



## Reivers

### *The Card Game Rules*

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### Introduction

Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there once thrived a lifestyle of kinship, honor, strength, and courage...but also thievery, deceit, and malice! This was the lifestyle of the *Border Reivers*.

Scotland and England are connected at one seam and it was this barrier that gave birth to the need for Border Clans. These clans protected these lands from enemies across that border. Through a series of sneaky events, Border Clans would attack each other, stealing horses, sheep, food, alcohol, and whatever else they could get their hands on and transport back to their homes.

Border Reivers were primarily horsemen and preferred the use of pikes to swords. Faster and lighter than England's standard mounted soldiers, Reivers could be in and out and you wouldn't even know it until you smelled your house burning to the ground. Border Reivers were hired marauders, contracted militia, and even simply vengeful families. They were great mercenaries.

### Objective

In this game, your primary objective is to get at least *one Unit* across and off the map into your opponent's *homeland*. This represents fighting past their defenses and successfully raiding them. Even though Reivers would raid back and forth, this would translate to this game never ending. So it's basically about who can successfully raid the other person's area *first*. All you have to do to achieve this is get to the other end of the map and then exit off the map on the following turn (you cannot leave the map on the same turn). In order to get to that point, however, you will need a lot of planning, staging, and strategy.

### Components

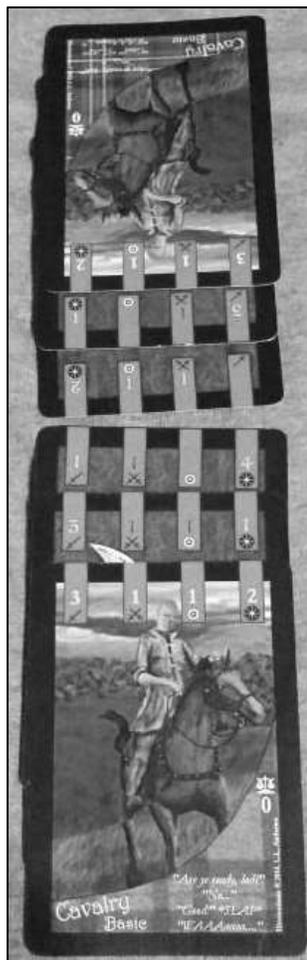
Each Starter Set of *Reivers – The Card Game* contains the following:

- 54 Poker-style cards with *Units*, *Weapons*, *Armor*, and *Tradeables*
- 8 randomized Hex-style cards with *Locations*
- Rules

## Learning the Cards and Setting Up

To set up *Reivers – The Card Game*, each player must have their own decks (54+ *Reiver* cards and 8+ *Location* cards). You will use the *Location* cards to create a map on which you will play.

The *Reiver* deck contains the ‘pieces’ you will play on the map. This game may be played with 2+ players, but to keep things simple, I will discuss the rules as if we’re just playing with 2 players. Game mechanics work the same with 3 or more players, but Alliances are possible (explained later).



Before looking at the *Reiver* deck (the one with all the *Units*, *Armor*, etc.), let’s create the map.

You and your opponent work together for this part. You each have at least 8 *Location* cards. You need to invent a map of the area using these *Locations*. Simply ‘connect’ the sides of these cards so that there is a general design of an area consisting of varying terrain. After you play a few times, you will find better ways to lay out the map. You can use as many (or as few) of the *Locations* as you desire.

When starting out, you may want to keep the maps small.

Also bear in mind that the edge closest to you is the opponent’s goal and this creates spaces off of which they will need to exit. This means that you will need to give yourself options for getting *Units* on the map and around to defend yourself. I recommend having two to four spaces on your edge of the map. Too many and the enemy has the advantage; too few and everyone quickly runs out of options and the game goes nowhere (or if the enemy gets there before your *Units*, you’re done right then and there). You can only attack/defend with *Reivers* in play on the *Locations* – you can’t attack/defend from the *homeland*.

When you’re happy with the length, width, and complexity of the map, each of you should look through your *Reiver* deck. You will see *Reiver* (or *Unit*), *Armor*, *Weapon*, and *Tradeable* cards.

*Reivers* are your main characters and fighters. These are the ‘pieces’ you move around on the ‘board.’ You will use these to battle enemy *Reivers*. Looking at the card, you will see an illustration in the center. The Tartan around the sides corresponds to your chosen clan. You will see *Infantry*, *Ranged*, or *Cavalry*. Each type has its own strengths and weaknesses and you’ll pick up on these as you play. Below their type, you’ll see their Skill level (*Basic*, *Skilled*, or *Veteran*). Next you’ll see some fact or quote to the right – these do not affect gameplay. Above this you’ll see an image of a scale with a number below it. This number is how much it costs to ‘hire’ that unit for battle.

Some are free, but others require some payment for their service. You must pay this numerical amount (discard pile) before playing that card.

On the top of the card you'll see four red ribbons with images and numbers on them. Look at the one on the left. This (the single sword) represents **Strength**. The next one over to the right (Crossed swords) is **Agility**.

The next one (Bullseye target) represents **Accuracy**. The fourth ribbon (Shield) represents **Stamina** (a.k.a. Defense). So you have S A A S. If you connect the tops of two cards you see that 'S's and 'A's line up. This makes it easy to see how the battle will resolve.

The player whose turn it is compares their numbers to the enemy's. You compare Strength to Stamina and Agility to Accuracy. You look at 'S' first – If you are stronger than their ability to defend themselves, you win. If their Stamina is greater than your Strength, then you look at the 'A'. If you're more Agile than they are Accurate, then you win that fight. If you don't do any damage, that is the end of that conflict. *Units* remain on their locations. Your opponent can decide to *Retaliate* or not (described later). *Armor* and *Weapons* may give a Bonus (white numbers) or Penalty (black numbers) to your *Reiver's* characteristics, so equip strategically.

There are three things not represented on the cards that you need to be aware of. These are differences in movement, range, and gear. These will be described in Turn Phases.

## Starting the Game

With the map set up, decide who will go first.

Players now shuffle their *Reiver* decks, leave space next to it for their discard pile, and draw 10 cards to form their hand. There are no re-draws – you must find a way to play with what you have. Gameplay then follows that you trade, play *Reivers*, add equipment to them, move and attack with them, and work to get your *Reivers* to your opponent's *homeland*. When your draw pile runs out, shuffle your discard and this is your new draw pile. When you're ready to play, follow the Turn Phases as described next.

## Turn Phases

There are 5 turn phases for each turn.

1. Ready
2. Reconcile
3. Reive
4. Reinforce

**Ready:** The beginning of your turn is your planning and equipping phase. This is when you play cards to the play area and equip your *Reivers*. You may play as many cards as you can afford with the *Tradeables* you own - this includes *Tradeables* hidden under locations. You can equip weapons and armor to *Reivers* until you've run out of logical or financial options. When equipping gear, you first must be able to afford it. Then, your *Reiver* must be able to use it. You will see hands on some items – this is how many hands it requires to use this item. If your *Reiver* is holding a one-handed sword, you can't equip a two-handed one. When it comes to armor, breastplates, and padding, use logic here – he can't wear

two helmets, but he could wear an Arming Jacket and a Breastplate. Riding a horse, they may be able to strap on a shield or hold a knife and the reins, but holding two broadswords on horseback doesn't make sense.

You play hired *Reivers* in the *homeland* – the space between you and the first row of locations in front of you. Once a *Reiver* is sent to the *Locations*, they may not be added to – they ride with the gear they're given up front. The only exception to this is in Retaliation.

**Reconcile:** This phase is about making sure your debts are paid. Some *Locations* have a number below a scale. This is the tax you have to pay to occupy that space. You pay this at the start of the *turn* after you have moved onto that space. It's like checking out of a hotel the next day, but you do it for every turn you've stayed on that *Location*. I make this a phase because it's so easy to forget this detail – but it's important. Pay by playing *Tradeables* to the discard pile. There's a lot of strategy required when utilizing these *Locations*. When you have taken care of your debts, you may Reive.

**Reive:** Reiving is the turn phase where you move your *Units* and attack. Each *Unit* may either Move *or* Attack (not both) on their turn. Moving involves relocating the *Unit(s)* to an adjacent space. Attacking is simply attacking enemy *Units* occupying an adjacent space. To attack, your *Units* must be connected to a *Location* occupied by enemy *Units* (exception: Ranged). Announce your intentions and count your numbers (red ribbons) to compare as described earlier. You will add up for all *Units* used in the attack, whether you're using one or all of the *Units* on that *Location*. You choose which ones you're attacking with. Bear in

mind that when you attack, you're attacking *all* of the rival *Units* that occupy that space, not a selection of them. Resolve the conflict. *Ranged Units* may attack from *two* spaces away (one empty map space between forces in a straight line), but then skip your opponent's Retaliation.

*If your attack doesn't result in a victory, your opponent can choose to Retaliate, which allows them to try to defeat your Units at the end of the conflict, before their turn. If the retaliating player has tradeables and can afford to give their Unit(s) additional gear, they may do so now. Numbers are compared as before and all defeated Units are sent to the discard pile.*

**Combat function summary:** You attack, but that doesn't mean your opponent is attacking back at the same time. This is to see how much damage *you* do. Then your opponent has a chance to try to hurt you back since you initiated. Your opponent *officially* attacks on *their* turn. You could defeat your opponent on your first attack – or it's a draw and it's their turn to try. Your opponent may elect not to Retaliate.

Infantry and Ranged *Units* may move *one* *Location* in one direction per turn. Cavalry, since they are faster, may move *one* or *two* spaces each turn (they don't have to be in one direction). Any number of *Units* (from the same clan) may occupy one space of the map at any given time – each *Location* may represent hundreds of acres. The difficulty is in this: The more *Units* you have in one space, the longer it will take to resolve conflicts and the more frustrated everyone will get with you for building a wall of people. *My family plays with a No-Wall Rule: No more than three units in a space at a time. This seems to help keep the game moving at a good pace.*

When you have a *Unit* occupying a space, you may use that space to free up your hand or tempt your opponent by hiding items and *Tradeables* underneath the *Location*. Any player may access these items so long as they occupy that space.

When you defeat a *Unit*, you move onto that space and can use/claim any hidden items there. You must move your attacking *Units* onto the *Location* you attacked.

***When attacking the homeland, remember that you must end your turn on the last row before the homeland – you may not move to the last space and then into the homeland on the same turn. Attacking from the Locations to the homeland is its own turn.***

**Reinforce:** This is just like the first phase in that you can trade with your opponent and hide items to prepare your hand for the next turn, but in this phase, you cannot play any *Reivers* to the *homeland*. You can equip additional items to *Reivers* in your *homeland* if you have any special items you want to equip quickly, but this is mostly for trading and clearing out your hand. When you're satisfied, your turn ends and your opponent begins their Ready phase.

## Winning the Game

Play continues as described above until one of you successfully gets at least one (only one is required) *Reiver* across the board and then off the board into your opponent's *homeland* on the following turn. As soon as your *Reiver* gets into your opponent's homeland, you win!

## Optional Rules

### *Alliances*

If you play with more than two players, you can play free-for-all and each player is trying to defeat each other player, or you have the option of establishing Alliances. This is done via written messages during your Ready phase.

Send a message to a player, asking for an Alliance. They may reply with a No, a Yes, or they could ask for an offering. Offerings would be *Tradeables* of their desired amount or specific items. You can ask for any items or amount of *Tradeables*, but try to keep it reasonable. You may only have one alliance, but this alliance could be between up to 3 players. Alliances can end at any time, and embittered players could call for a Feud.

When a player calls for a Feud after a broken Alliance, you and that player can only attack each other for 2 turns (each of your turns, not after 2 players take a turn). After the Feud is over, resume play as normal.

### *Blackmeal*

Blackmeal in Reiver days was blackened oats, used to carry a message – it was basically a Ransom note! In this game, if you defeat a single enemy by no more than 1 point, you can take them hostage and issue a Blackmeal.

The opponent can then either pay the Blackmeal price (30), or let you discard the Reiver and keep all of their gear. A Reiver must be held for 2 turns before being discarded – allowing the other player time to make sure they have the 30 they need in *Tradeables*. This is most effectively employed when you defeat a heavily-armed Veteran

*Reiver*.

## Concluding Thoughts

Thank you for playing *Reivers – The Card Game*. It's been a labor of love and I have enjoyed working on this project with **L.L. Andrews**, a wonderful artist and friend. I hope it provides you with hours and hours of entertainment. I will be adding to the game (more Clans, booster packs, expansions, etc.) over time, so please keep an eye out as the game continues to grow.

\* Several attentive people have told me that this game isn't accurate because tartans weren't used during this period. They're correct. Most Reivers actually wore trousers, boots, and shirts – kilts in general weren't as popular in this area, at this time. You see tartans in this game merely as a way to differentiate between players. It's a colorful nod to Scottish and English history, and many people enjoy seeing the beautiful tartans of their families presented. So even though this element isn't accurate for the time period, it serves a functional purpose - and an aesthetic one - for this game.

\* If you have trouble keeping the stacked cards together or picking them up, you can either purchase card stands or use paperclips.

