

Game Prototyping

Mindful War

Zaki Agraraharja

5046546

American University

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By Zaki Agraraharja

Abstract

The original War is a competitive game where each player plays against each other to win. This game has an issue with its mechanic where no player has a sense of agency. Based on this problem, a modification is made to give meaningful experiences for the players.

Unlike original War where both players cannot choose which card to use, Mindful War allows players to decide which card to reveal from the three cards on their hand. In addition, players can also choose to modify their hand by switching a card from the deck. With these modifications, players can challenge their strategic thinking ability, which adds the fun.

Game Rules

Number of players: 2

Outcomes

When there are no cards left on each player's deck and hand, the player with the most cards in their discard pile wins the game.

Procedures

1. Shuffle cards, then distribute evenly to both players.

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2. Each player draws and looks at their three first cards, which does not suppose to be revealed to the opponent.
3. Each player declares if they want to *switch card* unless *royal attack* (description at term section) activated in the previous turn.
4. The player who declares to *switch card*, put one card from their hand to the bottom of their deck, then draw a new card from the top of the deck.
5. *War* phase begins, each player chooses a card from their hand, then reveal it to each other at the same time.
6. The player who reveals the card with the higher value wins the round and takes all the revealed cards to their discard pile. The player who wins the war with royal card (A, K Q, or J) may declare to activate *royal attack* on the following turn.
7. In case of a tie, both players reveal another card from their hand. The player who wins that turn takes all the revealed cards. If a tie keeps happening and each player has no card in hand, the cards revealed on that turn goes to a neutral discard pile.
8. Each player draws cards from their deck until they have three cards in hand, then proceed to the next turn (No. 3).
9. When there is no more card in both players' decks and hand, the game ends.
10. At the end of the game, each player counts the cards in their discard pile.

Terms

Hand	Cards in each player's hand.
Deck	A faced down pile of cards that belong to each player resource.
Player's discard pile	A pile of cards that was used on <i>War</i> . Each player has their own discard pile.
Neutral discard pile	A discard pile that does not belong to any player, all cards in this pile does not count.

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Turn	A sequence of steps starting from each player draws to three cards in hand to set aside cards to discard pile.
<i>War</i>	A phase where each player revealing card to each other to determine the winner of a turn.
<i>Switch card</i>	A phase where each player might switch a card from their hand with the card from their top of the deck.
<i>Royal attack</i>	An ability activated when a player win a <i>War</i> on the previous turn with a royal cards (A, K, Q, and J). Each card has its own unique ability.
<i>Royal attack Ace – Loot</i>	Instead of drawing card from their library, the activating player takes a card other than A from any player's discard pile, then put a card from their top of their deck to replace the taken card.
<i>Royal attack King – Sabotage</i>	The activating player switches a card from their hand to the bottom of the opponent deck and draw a card from that deck.
<i>Royal attack Queen – Reveal</i>	The opponent reveals their hand before the <i>war phase</i> .
<i>Royal attack Jack - Trade</i>	The activating player chooses a card from their hand and put it face down, then he/she takes a card from the opponent's hand, then the opponent takes the faced-down card.

Rules

1. During each turn, each player only has one chance to *switch card*, before *war phase*.
2. Player cannot *switch card* on the first turn of the game, and a following turn after any player activated *royal attack*
3. Players have a maximum of three cards in hand.
4. Discarded cards should be positioned facing up. Each player may look at the piles at any time.
5. In the case of a tie, the *royal attack* is not activated on the following round.
6. Card value order from the lowest to highest is **2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J (Jack), Q (Queen), K (King), A (Ace)**.

Resources

1. Cards in each player's hand.
2. Cards in each player's deck.
3. Card in each player discard piles.

Design Process Statement

1st Attempt

Since the original War is too automatic, the players have no control over the game. I started by adding options for players. Instead of revealing cards from the top of their deck, the players get to draw three cards and choose which to reveal from them. This way, the players get a sense of control, and be able to strategize in order to win.

Issue: There was still too much luck factor involved.

2nd Attempt

To allow players to increase their odds, I added a switch mechanic where players can switch one card in their hand with one from their deck. In this attempt, each player can think about the strategy in a bigger picture. This adds a deck-building strategy to the game.

3rd Attempt

In the original War, there might be a moment where the game cannot end because each player keeps getting their cards back and forth without any control. To avoid that, I changed the game-over condition by adding a discard pile mechanic, so the number of cards in the deck will reduce, and the game will eventually end.

4th Attempt (v 1.2)

Additional *royal attack* feature added. The intention is to encourage the players to use royal cards more, so they are not stuck with the -keeping a good card to the bottom of the deck for later- strategy. *Royal attack* is an ability possessed by royal cards (A, K, Q, and J) that activated when a player win a war with the royal cards. When the *royal attack* activated, it alters the procedure of *switch card* of the next round.

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