

Spartan Yahtzee

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Logline:

The Peloponnesian War is in full swing. Choosing either Sparta or Athens your goal is to defeat the opposing army by any means necessary.

Summary:

The year is 431 BC. The first Peloponnesian War is in full swing.

A ship full of bloodthirsty Spartan warriors careens into a beach right outside Athens. They seek to strike down the quickly growing city-state before it can become a threat. But to their surprise an Athenian defense force awaits them on the beach. Take control of one of the sides of this battle and play against a friend. The outcome of your battle will decide history.

Rules

Setup

- Both players start with 10 hitpoints (HP) and 10 six-sided dice. A 4 sided dice (The Mercenary Die) is placed in the center.
- At the start of the turn, each player rolls 10 six sided dice. During the roll and reroll phase each player's rolls are done in secret.
- Once a player's hit points reach 0, they are defeated.

Order of turns

Player's turns occur simultaneously, the order of a turn goes as follows.

1. Roll.
2. Re-roll (optional).
3. Show dice/suffer consequences.
4. Repeat from step 1

Dice values

The values six-sided dice rolls correspond with the following values:

1. Plague (Dead)
2. Warrior (Attack)
3. Warrior (Attack)
4. Hoplites +1 (Defense +1)
5. Phalanx +2 (Defense +2)
6. Necromancer (Revive)

Plague: A dice that lands on plague can not be rerolled and goes straight to the graveyard after the dice of each player are revealed. Plagued dice remain out of play until healed. Healed dice can not be rolled the same turn they are healed.

Warrior: Adds 1 to the attacking power of the player.

Hoplite: Add 1 to the defense of the player.*

Phalanx: Add 2 to the defense of the player.*

Necromancer: Revive 2 dice from your graveyard.

*more details about defending below.

Rolling & Rerolling

Players may roll dice up to three times, **plague rolls can not be rerolled**.

On the first roll, roll all dice in play. For your second roll, if you like some of your results, you can set them aside and only roll the ones you don't like again. For your third Roll, if you change your mind, you can roll any dice you set aside again, along with any you still don't like. If a dice lands on 1 at any point, it becomes out of play (do not reveal yet).

For the first two phases (Roll and reroll). The dice remain hidden to the opposite player.

Defending

Defensive dice remain active for the round they are rolled, after which they are cycled into a “resting position”. **Resting defenders do not add to defense**, are considered out of play and can not be rolled in the next turn.

The amount of defense reduces the amount of attack damage dealt by the enemy player.

The Mercenary Die

On the first turn, the player with the highest raw attack (regardless of damage dealt to the opponent) on the first turn gets awarded with **The Mercenary**, a four sided bonus attack die which adds to their attack roll in the next turn. After **The Mercenary** is used, it goes back to the center and the process repeats.

In case of ties, no one gets the dice.

Sudden Death

If both players' hit points are reduced to 0 during the same round, the game shifts to sudden death. Both players get all their dice back and their HP is set to 1.

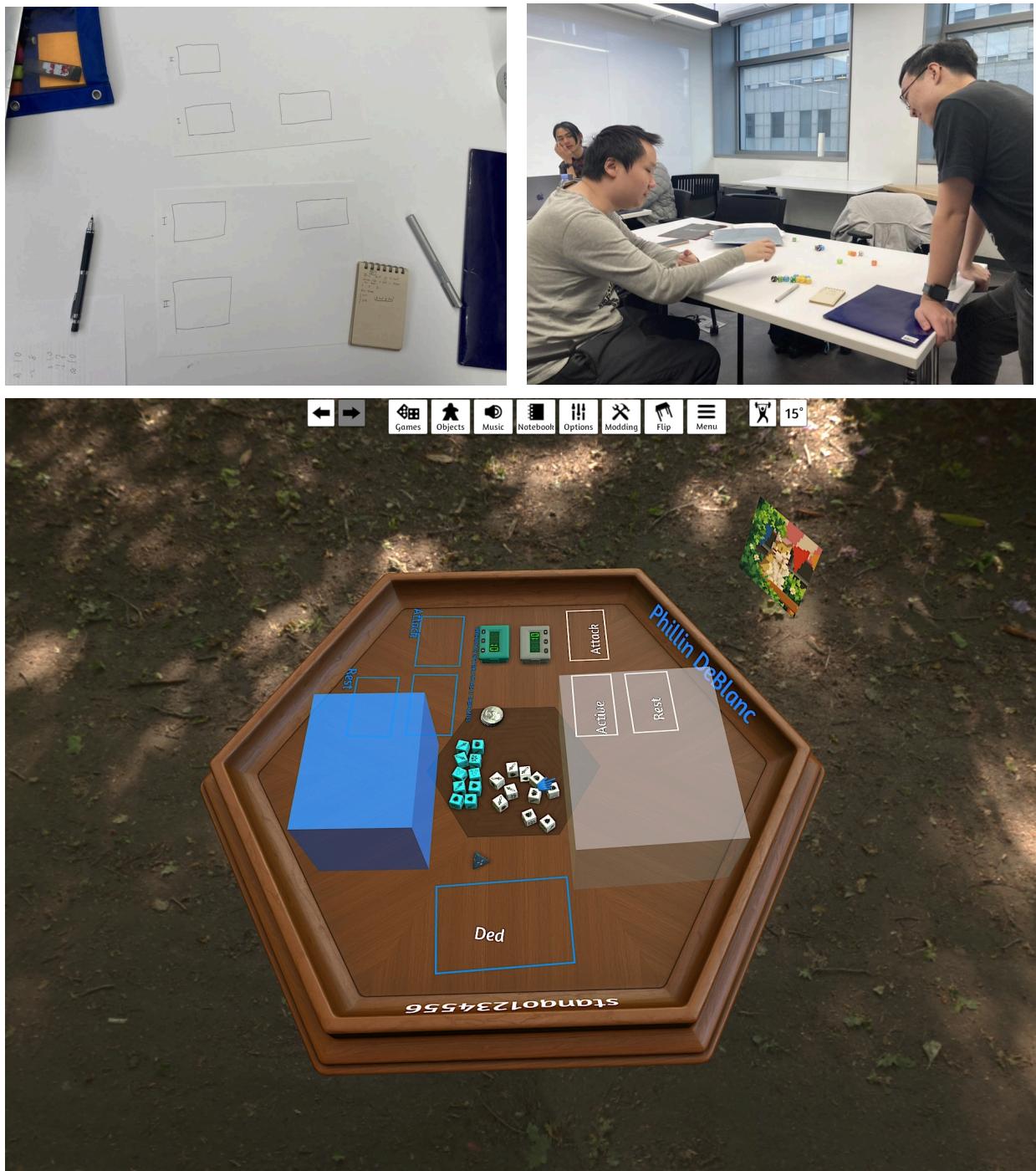
They roll all ten dice. No rerolls are allowed and whoever has a higher damage roll wins.

In the case of a tie, reset sudden death and roll again.

Materials List

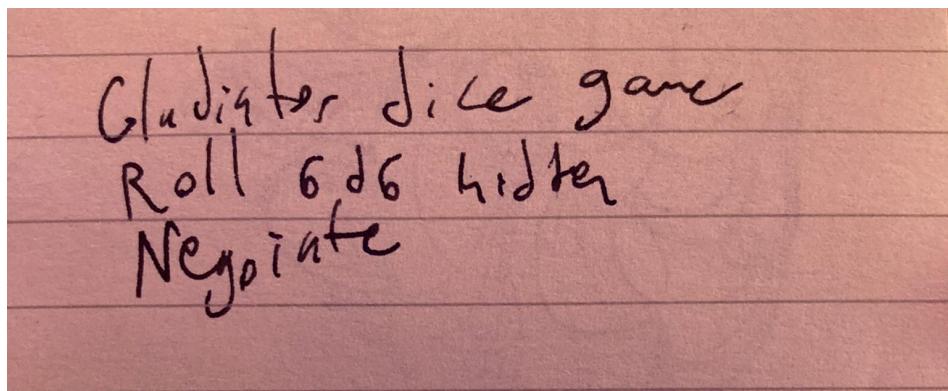
- 20 Play Dice (10 of each color)
- 1 Mercenary Dice
- 2 Player boards
- 1 Graveyard board
- 2 HP counters
- 1 Field wall

Visual Documentation



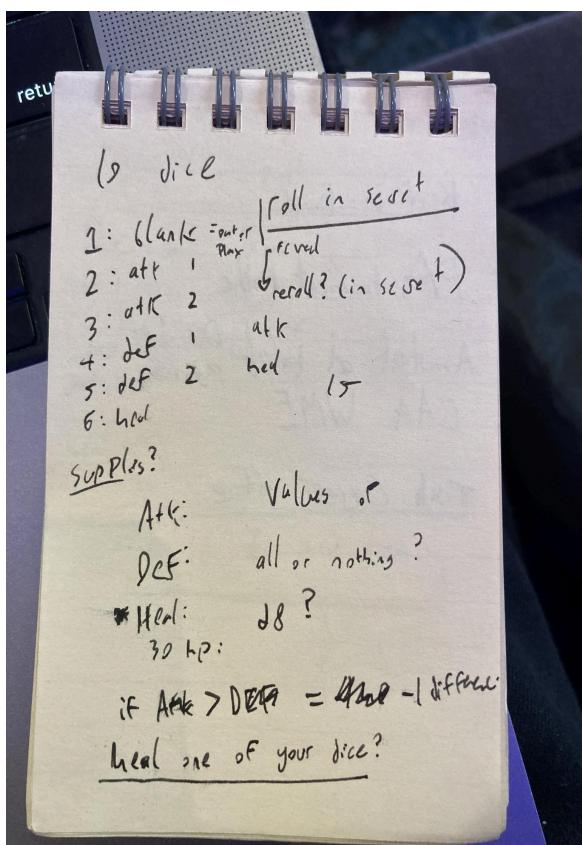
Process

This is the earliest thing I have written down in my notes that might be about this project:



In case you can't read my handwriting, it says: "Gladiator dice game. Roll 6d6 hidden. Negotiate."

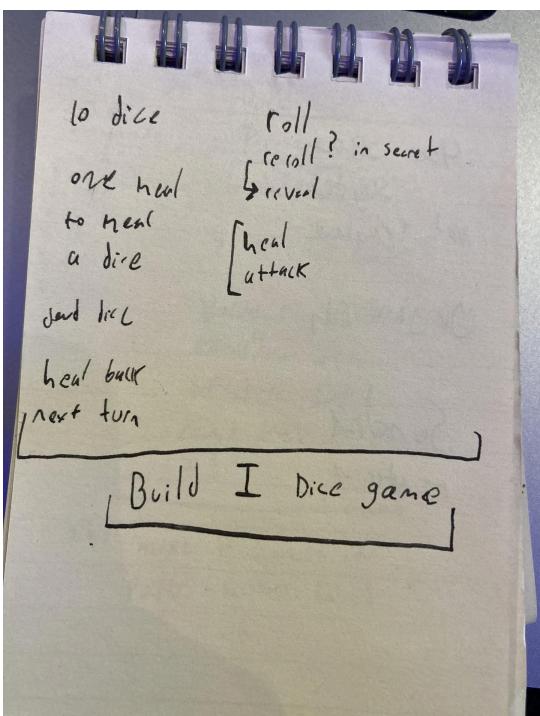
I don't think we ever tested this particular build just due to the simplicity but perhaps you could consider this the seed of this game "plant".



It was simple. Each player had ten 6 sided dice which they would roll in secret every turn. Different values meant different things: A roll of 1 meant the die would be out of play permanently. 2 and 3 equated to attack, 4 and 5 were +1 defense that turn and 6 healed the player 1 hp. Taking from *King of Tokyo*, the player was allowed to reroll their dice twice. We talked about implementing supplies or some sort of resource (similar to how *King of Tokyo* has cards) but we quickly realized that wasn't the direction we wanted to go. As far as hitpoints go, we started at 30 but very quickly realized that number needed to go down as games with 30 lasted much too long. After some back and forth we balanced it at 10.

Towards the end of testing out this first draft, we realized that dice being gone forever was way too punishing and happened much too often, so we implemented the 6 roll being able to revive dice as well.

Draft 1, Build 1

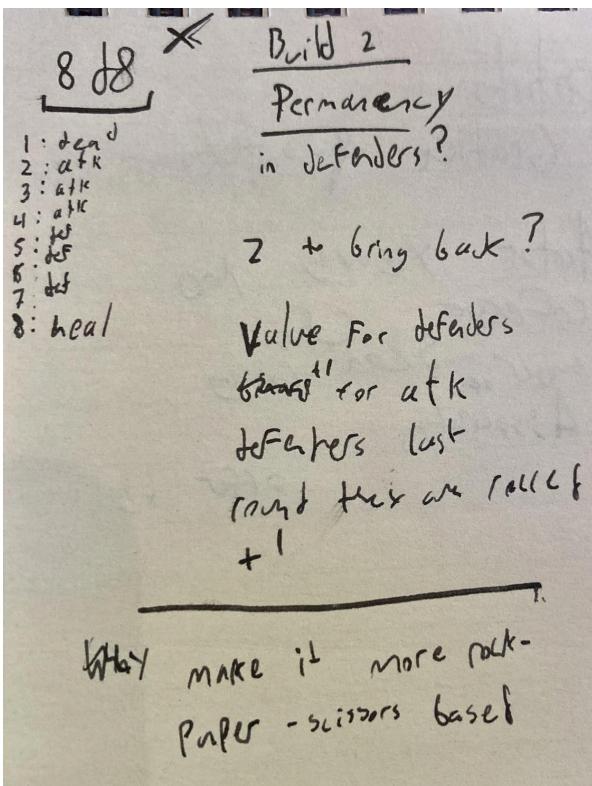


Build I wasn't much different from the draft. We clarified the structure/order of the turn and clarified that a roll of 6 could heal one die.

We also tested out a feature of different numbers being worth more in their respective effects (Ex. instead of 4 & 5 being 1 defense, 4 would be +1 and 5 would be +2). But we found this mechanic made attacking much too powerful and decided to shelf it.

Overall this build was stable and relatively fun, but we felt as though we could improve on it.

Official build I of "Dice Game"



One of the problems we had in Build I was that the dead dice caused the game to collapse much too quickly.

The first thing we tried in order to remedy this was using 8d8 instead of 10d6. After a few rounds we scrapped this idea because the dying dice were still an issue.

We briefly floated the idea of a 6 bringing back 2 dice instead of 1.

After speaking with Charles, we modified our defense mechanics.

Instead of disappearing after a turn, defenders would stick around. As we tested this we added more features:

-2 zones for defenders. One where they would stay, invincible for the turn they were played and another where they would go the turn after they were played when they would no longer be invincible. We quickly termed these zones, the

Build II

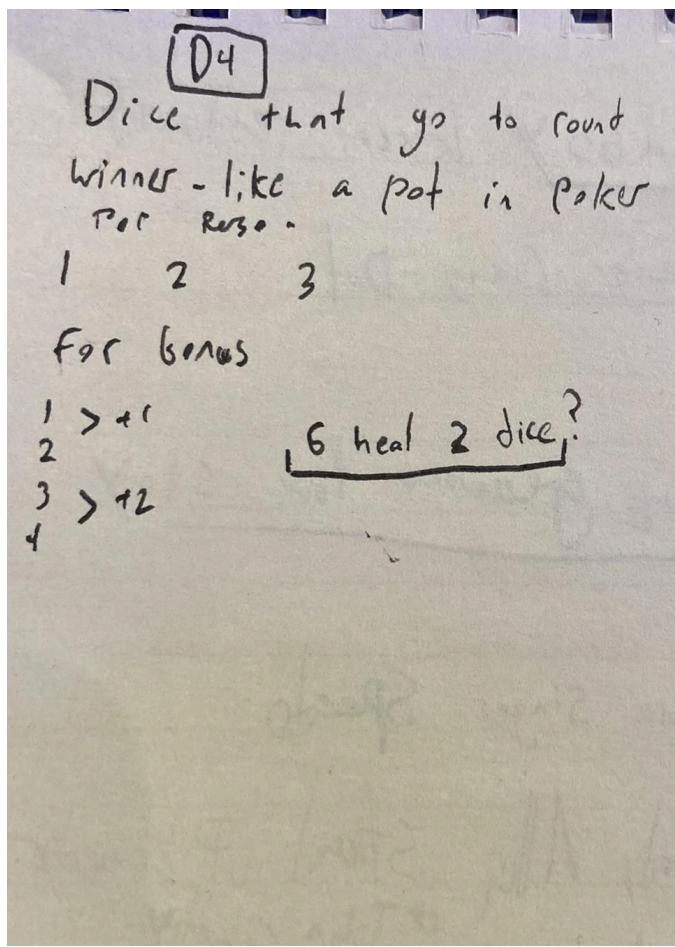
“Castle” and “Field”.

-We brought back the +1 +2 for 4 & 5 rolls mechanic but only for defenders.

-Players would have to keep their defenders in the field for one turn before taking them back.

-Defenders could be killed.

This build was very fun but we quickly realized that defending was much too overpowered, and due to the punishing nature of rolling 1s, the game followed a rhythm of stagnancy until one player lost a significant amount of dice in one turn.



This is still technically part of build 2 but we decided to add a special bonus attack die dubbed “The Mercenary”. This was implemented in order to try and balance our overpowered defense crisis.

The mercenary dice would be awarded to whomever had the most attack in the first round. The next round, the player in possession could roll the die and it would add to their attack. After use, The Mercenary would go back to the center and be up for grabs the next round.

We experimented with different types of die for this mechanic, but ended up using 3d2 for the bonus attack roll.

This modification balanced the attack/defense strategy a little bit for Build II, but we felt as though defending was still a little strong.

Needless to say, Build II was still pretty fun.

Build 2.1 The Mercenary

I don't exactly have our last version, Build III, as well documented as the other ones, but late Sunday night we jumped on a Discord call to discuss what changes we wanted to make to the game.

We used this opportunity to create and test the game in Tabletop simulator.

We also changed many of the central mechanics during this build. We completely removed persistent defenders, replacing them with a mechanic that Sam suggested: after each turn,

defenders would spend 1 turn “resting” before they could return to the hand to be rolled. This allowed for more interactions and consequences between turns. Going all out on defense finally had consequences. It would come at the cost of not being able to use a certain amount of dice in the next turn. We all felt this mechanic worked really well.

We also briefly removed The Mercenary, only to replace it shortly after with 1d4.

We also finalized the change of not allowing rolls of 6 to heal the player.

Some other features were also tested in this call:

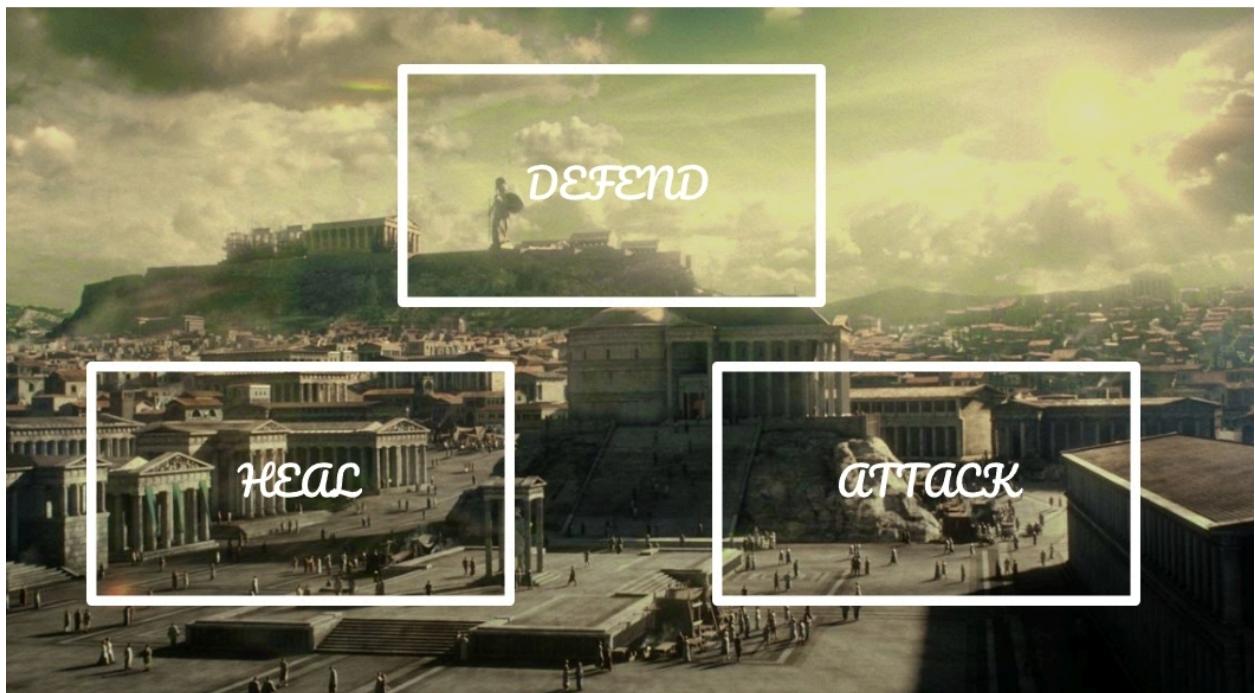
I suggested a system of converting defenders into attackers before returning them to your hand in order to balance our then-overpowered defense strategy, however this system did not fix the problem.

We also briefly tried out a “Necromancer” mechanic where you could steal your opponent’s dice from the graveyard if you rolled 3 sixes. However this just didn’t really work, and happened much too rarely to be practical.

Graveyard/Rest Board



Player Board



Custom Die

