



Reivers - *The Card Game*

Rules

Introduction

Between the 12th and 16th centuries, there once existed 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 these lands from enemies across that border. 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 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, and even executed. It wasn't always honorable or good, but they did what they had to for kith and kin.

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. In order to get to that point, however, you will need to utilize 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 *Location* cards
- 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 or more players, but to keep things simple, I will discuss

the rules for a match with 2 players. Game mechanics work mostly the same with 3 or more players, but there are a few modifications to the rules and Alliances are possible (explained at the end). 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 may collect and use more, if you'd like). 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 (3 or 4 *Locations* played by each of you). 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 the map, into your *homeland*. This means that you will need to give yourself options for getting *Units* onto and around the map to defend yourself. I recommend having 2 to 4 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* are brought onto the map, 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 placing a card, you may move *that* card around the map until you're happy with its placement. After this, placed cards may not be

moved again. 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 and you may play them to your *homeland* right away on your turn, but others require some payment for their service before they can be put in your *homeland*. You must pay this numerical amount in *Tradeables* (put used *Tradeables* in your 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 and their defeated *Unit* is discarded with any equipped gear. 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 (both S and A are less than theirs),

that is the end your attack with this *Unit* for now.

If you've attacked and not defeated those *Units*, your opponent has the option to Retaliate now, if they wish (described more later). *Armor* and *Weapons* may give a Bonus (white numbers) or Penalty (black numbers) to your Reiver's characteristics, so equip strategically (add the white numbers, subtract the black numbers). 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 redraws – you must find a way to play 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.

Turn Phases

There are 4 turn phases:

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

Ready: The beginning of your turn is your planning and equipping phase. This is when you trade cards in your hand with other players, play cards to the play area and equip your *Reivers* in your *homeland*. You may play as many cards as you can afford with the *Tradeables* you own - this includes *Tradeables* hidden under locations which your *Units* occupy. 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 hand icons 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, as well.

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 since one goes under the other.

Riding a horse, they may be able to strap on a shield or hold a knife and the reins, but holding two longswords on horseback doesn't make sense. Infantry, however, may be able to wield two short swords.

It is assumed that Ranged *Units* automatically have a basic bow equipped, but you may add a better bow or a secondary weapon like a Dirk or Broadsword 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.

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 given additional equipment – they venture out with the gear they're given up front.

The only exception to this is in Retaliation.

During your Ready phase, you may attempt to trade with your opponent, but this is optional. You may trade *Weapons*, *Armor*, and *Tradeables* (like exchanging for smaller bills). Tell your opponent what you'd like to trade and they can make an offer with what they have. If you agree to the trade, exchange cards. You may trade twice on your turn – during the Ready phase and during the Reinforce phase. Any player may reject a trade offer, and you may only make one offer per phase (up to 2 per turn). Once your offer is accepted or rejected, move on the next phase.

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 following when 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*. Pay by playing *Tradeables* to the discard pile. 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. On your turn, you may move every one of your active *Units* (the ones on the map), whether they move separately or stacked in a group. Moving involves relocating the *Unit(s)* to an adjacent, connected *Location*.

Infantry and Ranged *Units* may move 1 *Location* in 1 direction per turn. Cavalry, since they are faster, may move 1 or 2 spaces each turn (this doesn't have to be in a straight line). Any number of *Units* (from the same Clan) may occupy 1 space of the map at any given time.

A word of caution, however. The more *Units* you have in 1 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 3 Units in a space at a time. This seems to help keep the game moving at a good pace.*

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 1 or all of the *Units* on that *Location*. You may attack with *Units* from up to 2 *Locations* at the same time so long as both *Locations* are connected to the one occupied by your opponent.

Note: You may not also attack with Ranged Units unless they are connected to the opponent's Location, as well, and only fire from 1 Location away instead of 2.

If you have a bunch of *Units* stacked on a *Location*, you will choose which *Units* with which you're attacking (you don't have to use them all) and make sure your opponent is aware. When you attack, you're attacking all of the rival *Units* that occupy that space, though, not a selection of

them. Resolve the conflict by comparing totals as described earlier and discarding defeated *Units* and their equipment.

If your attack doesn't result in a complete victory (all *Units* defeated in one go), no *Units* are defeated and your opponent can choose to Retaliate, which allows them to try to defeat your *Units* at the end of the conflict but before their actual turn. If the Retaliating player has *Tradeables* and can afford to give their *Unit(s)* additional gear, they may do so now and attack with only the *Units* which you attacked (they may not use nearby *Units* or attack from another *Location* in Retaliation). When Retaliating, you must attack all *Units* present on 1 *Location* that attacked you – if you were attacked from 2 *Locations*, pick 1 to attack in Retaliation. Numbers are compared as before and defeated *Units* are sent to the discard pile.

Ranged *Units* may attack from 2 *Locations* away (1 empty map space between forces in a straight line), but opponent doesn't get to Retaliate when attacked by Ranged *Units*. You may have Ranged *Units* from 1 or 2 *Locations* attack 1 *Location* so long as they are 1 or 2 spaces away from your opponent's *Units*. If the space between your Ranged *Units* and your target is occupied by any other forces (yours or theirs), they may not fire 2 spaces – they must have a clear line of sight.

Your turn may consist of several conflicts. You may continue to attack until you have attacked with all of your *Units* once. Retaliation is done at the end of each separate conflict.

Combat summary: You attack, but your opponent isn't attacking back at the same time. Your opponent has a chance to try to hurt you back with Retaliation since you initiated and they officially attack on their turn and you may elect to Retaliate. You could defeat your opponent on your first attack, or it's a draw and it's their turn to try. Retaliation is optional but can be beneficial. Attack once with any and all of your Units, resolve each conflict, then move on to the final phase.

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*, face-down. Any player may access these items so long as they occupy that space. These items can be pulled to your hand, used for payment, or discarded on your turn in the Ready and Reinforce phases.

When you defeat all *Units* on a *Location*, you may move some or all of your *Units* onto that space. This is the only time when you can attack and move on the same turn – you must win the conflict to move. This allows you to access hidden items at the start of your next turn instead of having to wait longer. Moving after victory is optional – you may elect to keep all of your *Units* where they are if you don't want to move.

When attacking the *homeland*, remember that you must end your turn on the last 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. Moving from the *Locations* to the

homeland is its own turn. Remember that you may not attack from the *homeland*, though, which is why giving yourself several edge *Locations* to establish some defense is critical when setting up the map.

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* (not to those on the map) if you have any special items you want to equip quickly, but this is mostly for trading and clearing out your hand. You must have 10 or fewer cards in your hand at the end of your turn. You will draw to 10 at the start of your turn. If you have 10 cards at your Ready phase, you may not draw.

When you're satisfied with your hand and equipment, 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 1 (only 1 is required) *Reiver* across the map and then off and into your opponent's *homeland* on the following turn. As soon as your *Reiver* gets into your opponent's *homeland*, you win!

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 defeat each other player, or you have the option of establishing Alliances.

Free-For-All: If everyone is fighting for him/herself, note the following changes:

1. **Trading:** Trading cards in your hand with your opponents is the same except that you may only trade with 1 opponent on your turn, during the Ready phase. Choose 1 opponent to ask and if they don't want to trade, move on with your next steps and try again next turn.
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, but take all *Tradeables* from their hand and add them to yours. Keep all of their hidden items in play, but 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 attacked 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/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 a one-time payment of *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 1 alliance, but this alliance could be between up to 3 players. Players in an alliance may not attack each other unless they call a Feud, and alliance members fairly divide loot from hidden items and raided opponents.

Alliances can end at any time, and embittered players could call for a Feud on the turn when the alliance is dissolved. When a player calls for a Feud after a broken Alliance, you and that player of your choice 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. Only 1 player can call for a Feud after a dissolved alliance.

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 (e.g. Strength = 4, their Stamina = 3), you can take them hostage and issue a Blackmeal. The opponent can then either pay the Blackmeal price (30) and have their Unit returned to their *homeland*, 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. You can find more information on our website (www.cosegames.com).

* Several 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 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. Some English Border families don't have tartans, so I will be determining another way to represent them well as they are developed into this game.

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

Sláinte!

