Offensive** for example).

Abilities: Improvements can have static abilities (which do not need activation), and active abilities (which need to be activated by spending resources and/or actions). The abilities of a particular improvement are described on its corresponding card.

Wells: These are improvements that are on the board at the start of the game and do not come from placements by the players. They have static abilities that favor the controlling player (such as +1 credit, +1 encampment, etc.)