

SPLIT UNO: The High-Card Challenge

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Abstract

This document formalizes the ruleset for SPLIT UNO, a two-player strategic card-shedding game derived from the standard UNO deck. By dividing the deck into separate Number and Action piles, the game shifts its core mechanic from matching to simultaneous high-card bidding, combined with aggressive card penalties and disruptive action effects. The goal is to be the first player to shed all Number Cards while navigating the opponent's disruptive Action Card arsenal.

1 Introduction

Welcome to SPLIT UNO! This game takes the familiar cards of UNO and introduces a completely new, high-stakes dynamic. Forget matching colors and numbers; this game is about strategic bidding, controlling information, and using powerful Action Cards as game-breaking interruptions. The core of the game lies in two distinct decks: one for card shedding (Numbers) and one for disruptive power (Actions). You can play any card at any time except you cannot end the game with a +2 or +4 card. You can however shred your last card if it is a reverse, block or color change card.

2 Game Components and Setup

SPLIT UNO is played with a standard UNO deck (108 cards) and is designed exclusively for two players.

2.1 Deck Separation

The deck must be sorted into two distinct piles:

1. Number Card Deck (N): Contains all numbered cards (0 through 9) in all four colors (Red, Yellow, Green, Blue).
2. Action Card Deck (A): Contains all special cards: Reverse, Skip (Block), Draw Two (+2), Wild (Color Change), and Wild Draw Four (+4). Also contains 5 special cards: Three Truth Cards and Two Dare Cards.

2.2 Setup Procedure

1. Both decks (N and A) are shuffled separately and placed face-down within easy reach.
2. Each player is dealt twenty (20) cards from the Number Card Deck (N).
3. No Action Cards are dealt into the starting hand.
4. The current score is zero, and the starting player is determined arbitrarily.

3 Core Gameplay: The High-Card Bid

The game is played in a series of "Rounds" or "Terms," where players simultaneously reveal cards from their hands.

3.1 The Round Procedure

In each round, both players execute the following steps:

1. Simultaneous Play: Both players select and place one Number Card face-down from their hand.
2. Reveal and Compare: Both cards are flipped face-up at the same time. The highest numerical value wins the round.
3. Resolution:
 - The Winner (player with the highest number) successfully sheds one card (the played card) from their hand.
 - The Loser (player with the lowest number) must draw one card from the Number Card Deck (N) and add it to their hand.
 - In case of a numerical tie, both players shed their played cards, and both player draw one card from the number deck.

3.2 Consecutive Loss Rule

If a player loses two consecutive rounds (however, a draw between two rounds won't result in consecutive wins), the winning player is granted a choice:

- Option A (Action Gain): The winner draws one random Action Card from Deck A and immediately adds it to their hand.
- Option B (Penalty Imposition): The loser must immediately draw two additional Number Cards from Deck N.

This choice is made immediately after the second consecutive round's standard resolution.

4 Number Card Special Effects

Two numbers have unique effects that resolve immediately upon being revealed in the simultaneous play phase:

- The Zero (0): If a player plays a 0, they must draw one random card from the opponent's hand. This drawn card is added to the playing hand *before* the round's standard shed/draw resolution.
- The Seven (7): If a player plays a 7, their opponent must immediately:
 1. Draw two random Number Cards from Deck N.
 2. Draw one random Action Card from Deck A.

Note: The winner of the high-card bid still sheds a card, and the loser still draws (this is valid in all rounds of the game), even if these effects occur.

5 Action Card Rules and Timing

Action Cards are highly disruptive and can be played anytime (as an interrupt) by placing the card face-up and declaring its effect.

5.1 Action Card Interaction Resolution

If both players play action cards simultaneously, there may be two scenarios. If player A plays +2 and player B plays +4 cards, player A and B shed the two cards, Player B wins. Player A has to draw 1 card for losing and $(4-2)=2$ cards for the action card effect (in total 3 cards). However, if the action card doesn't occur to be a +2/+4, then both players will shed the cards simultaneously and draw one card each from Deck N.

5.2 Specific Action Card Effects

- Block Card (Skip):
 - Effect: Prevents the opponent from playing a Number Card in the next round.
 - Resolution: The blocking player automatically plays the next round alone. They successfully shed their played card, and the blocked opponent must draw one Number Card (standard loser penalty).
 - Simultaneous Block: If both players play a Block Card simultaneously, the effects cancel out, and both players shed one Number Card immediately.
- Reverse Card:
 - Player A or Player B plays Reverse. Player A and B will have to exchange their deck of cards.
- Color Change Card (Wild):
 - If Player A plays a color change card, Player A and Player B both have the right to shed their cards. But Player A has the right to choose Which Color Card will Player B will play in the next round.
- Draw Two (+2) / Wild Draw Four (+4): See Section 6 for their special win-blocking effect.
- Special Cards: A special card can be of two kinds. These cards will be played in personal settings only. if someone intends to play Split UNO in a tournament setting, the special cards will be removed from the deck.
 - A Truth card can enable you to force your opponent to tell an uncomfortable truth of their life. If they do not agree to answer to you question, you can choose to take two action cards and tell you opponent to draw two number cards you can tell your opponent to draw 5 number cards.
 - A Dare Card adds fun to the game. You can shred one card and tell your opponent to do any wild thing ranging from doing a practical task to something extreme (or extremely annoying). If a player disagrees to the dare card, s/he forfeits the game.

6 Winning the Game

The game is won by the first player to reduce their hand to zero cards. However, the opponent may delay this victory using +2 and +4 Action Cards.

6.1 The Final Card Rule

The win is triggered when a player successfully sheds their last Number Card in a round. If Player A sheds their last card, they announce their win, but Player B (the opponent) may challenge this:

- Challenge Condition: If Player B holds a +2 or +4 card, they may play it immediately (out of turn) to force Player A to draw cards, bringing A's count above zero.
- The "Only Card" Barrier: Player B cannot play a +2 or +4 if it is the only card remaining in their hand.

6.2 Draw Penalty for Opponent's Single Action Card

If Player B has only +2 or +4 Action Cards left, and Player A successfully sheds their last card:

1. Player A is temporarily a "winner."
2. Player B cannot play their last +2/ + 4 to block the win.
3. The game continues, and in the next term, Player B, unable to play their remaining Action Card, is forced to draw one Number Card from Deck N as a penalty for being "stuck."
4. Player A is safe from the +2/ + 4 only once Player B successfully draws a Number Card (making the +2/ + 4 no longer their only card) and plays it, or if B is forced to play the +2/ + 4 card against A.

7 Gameplay Scenario: The 0 and 7 Exchange

Setup: A has $\{R_9, B_5, Y_0\}$. B has $\{G_8, R_7, B_6\}$. No Action Cards drawn yet. A is the starting player.

1. Round 1 (The 0 Power Play):

- A plays Y_0 . B plays B_6 .
- Zero Effect Triggered: A must draw one random card from B. A chooses and draws G_8 . A's Hand: $\{R_9, B_5, G_8\}$. B's Hand: $\{R_7\}$.
- Bid Resolution: $B_6 > Y_0$. B is the Winner.
- B sheds B_6 . B's Hand: $\{R_7\}$.
- A is the Loser, draws 1 card from N. A's Hand: $\{R_9, B_5, G_8, N_1\}$.

2. Round 2 (The 7 Bomb):

- A plays R_9 . B plays R_7 .
- Seven Effect Triggered: A is penalized. A must draw 2 Number Cards and 1 Action Card (e.g., a +4). A's Hand: $\{B_5, G_8, N_1, N_2, N_3, +4\}$.
- Bid Resolution: $R_9 > R_7$ A is the Winner.
- A sheds R_9 . A's Hand: $\{B_5, G_8, N_1, N_2, N_3, +4\}$.
- B is the Loser, draws 1 card from N. B's Hand: $\{N_4\}$.

3. Consecutive Loss: B lost Rounds 1 and 2. A chooses to take Option A (Action Gain). A draws an additional Action Card (e.g., a Reverse). A's Hand: $\{B_5, G_8, N_1, N_2, N_3, +4, \text{Reverse}\}$.

The game continues with A having a strong hand and two powerful Action Cards.

8 Tournament Ruleset

This ruleset defines a competitive multi-player, multi-stage tournament structure using the two-player SPLIT UNO duel as its foundation.

8.1 Group Phase (15 Rounds)

- **Player Groups:** Players are divided into two distinct groups, which compete in duels against each other.
- **Dynamic Grouping:** Group membership is completely fluid. Players may discuss among themselves, shift sides, share an Action Card, or even reshuffle groups entirely after the first round. Remember that a group number cannot exceed 15 and cannot go below 5. Going below 5 will result in direct elimination. So sharpen your bluffing and negotiation skills too.
- **Duels:** The Group Phase consists of 15 rounds. Each round is a two-player SPLIT UNO duel between a representative from each group.
- **Scoring:** Points are awarded to the individual player who participated in the duel, contributing to the team's total score:
 - Win: **+3 Individual Points** (added to the individual's score and the team's total).
 - Loss: **-2 Individual Points** (deducted from the individual's score and the team's total).
- **Group Winner:** The group with the highest accumulated total points after 15 rounds is the winner of the Group Phase.

8.2 Individual Elimination Phase (The Finale)

After 15 rounds, the top four individual players with the highest point totals proceed to a knockout tournament for the trophy.

- **Tie-breaker Duel:** If two or more players are tied on points for the top four positions, they will engage in a sudden-death SPLIT UNO duel to determine the higher rank for tournament seeding.

- **Tournament Bracket (Page Playoff Adaptation):** The top four players compete in the following structure (using the example scores 100, 90, 80, 70 for illustration):
 1. **Qualifier 1 (Q1):** Rank 1 (100) vs. Rank 2 (90).
 - Q1 Winner → Advances directly to the Grand Final Duel (Podium).
 - Q1 Loser → Drops to the Final Eliminator (Q2).
 2. **Eliminator 1 (E1):** Rank 3 (80) vs. Rank 4 (70).
 - E1 Winner → Advances to the Final Eliminator (Q2).
 - E1 Loser → Eliminated (4th Place).
 3. **Final Eliminator (Q2):** Loser of Q1 vs. Winner of E1.
 - Q2 Winner → Advances to the Grand Final Duel (Podium).
 - Q2 Loser → Eliminated (3rd Place).
 4. **Grand Final Duel:** Winner of Q1 vs. Winner of Q2. The winner claims the championship trophy.

9 Conclusion

SPLIT UNO is a high-risk, high-reward strategic game. The key is managing your hand size, using the 0 and 7 cards to inflict heavy damage, and strategically deploying Action Cards as interrupts. The rule of two consecutive losses and the win-blocking mechanic using +2 and +4 ensures a volatile and unpredictable finale.