

Reivers

The Card Game

Reivers – The Card Game Rules (updated 9.4.2022)

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Introduction

Reivers – The Card Game is a card-based strategy game based on the history of the Scottish and English Border Reivers (for more on the history, see *Background* at the end). This game can be played by 2 or more people, so long as each player has their own deck of at least 54 cards and 8 Location cards. The following instructions are written to reflect a 2-player game, but instructions for 3+ players and optional rules are provided at the end.

Objective

In this game, your objective is to get at least one *Reiver* across and off the map, into your opponent's *Homeland*. You win the game with one successful "raid."

Components

Each set of *Reivers – The Card Game* contains:

- One deck of 54 Poker-style cards
- 8 randomized Hex-style *Location* cards

Setting Up

To create the map (the "board" on which you play), you and your opponent will take turns placing one *Location* card at a time, face-up, in the center of the playing area. You will each need to place at least two *Locations* along your edge of the playing area (see pictures that follow). Simply 'connect' the edges of these cards so that there is a general design of an area consisting of varying terrain. Keep in mind that the edge closest to you is your opponent's goal and are the spaces from which they will raid your *Homeland*. Once a *Location* has been placed, you may not go back and change it. You don't have to use all 16 *Location* cards; a smaller map (6-10 total *Locations*) is better as you learn to play. When you are both content with the map, shuffle your decks, place them to the side (leave space for the discard pile), and then draw 10 cards for your hand.



Starting the Game

The youngest player goes first. Each turn will follow 4 phases:

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

Ready:

To begin each turn, you will make sure you have 10 cards in your hand. Then play *Reivers* (a.k.a. *Units*) from your hand to your *Homeland* (the space between you and the edge of the map) and equip them for battle. Note the Scales symbol on the right side of *Reiver* cards. The number below this symbol is the total value of *Tradeables* you must pay (discard) to be able to play that *Reiver*. If you have more than you need, you simply lose the change (e.g., you need 15 but have 20, discard the 20 but you just lose the leftover 5).



Once you have paid the cost, you may play that *Reiver* in your *Homeland*. Some are free, so you may simply play those without discarding any *Tradeables*. When you have played all the *Reivers* you can afford, your next step is to arm and protect them.

When equipping *Weapons* and *Armor* cards, you first must be able to afford them with *Tradeables* (refer to the *Scales* symbol as before; if this is not present, this is free to equip). You may use one *Tradeable* card to pay for multiple items (e.g., paying for a *Reiver* and *Armor* at the same time). Then, your *Reiver* must be able to *carry* it. *Weapons* have *Hand* symbols to the right, which show how many hands are required to wield it.

As an example, you can equip someone with a two-handed greatsword or a broadsword and a dagger, but you cannot give them all three. Riding a horse, they may be able to hold a buckler or knife and the reins in one hand, but holding two longswords on horseback won't work. The logic also applies to body armor – they could wear chain-mail underneath a breastplate, but they can't wear two helmets.

Ranged Units (archers) automatically have a basic bow equipped (so they can immediately attack as archers), but you may add a better bow or crossbow to improve their attacks. You may also add a secondary weapon like a *Dirk* or *Broadsword* (one-handed weapons) they could wear on their belt for close-combat (*you would add in the secondary*

weapon's numbers when dealing close-quarter damage, but not include it when determining ranged damage). Only Ranged Units can equip bows and crossbows.

Some Armor and Weapons are more difficult to use than others, so you'll need Reivers with more experience to carry them. The Skill level (B = Basic, S = Skilled, V = Veteran) of the Reiver must be equal to or greater than the required skill of the Armor or Weapon (*B is lowest, V is highest*). To equip the gear, simply pay its cost and then play it behind the chosen Reiver card (only the Reivers in your *Homeland*). Once a Reiver is sent to the Locations in the next phase, they cannot be given additional gear, except during a "Retaliation" (explained later). When you have equipped all you desire to, the second phase begins.

Reive:

Reiving is the phase when you move your Reivers around the map and/or attack. Each Reiver may either Move or Attack once per turn, not both. You may move each of your active Reivers (the ones on the map or in the *Homeland*, not the ones in your hand), whether they move separately or stacked in a group.

Moving

Moving your Reivers involves relocating their cards to an adjacent Location. You don't have to move a Reiver from the *Homeland* unless you decide they are ready to fight. If a Reiver in the *Homeland* is equipped to your liking, you may send them onto the Locations: You simply move the card(s) onto one of the spaces on your edge of the map, based on that Unit type's movement distance.



You may not move to a space that's occupied by an opponent. You may move Reivers to a space which already holds more of *your* Reivers, but only if they are the same *Unit type* (Infantry, Cavalry, Ranged). These Units will all stack together and can be separated again on any future turn (simply by moving 1, 2, or 3 of the Units and their equipped cards to another Location; equipped items stay with that Reiver). You may only stack up to 4 Reivers together on one Location. Some Locations are too difficult for certain Reiver types to occupy and this is represented on the Location cards with an X followed by another letter (*XC = No Cavalry, XR = No Ranged, XI = No Infantry*). These

types may not land on such a Location. Infantry and Ranged Reivers may move 1 Location in 1 direction per turn. Cavalry may move 1 or 2 spaces each turn and this doesn't have to be in a straight line; Cavalry may move *through* "XC" Locations, but cannot stop there.

Attacking

If your opponent's Reivers are within range of yours, you may attack them. You may only attack one Location at a time and resolve that conflict before attacking another. Remember that Reivers may not Move *and* Attack on the same turn. You may attack one Location with Reivers from more than one Location at the same time, as long as they're within range. Infantry, Cavalry, and Ranged can all attack adjacent Locations, but Ranged Units can also attack Locations that are 2 spaces away, in a straight line.

To determine your Attack power, total your numbers from the red ribbon on the top-left of your cards (single Sword symbol) from *all attacking Locations*. Your opponent will find their Defense power by totaling the values in the top-right ribbons (Shield symbol). *White numbers are added to your total and black numbers are subtracted*. If their Defense power is higher than your Attack power, you then compare your Agility total (Crossed Swords symbol) to their Accuracy total (Bullseye Target symbol). The reasoning here is that if you're more agile than they are accurate, you can get past their defenses and strike them, even if their defense is better than your attack. (*This secondary check was inspired by the ballad of Little Jock Elliot vs. The Earl of Bothwell.*) If your Agility is lower than their Accuracy, the attack attempt from these Reivers immediately ends. If you have other Units elsewhere on the map that can attack, you may now begin *that* attempt. You may attack with any such Units. You are not *required* to attack on your turn or to attack with all available Units. If you don't have other Units that can attack or you are satisfied with your attacks for this turn, your Reive phase is now done.

If, however, either your Attack or Agility total is higher than the defending totals, your Units have won. The defending player must now discard all Units which were involved in that conflict and all of the attached equipment. You may move some or all of your Units into the space they had occupied. This is the only time when Units may attack and move in the same turn. Moving after victory is optional.

Retaliation

If a player's attack fails, the defending player is allowed to "Retaliate" immediately after each attack attempt ends. They may not Retaliate when attacked by Ranged Units that are 2 spaces away – only Units on an adjacent Location. If the Retaliating player has Tradeables in hand and can afford

to give their Unit(s) additional gear, they may do so now and attack with only the Units which had been attacked. If they were attacked from two or more Locations, they may pick only one of them to attack in Retaliation. Numbers are compared as before and defeated Units are sent to the discard pile. The defending player may also elect *not* to Retaliate after an attack. Retaliation can help shift strategies and reduce stalemates.

Reinforce:

This phase serves as a reward for successful attacks. If you’ve defeated enemy Reivers this turn, you may draw one card for each Reiver you defeated and add these to your hand. This reward does not apply to defending players who Retaliated and defeated Units. If you draw Reivers or equipment and are able to play any of these in your *Homeland*, you may do so now. This extra boost can give you a tactical advantage for the next round and help strengthen your *Homeland* defenses. If you didn’t have any successful attacks this turn, skip this phase.

Reconcile:

This final phase is about making sure your debts are paid. Some Locations have a number below a Scales symbol. This is the “fee” you have to pay to occupy that space between turns, which is paid at the end of your turn. You must pay with Tradeables from your hand to the discard. Pay close attention to this detail because, if for some reason you are unable to pay during this phase, you must flip all Units on this Location face-down and may not use them again until you pay double the Location’s cost on any future Reconcile phase. Units in this “Debtor’s Prison” position cannot be attacked, but they also cannot be used to attack or defend – they are out of play until the debt is paid.

We suggest that newer players do not use these special Locations; but as your skills increase, these can serve as very strategic positions.

At the end of your turn, you may discard any number of cards from your hand as you want. When you run out of cards in your draw pile, shuffle the discard to make a new draw pile.

Winning the Game

Play continues in turns as described until one player successfully gets at least one Reiver across the map and into the opponent’s *Homeland*. When this happens, that player has successfully raided their rival and won the game!

When attacking your opponent’s Homeland, remember that you must end your turn on the last Location row before the Homeland (edge of the map) - you may not move to the last space and then into the Homeland on

the same turn. This gives your opponent one last chance to rally their forces. You may not attack from the Homeland – attacking and defending Units must already be on the map.

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Optional Rules

When 3’s A Crowd: If you play with more than 2 Clans, you can play free-for-all and each player is trying to be the last one standing, or you can play using Alliances to win as a team.

Free-For-All: If everyone is fighting for him/herself, note the following changes from a 2-player setup:

1. *Trading:* In this version of the game, you may trade Tradeables with opponents as a way to make change or “break it into smaller bills.” You may only trade with one opponent per turn and they must have exact change. Do this during your Ready phase.

2. *Raiding the Homeland:* When you successfully raid an opponent’s *Homeland*, they are defeated and are out of the game. Remove all of their Units from the map (discard them and all equipment), but take all Tradeables from their hand and add them to yours. You must discard to 10 at the end of your turn. Make sure all players’ own cards are returned to them at the end of the game.

3. *Turns:* Play passes to the left, no matter who was attacked this turn, but defending players still get the option for Retaliation after each conflict. Using a coin or button to keep track of whose turn it is may be helpful with larger groups of players.

Alliances: This is done via written messages during your Ready phase. Write/text a message to a player, asking for an Alliance. They may reply with a No, a Yes, or they can ask for an offering. Offerings would be a one-time payment of Tradeables of their desired amount or specific item(s). You may only be in one alliance at a time, but this alliance could be between up to three players. Players in the same alliance may not attack each other and must fairly divide loot from raided opponents. Players in an Alliance may also trade Tradeables, Weapons, and Armor during an Alliance member’s Ready phase.



Reivers of Allied players may pass through Locations occupied by an Ally, but may not land there. Allied Units

can be used in an attack if they are within range of the opponent and the Ally agrees to join that battle. If the only remaining players are in the same Alliance, you have won the game as a team. Alliances can end at any time, but only on an Alliance member's turn. To end an Alliance, simply declare the breaking of the Alliance verbally and resume play as normal.

Blackmeal:

Blackmeal in Reiver days was blackened oats, used to carry a message – it was basically a Ransom note! With this optional rule, if you defeat a *single* enemy Unit by no more than 1 point (e.g. Strength = 4, their Stamina = 3), you can take them hostage (Put them face-down in your *Homeland*) and issue a Blackmeal. The opponent can then either pay the Blackmeal price (which is 30 in Tradeables) and have their Unit returned to their *Homeland*, or they can let you discard the Reiver and you keep all of that Unit's gear. A Reiver must be held for 2 additional turns before being discarded, allowing the other player time to make sure they have the 30 they need in Tradeables. If they can't pay, simply discard their Reiver and add any equipment to your hand.

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Background

Between the 13th and 17th centuries, there was 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 seam that gave birth to the need for Border Clans. These clans protected their lands from enemies across that border. They 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 cavalry 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 sometimes hired marauders, contracted militia/mercenaries, and even simply vengeful families. The 1600s saw the end of the Border Reivers when James VI of Scotland (who became James I of England) unified Scotland and England and had the Reivers imprisoned, exiled, or executed. Their actions weren't always honorable or good, but they did what they had to for kith and kin.

Reivers – The Card Game was designed as more of a game system than simply a game. You are encouraged to expand your decks, swap cards out to create a stronger deck, and even trade cards with other players. All players must have at least 54 cards, but you may use many more than that as long as all players have the same number in their decks.

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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.

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A few observant people have told me that this game isn't accurate for the time period 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, and official clan tartans were not being used until the 1800s. 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 represented. So even though this element isn't accurate for the time period, it serves a functional purpose - and an aesthetic one.

Any constructive feedback is welcome! You can let us know what you think through the feedback form on the website or by e-mailing cosejackofall@gmail.com.



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