

# GAMEBUYER



## Aeon's End: War Eternal



EMERGING FROM THE VOID  
THIS SEPTEMBER

## Wasteland Express



WELCOME TO  
WASTELAND EXPRESS.  
TRY NOT TO DIE



ORIGINAL GAME DESIGN BY RICHARD LAUNIUS AND PETE SHIREY

# SHARK ISLAND™

INSIDE: BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE CREATION OF SHARK ISLAND



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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To say that 2017 has been a little unpredictable, would be an understatement. Those of us who have been in this business for a while have learned to expect the unexpected. But one thing hasn't changed: People love to play games. With mass media outlets such as USA Today, Wired, Forbes, i09, Newsweek and others talking about 'Table Top Games,' our industry has seen some very healthy growth. But with that growth came *glut*.



Publishers have produced games at a rate that no one-- especially the consumers-- can keep up with. With that much product pouring into the market, how are retailers supposed to know which will be a hit, and which won't? Retailers can't stock everything, and consumers can't buy everything. So what's the answer? *(Spoiler: there isn't one)*

When we set down to build this issue of *GameBuyer*, we discussed this dilemma. And so we sought some industry experts to give their views on the state of things: Michael Bahr of Desert Sky Games gives his retailer perspective on ensuring your store doesn't burn to the ground while you're on vacation. Phil Reed, CEO of Steve Jackson Games, reminds us that while the 'newest hottest games' are hard to keep in stock, you probably have a goldmine of good titles still on your shelf just waiting to be discovered by a new audience. And our own Justin Wilkinson put together a handy list of the best-selling games that can be played in under 20 mins. We've also included a more focused selection of all the items available for pre-order, to help you 'navigate the jungle.'

Which leads me to my last point: Everyone has something to learn, and something to teach. We all benefit from sharing our experiences, our success stories, and our not-so-successful ventures. Do you have something you'd like to share with other Core Hobby retailers in the form of a guest article in *GameBuyer*? Drop me a line at my email address below.

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# AEONS END WAR ETERNAL



# Witching Hour



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**Selling OVERLOOKED Games**

By Philip Reed, Steve Jackson Games

One of my hobbies is researching the toy industry and digging deep into the past. Recently, during an expedition to the Strong Museum in Rochester, NY, I stumbled across two sentences from the December 1983 issue of *Playthings* magazine that made me think of today's boardgame market.

First up, we read that "I get more annoyed with Kenner ever month. Last Saturday morning almost one of every three TV commercials was Kenner – and yet we can't get any product or any promise of delivery." (Ted. J. Rakstis)

Even though the above statement is over three decades old, it apply's to today's boardgame market. How often do you stock the new hot game, invest time into events and demos, and then find that the game is unavailable for weeks . . . if not months? The hottest games seem to be consistently in short



supply, meaning that following the industry buzz puts your energy into effectively a flash sale, a one-n-done game that, when it is back in stock, requires you to learn how to demo the game all over again. Fortunately, a second sentence from that same 1983 magazine is also worth bringing up. "What is selling in these stores is different from what moves elsewhere . . ." (Joanna Gamlin)

And this, as many retailers already know, is how you combat the short supply of the hottest games. Definitely stock and sell the games that shoot onto the BoardGameGeek "Hotness" list, but then supplement those hot titles with some of the great games that – for reasons as varied as there are numbers of new games released at Essen – have been mostly overlooked and forgotten. There are hundreds of games sitting in publishers' warehouses, and with a bit of work you can take advantage of overstocked slow-sellers and differentiate your store from those around you.

## Find a game you love

First off, look back through the games you played last year or even the year before. There's a pretty high chance that you'll find four or five great games that have been lost in today's "gimme the newness!" sales cycle. Games that you enjoyed, your customers enjoyed, but just aren't getting the attention that they deserve.

Once you've selected a few games, contact your preferred distributor and start the discussion with "I'd like to run an event for X game, how many have you got and what sort of deal can we make?" Some of the games that were once hot, that are now cooler in temperature, may be titles that the distributor has too many of and would like to liquidate.

## "We would be overjoyed if a retailer called and said: "...Can I get some marketing help?"

If the distributor doesn't have the game in question, you can either ask "Can you find more and get me a deal?" or move to the next game on your list. As long as you have a list of four or five games, there's a strong possibility that you can get a bulk discount on your chosen title.

Before buying the games – your own experience and the size of your market will tell you how many is "a lot of games" – ask if there's a chance that you could get some marketing assistance from the publisher. Your distributor should be able to facilitate communications, but you'll also find many publishers are active on social media and willing to engage directly with retailers. At our office, we try to work with distributors and retailers daily, and we would be overjoyed if a retailer called and said: "I am running a Chez Geek event. Can I get some marketing help?"

## What sort of marketing assistance?

\* Do you have any older event kits of promo materials for the game? Some publishers are sitting on promo cards, posters, coasters, and all sorts of other goodies and they'll likely give you what you need.



\* If there are no older promos available, can we make a deal to create new demos? At the office, our Munchkin bookmarks are popular with fans and inexpensive to create. Additionally, we print those Munchkin bookmarks domestically, so we can get a new design in the hands of gamers within a few weeks. We would happily work a deal with a retailer who is holding a Munchkin Bites event and provide a new bookmark as a "first to market" promo item.

\* Are there any existing poster designs or social media graphics? Usually, the answer is "yes," or the slightly more complex "no, but we can make some." Publishers will be excited to help you with images for use on your social media channels.

\* Will you help promote my event? Again, the publisher's answer should totally be "Yes!" At the office, we're always happy to share a retailer's Facebook post or retweet an event announcement, which boosts the signal and may even lead to someone new finding your store.

\* Do you have anything special that we can use as an event prize? Door prize? "Yes" and "yes," are again the likely questions. I don't know of any publisher who would turn down a request to provide prizes to a retailer who is picking up an older hit and giving it another chance at success.

**BONUS!** Does the game have an expansion? Make sure to ask your distributor on a deal on the expansion, maybe something where you get a free copy of the expansion for every X number of copies of the game you buy. After all, if the game has slowed down, any expansions are even slower.



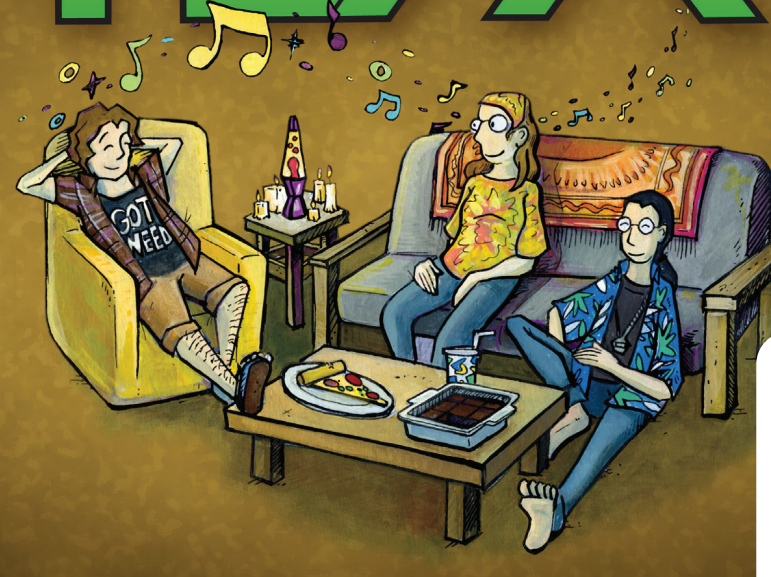


These are just a few ways in which a publisher may be able to assist with an event, and I am certain that you already have more ideas you're writing down and preparing to inflict on an unsuspecting publisher. Good! You pushing publishers and asking for more makes us better at understanding your needs and supporting your efforts as a retailer.

Once you've assembled your mountain of games -- you did order enough to construct a towering display, right? -- and secured promo materials and publisher support, the event becomes like any other special night at your store. Get out there and promote, ask the publisher and your distributor to spread the word, and put on a stellar party that introduces your community to a new game or reminds them about a forgotten favorite. ■



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baked

cuddle

awesome

!?!

banana

legendary

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## TEN GREAT GAMES TO PLAY IN UNDER 20 MINUTES

Sometimes gamers just want a fast game to play as a warm-up, cool-down, filler, or because they are short on time. These titles can all be played in under 20 minutes and fit in any gamers collection. Stock up today!



**Sushi Go Party!** From Gamewright (SKU: GMW419)

Up to eight players try to earn points by picking winning sushi combos by drafting cards. This expanded version of Sushi Go! allows players to customize each game from over 20 different cards!

**Pocket Madness** by Passport Games (SKU: FNFPUS01)



Players invoke powers of the Ancient Ones to drive fellow cultists mad while securing their path to victory! Easy to learn and fast to play, for 2-4 players.



**One Night Ultimate Werewolf** by Bezier (SKU: BEZONUW)

The game of Werewolf condensed into one morning, because all it takes is lynching one werewolf to win! Dozens of unique roles, simple rules and fast game play make this a classic. 3-10 players.

**Coup** by Indie Board & Cards (SKU: IBCCOU1)

Set in the universe of Resistance. Players receive two secret identities then bluff and deceive their way to victory while trying to eliminate the competition. 2-6 players.



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**KLONDIKE RUSH**

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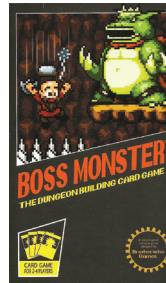


## Hanabi by R&R Games (SKU: RRG869)

Meaning “fireworks” in Japanese, this cooperative game is about creating a perfect fireworks show by placing cards in the correct order. The catch? Players can’t see their own hand!

## Boss Monster by Brotherwise (SKU: BWG001)

Players compete as Boss Monsters to create the perfect side-scrolling dungeon while fending off any intrepid heroes sent their way! Classic 16-bit graphics and fast gameplay make this perfect for video game and board game enthusiasts alike.

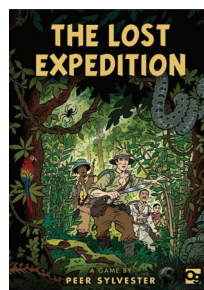


## Love Letter by AEG (SKU: AEG5104 - Classic)

A game of risk, deduction, and luck for 2-4 players as they compete to get their love letters to the eligible princess of Tempest. Only 16 cards and every player starts with just one card in hand. Licensed versions are also available including Batman, Archer, Adventure Time and more!

## FUSE by Renegade Game Studios (SKU: RGS00504)

Takes exactly 10 minutes to play as you race against the clock to diffuse bombs before it’s too late. Frantic, cooperative gameplay as players roll dice and try to quickly diffuse the bombs in front of them.

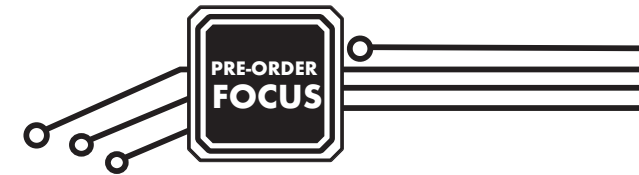


## Lost Expedition by Osprey Games (SKU: OSPGAM012)

Players make their way through the Amazon searching for El Dorado. They must make the best of their food, ammunition, and health as they prepare for the pitfalls that may occur. Solo play, cooperative play and team competitive play available!

## Eight Minute Empire by Red Raven Games (SKU: RVM003)

Players build an empire and conquer the land in eight minutes! 2-5 players take turns selecting cards from six displayed, gaining goods and actions from their choices. Balance taking over the map with collecting sets of good to score points at the end of the game!



## COLLECTIBLE CARD GAMES



BRDLLHBT02J

LUCK AND LOGIC: BOOSTER 02 - “HINA LOGIC” HAPPY X HEART JAPANESE LANGUAGE

CCB01

CASTER CHRONICLES CCG: BOOSTER 01 - ADVENT OF DEMONS

PKU80316

POKEMON TCG: ALOLAN RAICHU FIGURE BOX

PKU80319

POKEMON TCG: SHINING LEGENDS ELITE TRAINER BOX

PKU80330

POKEMON TCG: SHINING LEGENDS PIN BOX - MEWTWO

WOCC2230

MAGIC THE GATHERING: “IXALAN” BOOSTER

WOCC2233

MAGIC THE GATHERING: “IXALAN” PLANESWALKER DECK

## RPGs

WOCC2208

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS RPG - TOMB OF ANNIHILATION

WOCC3687

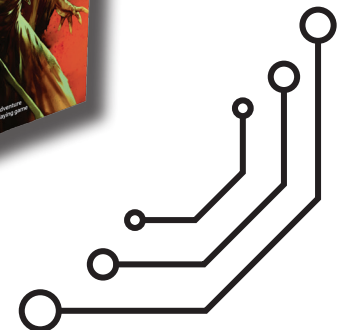
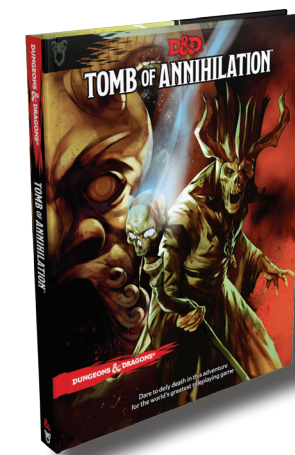
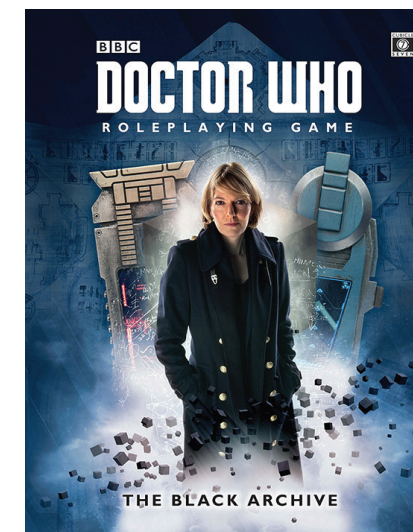
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS RPG - DUNGEON MASTER’S SCREEN REINCARNATED

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DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS RPG - TOMB OF ANNIHILATION DICE SET

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DOCTOR WHO RPG: BLACK ARCHIVE







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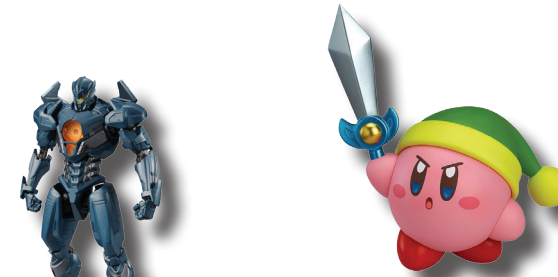
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NENDOROID 544: KIRBY - KIRBY  
S.H.FIGUARTS: DRAGONBALL Z - TIEN SHINHAN  
SW GAL E8 DELUXE FIGURE 2 PACK AST (8CT)  
SW E4 BL LUKES LANDSPEEDER AND LUKE 2CT





MATT RIDDLE BEN PINCHBACK  
JONATHAN GILMOUR

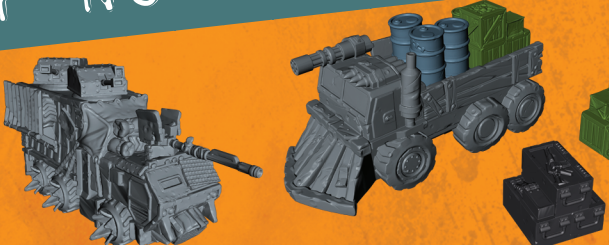
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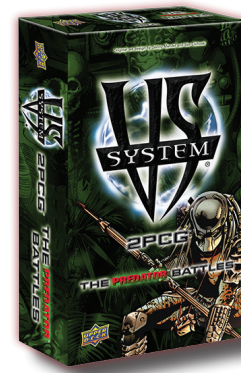


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BOARD GAMES

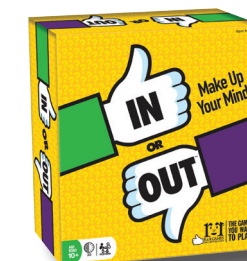
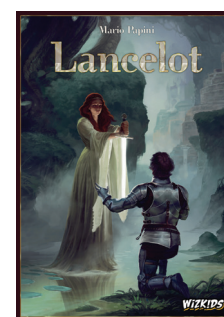
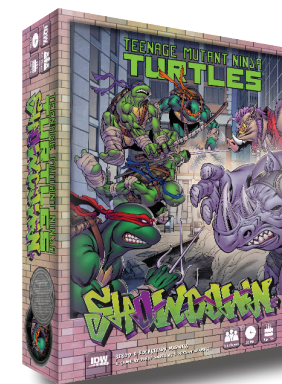


BOARD GAMES



- IDW10205 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: SHOWDOWN: BEBOP AND ROCKSTEADY MADNESS!
- IEL51313 BUNNY KINGDOM
- AEG5512 SMASH UP: BIG IN JAPAN
- JPG490 DRAGON PETS
- JPG151 FAR EAST TERRITORY (HEART OF CROWN EXPANSION)
- OSPGAM014 ZOO BALL
- AWGDTE06VL VIRAL
- CB72302 ADVENTURES IN MIDDLE-EARTH - WILDERLAND ADVENTURES
- CZE02178 MR. MEESEKS' BOX O' FUN: THE RICK AND MORTY DICE AND DARES GAME
- SJG1540 MUNCHKIN BOOTY: GUEST ARTIST EDITION - TOM SIDDELL
- SJG4256 MUNCHKIN GETS PROMOTED 2
- TAK692650 A COLUMN OF FIRE
- TAK692803 LEGENDS OF ANDOR: PART III - THE LAST HOPE
- UP10096 ASCENSION: VALLEY OF THE ANCIENTS

- RG500504 FUSE (REPRINT)
- RG501614 GRAVWELL: ESCAPE FROM THE 9TH DIMENSION
- WIZ73057 LANCELOT
- AEG7002 OATH OF THE BROTHERHOOD
- UD85994 VS SYSTEM: 2PCG - THE PREDATOR BATTLES
- UD88087 VS SYSTEM: 2PCG - MARVEL MONSTERS UNLEASHED
- HASC2095 TROLLS TWISTER - 1/1/2018 ON SHELF
- HASC3839 DISNEY OLAF PIE FACE - 10/1 ON SHELF
- RRG895 IN OR OUT
- UP10205 VALERIAN: THE ALPHA MISSIONS
- AEG5878 60 SECONDS TO SAVE THE WORLD
- AEG5890 CUTTHROAT KINGDOMS
- RDG704003 HAFID'S GRAND BAZAAR







MINIS

- CVB280013 INFINITY: YU JING / HAQQISLAM BEYOND RED VEIL EXPANSION PACK
- CVB280014 INFINITY: PANOCEANIA / NOMADS - BEYOND ICESTORM EXPANSION PACK
- SFGB03030 GUILD BALL: ALCHEMIST'S GUILD - THE NEW AGE OF SCIENCE
- SFGB03031 GUILD BALL: MORTICIAN'S GUILD - STRINGS OF THE SPIRIT WEAVER
- SFGB03032 GUILD BALL: BUTCHER'S GUILD - THE SCARLET CIRCLE
- SFGB03033 GUILD BALL: FISHERMAN'S GUILD - PIRATE'S RETURN
- PIP25003 COMPANY OF IRON: STARTER BOX



MINIS

- WIZ72575 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: NOLZUR'S MARVELOUS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - CENTAUR
- WIZ72578 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: NOLZUR'S MARVELOUS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - BALLISTA
- WIZ72615 PATHFINDER: DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - DWARF MALE BARBARIAN
- WIZ72621 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: NOLZUR'S MARVELOUS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - DWARF FEMALE WIZARD
- WIZ72645 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: NOLZUR'S MARVELOUS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - DWARF FEMALE BARBARIAN
- WIZ73090 DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - CRATES
- WIZ73094 DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - FAMILIARS
- WIZ73184 PATHFINDER: DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - DIRE WOLF
- WIZ73185 PATHFINDER: DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - INFANTRYMEN
- WIZ73186 PATHFINDER: DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - SILVER DRAGON
- WIZ73187 PATHFINDER: DEEP CUTS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - ELF FEMALE ROGUE
- WIZ73189 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: NOLZUR'S MARVELOUS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - DROW
- WIZ73196 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: NOLZUR'S MARVELOUS UNPAINTED MINIATURES - BEHOLDER
- WIZ73319 WIZKIDS NEW PRE-PAINTED MINIATURES: BOY DRUID AND TREE CREATURE
- WIZ73320 WIZKIDS NEW PRE-PAINTED MINIATURES: BOY FIGHTER AND BATTLE DOG
- WIZ73323 WIZKIDS NEW PRE-PAINTED MINIATURES: GIRL WIZARD AND GENIE
- WIZ73324 WIZKIDS NEW PRE-PAINTED MINIATURES: GIRL ROGUE AND BADGER
- WIZ72980 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: MINIATURES ICONS OF THE REALMS - CLASSIC CREATURES (8 CT) BOOSTER BRICK
- WIZ73253 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: MINIATURES ICONS OF THE REALMS - CLASSIC CREATURES DEMOGORGON PROMO





# BUTTON MEN

Strategy Dice Game

Returning Fall 2017



## Jocasta Pierce-Wilson

Jocasta owns you, and you don't even know it. She likes managing casinos, barbed wire, and the muffled snap of a professionally broken bone, and she likes to beat people up.

## "Downtown" Porter Stratos

Porter is a small-minded killer who will do anything because he believes in nothing. He prefers argan to aloe, Hong Kong to Savile Row, and he likes to beat people up.

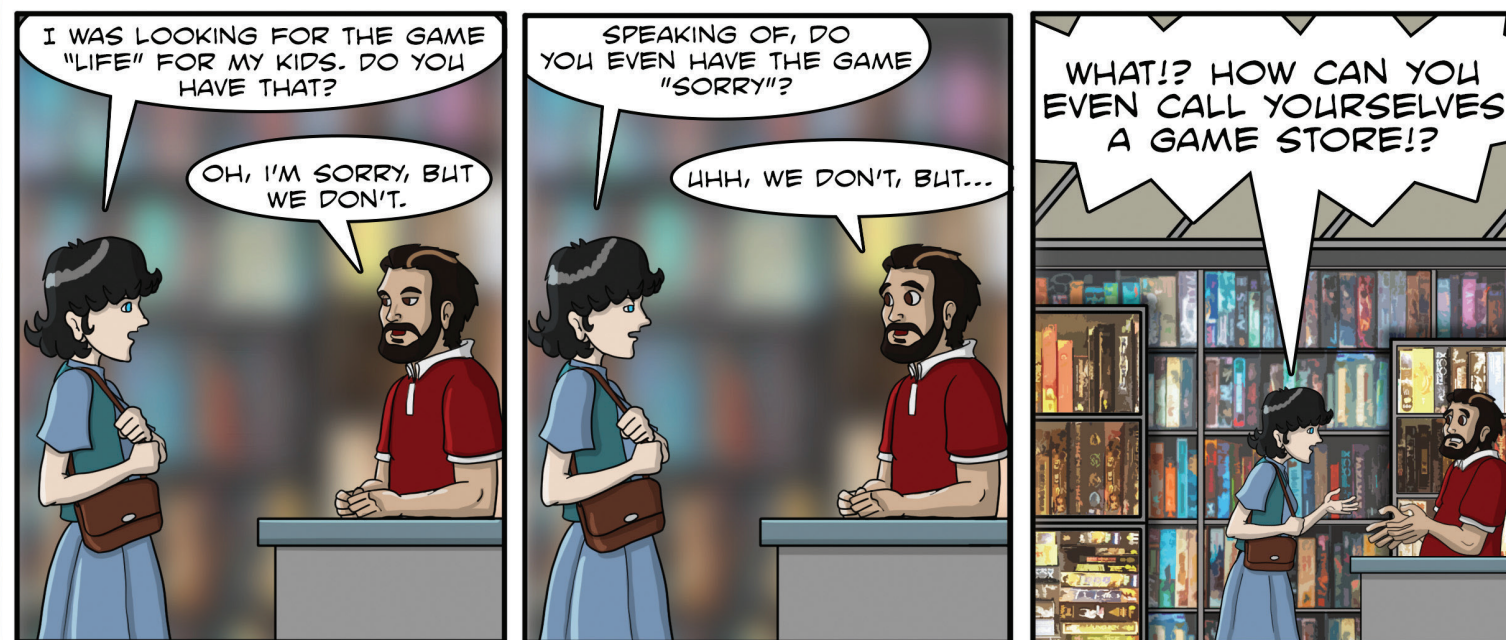


Button Men is a classic dice game from James Ernest and Cheapass Games. It returns this fall in an all-new package, with a set of 48 fighter cards. Learn rules, strategies, and details at [beatpeopleup.com](http://beatpeopleup.com).

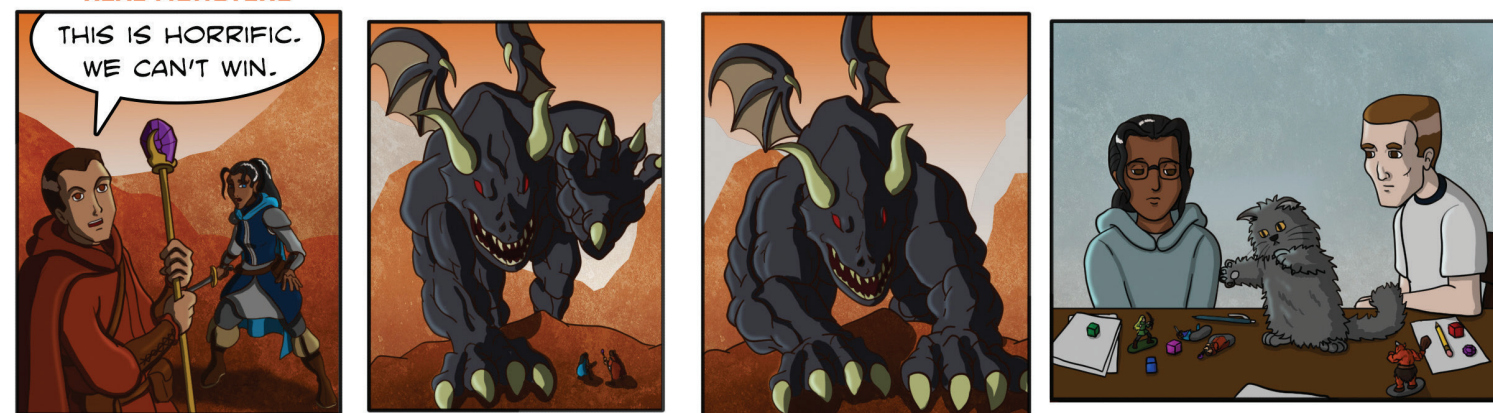


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### REAL MONSTERS



### GAMERS



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# RESTORATION GAMES

## < THE ORIGIN STORY >

By Rob Daviau

"I'm going to sell my law firm and start a game company." This is Justin Jacobson, my corporate lawyer. I've known him for a few years. He helps me with contracts, mostly. Gamer. Good guy.

"I think that is an awful idea." My truthful response.

"It's a company that only publishes out-of-print games. We fix them up, tweak them, adjust them, new graphics. So not nostalgia and not retro. More of a restoration."

"I changed my mind. This sounds genius."

And so our partnership on Restoration Games began, back in April of 2016. 17 months later we have our first line of games ready to go, a booth at Gen Con, next year's line planned, and four part-time employees in addition to us.

Busy year.

But so worth it. I have discovered that it is exhilarating to be a publisher. If you think there are a lot of decisions to designing a game, there are five times as many when it comes to publishing it. While it's too soon to start retrospectives, it seems like a great time to talk about our company and our first line of games.

### Who We Are

We are a publisher that finds old games and restores them, making them work for today's game players. So we don't do retro. You aren't going to see a Six Million Dollar Man Game with its original graphics.\* We need to make it work for today. Also, we're not going to just reprint a game. If it is a great game and we can't think of any way to make it better, we're not likely to make it.

The game may be beloved, somewhat beloved, or unknown but it has to have something that made it great at the time. For the most part we'll be looking for games that have awareness but we also may find a game that was great but, for some reason, just didn't find its audience.

Then we figure out what made it great and, now, in 2017, what isn't so great any more. Then we go about restoring them. We create new graphics, sometimes rename them (if we can't get rights to the original name), test them, make them, and send them out into the world.

We do take requests (go to [www.restorationgames.com](http://www.restorationgames.com)). We can't get the rights to every game people want but we use people's requests to help us hunt for good games.

Using this criteria, here's what you'll find in our first line, available at Gen Con and in retail in August.

### Stop Thief!

This 1979 game was one of the first to have a hidden opponent on the board. It also had a giant brick of plastic and wires called the crime scanner. Using only audio clues, players deduced where the thief was. We found the original inventor and he was (and is!) delighted to have the game back in print. Then we set out to restore it.

The original game had a roll-and-move system and a lot of "take that" cards. Both didn't age well. So we combined these two mechanics into one deck. We changed the game board from a grid to point-to-point circles. We nudged a space or two on the original board but left it largely the same.

Finally, we went from a kilo of plastic and wires to an app. With the app, you can play the original game (with its beeps and boops) and also several different modern versions. We have different difficulties for the thief and, starting in the fall, we'll have different modes of play as well.



### Downforce

When I started at Hasbro in 1998, I learned about Daytona 500, a game that Hasbro had put out a handful of years back. I thought it was a great racing game. When my kids were young, I'd play it with them, tweaking the rules, and just having some nice dad-kid memories. This game had been released in a bunch of different incarnations and names. Each had slightly different rules. Some had betting. Some used track licenses.

I played it with Justin and we both felt it would be a good fit. At Essen, I got to sit down with Wolfgang Kramer and ask if he would license it to us. It was a wonderful moment and I managed not to fan boy too much.

We took some rules from one version, other rules from another, added our own track, revamped the bidding system, and added player powers. What we ended up with is something that feels like an old friend in new clothes. And our team made it look gorgeous (this is true of all our games actually...)



### Indulgence

When I was 11, I discovered Dungeons & Dragons. After that, I found anything that had a dungeon and/or a dragon, including a card game called DragonMaster. It was my first trick taking game and I studied the beginner, intermediate, and advanced rules like it was a religious text. This was the game that moved me into the world of serious gamer. I still have that copy.

(continued)







RESTORATION  
GAMES



16 years later, when interviewing at Hasbro, I mentioned this and the person interviewing me had been the in-house designer on it years before. That game pretty much got me the job and moved me from serious gamer to professional game designer.

It would be really bad mojo not to have it in our line at Restoration. That game is my lucky charm.

The original art was gone (it was pre-digital). The D&D theme, fresh in 1982, wasn't as much today. There had been an earlier Napoleonic version and, before that, a public domain version. So we had a lot of room to play around. We changed the theme, commissioned new art, and did a fairly significant reworking of the "bidding contracts" in the game. But most of all, we're giving you the most value for \$20 that you'll see just about anywhere.

\*Look it up on Boardgamegeek.com sometime. There are other reasons why we're not bringing it back.

Rob Daviau is a game designer and has been for 18 years now. As Chief Restoration Officer at Restoration Games, his job is to find old games, fall in love with them again, and then edit and polish them for modern times. Rob lives in western Massachusetts with his wife and kids. He cut his teeth on 1st Edition AD&D and never stopped being a gamer.



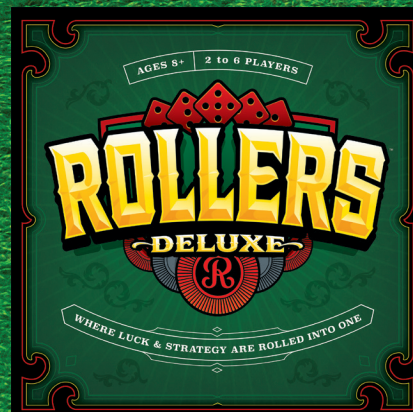


**Rollers Deluxe**

By: Tony Serebriany

Press your luck dice games have been a staple in many gamers' collections for decades. In fact, one of my earliest games, outside the standard game

closet, was Sid Saxon's CAN'T STOP. It was the luck of the dice mixed with bit of scoring strategy that made this game so appealing. Many games since have gone on to meet the needs for the love of rolling dice.



A few years ago, we were in Chicago for the Chicago Toy & Game Fair, to meet with game designers and inventors as well as having a booth at the public event. As Chicago is home to so much history for the toy and game industry, it was only natural to meet with some of the local folks and inventor teams too.

While at a meeting with Big Monster Toys (BMT) they presented a number of great games, including the prototype for Rollers. We were hooked on this game pretty quickly. There is a sense of familiarity with the game, mixed with a bit of strategy based on how you score your dice after your 3 rolls.

One of the great things about working with BMT is that they were involved through the entire process of development. During development play testing internally, we determined that we wanted to change things up a bit. So, reaching back out to BMT to discuss some of our thoughts, they quickly went back to play testing too.

The final results were well worth the exploration on both sides. The game is loosely based on the dart game of Cricket. In Cricket, players are throwing darts to 'close' the numbers 15-20 and the bullseye. If one player has a number closed and their opponent doesn't, they can collect or 'hit them' for points equal to the number shot, on subsequent turns until the opponent closes the number. Therefore, you can't win unless you close all your numbers and beat your opponent in points collected.



Originally, Rollers was developed more like the Cutthroat Cricket variant, whereby you are attacking or assigning your opponents with points rather than collecting points from your opponents. During testing, we felt that it is more fun to collect chips/coins from others, and that there should be more of a press your luck element in the game. After some further testing and exploration, we ended up with the addition of the Zap die, which wasn't in the original version.

Since five of the dice have one side that is WILD (stars) the scoring of the dice during your turn remains quite flexible. For 'opening' a number a player must collect the same number of dice as the number they want to open, such as two 2's or five 5's. Then, in order to 'close' a number players must save one more die in that number or a WILD star. Once closed, players can begin collecting chips from their opponents that still have the numbers open. This ability to assign the stars as any number allows players more flexibility and strategy in trying to close out first, for 2 victory points, or be the one who collects the most chips that round, for one victory point. First to five victory points is the winner.

Once these core mechanics of the game were well worked out, we began to explore the best way to visually and physically execute the game. We initially developed the game with an alien theme and story, but eventually presented a playful medieval castle theme at Toy Fair to the trade. Although the game lends itself well to theming, the base game is great as is, and that is what Target fell in love with and wanted for their stores. Therefore, what you will find is a clean, non-themed design for the final product which is now available as a five player game in Target.

Another one of the beautiful things about this game is the ease of ability to jump right in and play. It is not a hard game to figure out and is also a great socializing game, in that it plays well with families or friends that are also talking or visiting, sort of a 'beer and pretzels' game. The game plays well with multiple generations, as the familiar aspect of the rolling and scoring appeals to many. Though the game launched as an exclusive for Target, later this summer we will be releasing a 2-6 player Deluxe Edition into the Specialty market. This new edition of the game will have updated art, with more of a casino style feel to it, and can be played with up to six players, allowing for even more fun and competition.



For more information about Rollers or to watch a video on how to play, visit: [usaopoly.com/term/videos/how-to-play](http://usaopoly.com/term/videos/how-to-play)



TEN FANTASTIC FAMILY GAMES FOR EVERYONE

There are tons of amazing family board games to choose from. Here are just a few gems that perform consistently at retail and make a great base for any family board game collection. Stock up today!

**Ice Cool by Brain Games**

Kinderspiel des Jahres 2017 winner! Dexterity game about penguins at school trying to grab an early lunch before the hall monitor gets them! SKU: BGP5168



**Castle Panic by Fireside Games**

Cooperative tower defense board game for 1-6 players. Protect the central castle by planning strategies, trading cards, and defeating Monsters to keep the towers intact. Players win or lose together, but the one with the most victory points at the end is the Master Slayer! SKU: FSD1001



**Munchkin by Steve Jackson Games**

Go down in the dungeon, kill everything you meet and backstab all your friends to steal their stuff! Fast-playing and silly take-that mechanics at their finest. Tons of versions to choose from. SKU: SJG1408



**Pie Face by Hasbro**

Hilariously fun and simple game for the family. Put whipped cream in the hand, place your face through the mask, turn the handle, and watch out! A game of chance, thrills... and pies! SKU: HASB7063



**Pokemon TCG by Pokemon**

Trading Card Game of the incredibly popular Pokemon brand. Fun for kids and adults alike, a fantastic way to get kids into collectible card games before graduating to more difficult TCGs. SKU: PKU80236



TEN FANTASTIC FAMILY GAMES FOR EVERYONE

**Rhino Hero – Super Battle by HABA**

Build a wobbly skyscraper out of cards as 2-4 players try to get their superhero animal higher than everyone else! A 3D stacking game for ages 5+. SKU: HAB303383



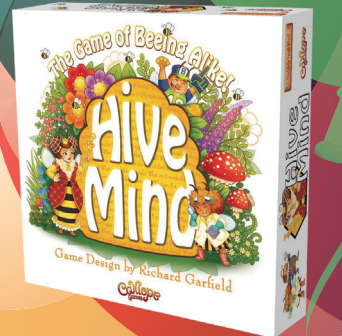
**Machi Koro by IDW**

Players have just been elected mayors and must grow Machi Koro into the largest city in the region! Fast-paced and light-hearted, perfect for a casual family game night. SKU: IDW00665



**Hive Mind by Calliope Games**

The Queen Bee asks players questions and the players must be harmonious in answering. The more answers you have in common with other players, the more points you earn. The player with the lowest points in a round moves closer to the hive exit. Once a bee exits, everyone else remaining wins! SKU: CLP116



**Fluxx by Looney Labs**

A hectic, fun game where the rules and goals are always changing. The game begins with just one rule, draw 1 card, but new rules and ways to win can be added! Lots of versions to choose from including Adventure Time, Batman, Chemistry, Math and more! SKU: LOO001 (Classic)



**Forbidden Island by Gamewright**

Cooperative adventure where players try to capture four sacred treasures before the island sinks! Tile based board ensures no two games are the same. Designed by Matt Leacock. SKU: GMW317

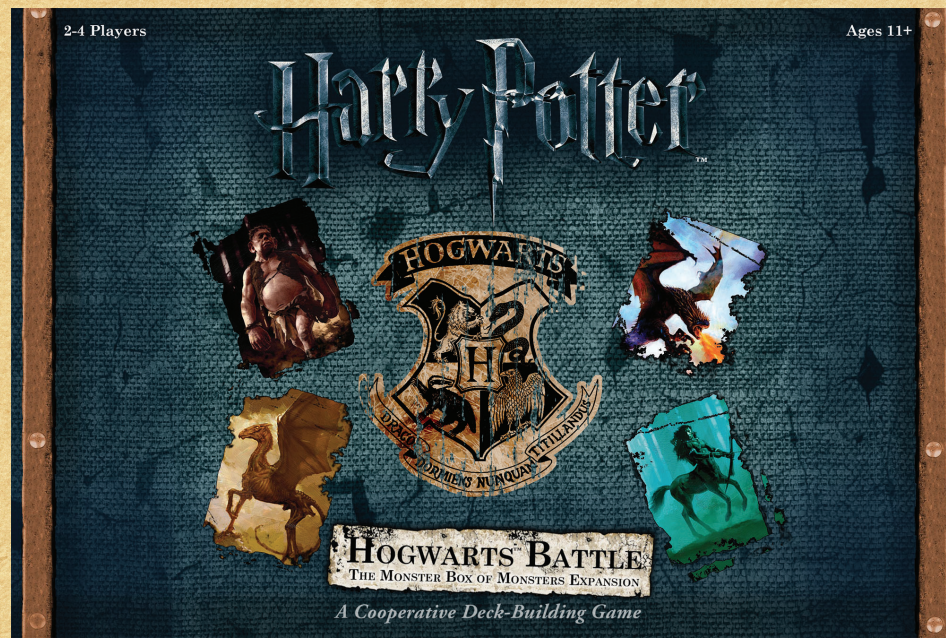




# Harry Potter

## HARRY POTTER™: HOGWARTS™ BATTLE - Monster Box of Monsters Expansion

By: Kami Mandell



I read my first Harry Potter book in 2001, and I confess I was a little embarrassed to choose a book from the “kids” section. I fell in love with a castle where the staircases moved and secret passages pretended to be walls and I immediately lamented my muggle status. Fast forward 16 years, and I grieved with first one, and then with another daughter that their admissions letters to Hogwarts didn’t arrive.

Needless to say, it has been amazing to have spent the better part of the last year and a half working on HARRY POTTER™: HOGWARTS™ BATTLE. I got to relive the magic as I re-watched the movies from the beginning—with a new perspective. And as we worked on the original game we paid special attention to the characters, the locations, and especially the



struggle between Harry and Voldemort. As part of this process, we encountered some of the cutest and fiercest characters ever imagined—all the magical creatures Harry and his friends met along the way. And simmering in the back of our heads was the thought that they needed to be part of this game. Of any game! And now, finally with the release of the Monster Box of Monsters expansion they will be!

Not all the magical creatures included in the expansion are “monsters”. Some are Allies that you can influence to join you on your adventures, but you’ll find most incorporated into the Villain deck (even though not all creatures are technically villains!). I think that Hagrid would have probably liked to keep them all as pets!

*"And as we worked on the original game we paid special attention to the characters, the locations, and especially the struggle between Harry and Voldemort."*



But before I get too far ahead of myself, let me tell you a little bit about what you can expect. This game plays best after Game 7 of Hogwarts Battle and adds four new adventures. Each box contains more cards (and a few other surprises) to incorporate.

My favorite part of this expansion is the introduction of a new playable Hero. Enter Luna Lovegood™. We briefly mentioned using Luna as a Hero in the first game, but she didn’t quite fit in. First, she started a year behind Harry, Ron, Hermione and Neville and secondly she wasn’t introduced until the fifth movie. But here with her love of magical creatures, she is a perfect fit. Her starting items are designed to embody Luna’s value of friendship. And you’ll be amazed at what she can do simply with her Spectrespecs! You’ll also see how her Lion Hat works in conjunction with cards in another Hero’s hands. These were very conscientious design decisions all for the player’s benefit and enjoyment!



Some of the most requested types of cards in the original game were those that allowed you to trash other cards in your deck. Crafting a powerful deck by getting rid of weak cards is second nature to seasoned gamers. But for players new to deck building games this works counterintuitively. For HARRY POTTER: HOGWARTS BATTLE, we went against conventional wisdom by deliberately not including those cards knowing that there would be many people who would be new to hobby games. With this expansion, we embraced the ability to banish cards. And with the introduction of Detention! cards, players will be grateful for ways to get cards out of their hand.

**"My favorite part of this expansion is the introduction of a new playable Hero. Enter Luna Lovegood™."**

Another new card type introduced in the expansion is Encounters. Encounters cards work similarly to the small square cards that were introduced in Game 7 (I won't say more for the people who still haven't finished the first game and don't want spoilers). Each Encounter is designed to interact with a specific Creature (or Creatures).



For example, the first Encounter in Box 1 is Peskipiksi Pesternomi. To complete the Encounter, players must first acquire then play two cards with an even value, but the Cornish Pixies attack players who have even value cards in hand at the start of their turn. Before the Heroes can win, they will need to complete the Encounters as well as defeat the Villains and Creatures.



And speaking of Creatures, it is finally time to talk about them in detail. Creatures are the "Villains" in this expansion. Creatures have the same card back as Villains from the core game and will be shuffled together with a select number of Villain cards each game. As I mentioned not all the Creatures are monsters, so don't be surprised if you are required to defeat some of your favorite magical creatures. But knowing that my girls could never attack Norbert no matter how much trouble he was causing, we are introducing a new way to defeat some of the Creatures—Influence. Since only one Influence can be placed each turn, Norbert will take at least six turns to defeat.

I have so much more that I want to share about the Monster Box of Monsters expansion, but I don't want to spoil all the surprises. If you thought the first seven games were easy, expect this game to show its teeth starting with the first box. Share your adventures @ usaopoly #HogwartsBattle I look forward to hearing from you.



Kami Mandell is a wife and mother of two girls ages 11 and 13. She began working at USAopoly in 1998 in the graphics department and now spends most of her time designing and developing games. Her favorite games include Telestrations®, CLUE®: Firefly Collector's Edition and HARRY POTTER: HOGWARTS BATTLE.

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## Spotlight on Previous Gen Con Titles

With this being its 50th anniversary, one can easily forget about the great titles from past Gen Cons. These games were highly sought after during their releases, becoming the must-have games of the year! Make sure you stock up on these titles that deserve a place in every gamer's collection!



**GenCon Hits 2016** – Gloomhaven, Cry Havoc, Vast, Scythe, Star Trek Ascendancy



**GenCon Hits 2015** – Tesla vs Edison, Gravwell, Tides of Time, Nefarious



**GenCon Hits 2014** – Imperial Settlers, Sherriff of Nottingham, King of New York, Run Fight or Die, Heroes Wanted



**GenCon Hits 2013** – Robinson Crusoe, Coup, Trains, Takenoko, Heroes of Normandie



**Gencon Hits 2012** – Smash Up, Tokaido, Space Cadets, Mage Wars



**GenCon Hits 2011** – King of Tokyo, Ascension, Eminent Domain



# ZOO BALL

**ZOO BALL** by Duncan Molloy

*"To make a great sports board game from scratch, first you must invent a sport."*  
-Neil DeGrasse-Tyson

Hello! Duncan Molloy here. I'm the developer of board and card games at Osprey Games, and the designer of Zoo Ball, the new dexterity game we're releasing this August. I've been asked to talk about it by my friends at GTS, so allow me to do that for a moment.

Here is what Zoo Ball is like:

- Zoo Ball is like four-player combat pool.
- Zoo Ball is like crokinole with defensive formations.
- Zoo Ball is somewhere between olympic curling and Super Smash Bros.
- Zoo Ball comes with a 30" square fabric mat and customisable teams.

Now that I've gotten that out of the way, let's talk about sports.

Simulating a sport in board games is properly difficult. There's a bunch of reasons for this, but mainly it's simple - if the sport is easy to simulate, why don't we just play the sport?

It's the reason why really good sports board games tend to simulate the culture of sports rather than the sport itself. Bloodbowl: Team Manager is a perfect example, doing a great job of capturing the feel of a season of American football by completely ignoring the rules of American football.

My task was a little different, as I wanted to capture the atmosphere of something in play, but lower the barrier to entry. The sport I was after here was rugby. It's similar to American football, with some key differences:

- Play doesn't stop when there's a down.
- You can't tackle/interfere with play off the ball, i.e. you have to tackle the man/men who currently have possession.
- You can't tackle a player from behind or the side, unless they took the ball past you - i.e. you can't run around in a big loop, play must move through the ball.
- You can't throw the ball forwards (though you can kick it, which is seen as riskier).

This leads to a compelling game state where the ball itself becomes the moving centre point of an hourglass shape through which all of the action filters. Like American football, a rugby team is roughly evenly split between a group of burlier, stronger forwards (sometimes referred to as 'the pack'), and a group of leaner, faster backs. Unlike football, the job of the pack isn't just to target/defend the backs, it's also to create space by drawing as many of the opposition's players into the centre of that hour glass, then quickly

moving the ball out wide to the edges of the field where the defensive formation has broken down.

It's that risk/reward of committing just enough defensively to allow you to also attack effectively that I wanted to capture, but it wasn't going to happen by trying to simulate thirty men tactically smacking each other around. Instead I tried to break it down to its component parts - your blockers trend towards defense and moving as a unit, but are not limited to it. Your scorer tends to move more widely, but can act as a last ditch defender when needed. It became clear that to make the sports game I wanted, the trick wasn't to invent the game, it was to invent the sport.

Most sports arrive at rules via play, rather than the other way around, and that's where I started. Flicking discs on a table is great fun. Flicking them on a mat felt better. Snooker/pool is a lot of fun, but lining up a great shot and not-quite sinking it felt frustrating, as it was handing points to your opponent. No shared scoring pieces then. So how do you score? You are your own ball. If you've got a single scorer, what's enough for a good defensive formation? And everything spun out from there.

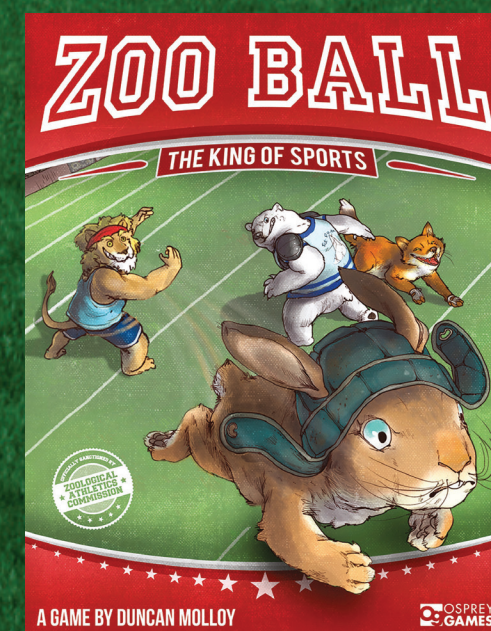
Here's how to play Zoo Ball:

Everyone's got 4 discs - 3 blockers and a scorer. On your turn you can flick any or all of your blockers, or flick just your scorer. If you go off the mat, you come back on the side closest to your own goal. Only your scorer can score, but blockers can knock scorers into the goal.

Play usually falls into an ebb-and-flow of momentum, where some clever defensive moves, or a poor attack from an opponent, will allow an opportunity to push for goal. If playtesting is anything to go by a local meta is likely to develop, with prominent starting positions, and direct counters to those.

I wanted to capture the pure fun energy of rugby, but have ended up somewhere entirely different, with little bits of soccer, and boules, and playground games in the mix. The important bit remains though: like rugby, Zoo Ball is a game where tactical positioning is as important as skill, but where neither of those dominate the joy of play.

And for that reason, I offer the sport of Zoo Ball for your consideration to the Olympic committee. Any help readers can provide to progress in this venture would be greatly appreciated. I mean, if it's good enough for darts...





# THE BEST LAID PLANS ON THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS OFTEN GO AWRY

By Justin Wilkinson

Mountains of Madness by Rob Daviau and published by Iello Games is Cthulhu Mythos at its finest. As a fully cooperative game, players take on the roles of professors ascending a giant mountain in Antarctica in search of a hidden alien city. The object is to get to the city, gather relics and get off the mountain as quickly as possible.

Now, I know what you're thinking. H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu and the extended mythos which surround him are ubiquitous to the hobby. Almost every board game publisher has a Cthulhu themed game or have the old god showing up with a cameo in some capacity. You can usually expect these ancient beings from beyond trying to force their way into our reality with only you and your intrepid friends there to stop them. Manage your health and sanity, then push the eldritch evil back so humanity can enjoy their insignificant lives for a little longer...no matter how futile. So, what makes Mountains of Madness stand out? Communication.

*"Communicating exactly what needs to be played and what everyone will be doing is key to success. Easy, right? WRONG."*

Without giving too much away about the game, what really makes Mountains of Madness shine are the madness cards players receive. During the game, your team will move to new locations and run into encounters. Each encounter phase has a time limit of 30 seconds and players will need different cards played from everyone in order to pass them. Communicating exactly what needs to be played and what

everyone will be doing is key to success. Easy, right? WRONG. As the game goes on, players will be receiving Madness cards that dictate player actions and how they can talk to everyone, like insanity induced charades.

Take this scenario for instance: You and your team land on a new tile during the Movement Phase. The leader flips the tile over and flips the 30 second sand timer. Looking at the tile, it shows that the players need to play cards that range between 7-10 books AND 8-10 weapons. Each card in their hand will be a book, weapon, tool or crate card with a number on it. You'll need to talk over who will play what to get the numbers to total within that range. Except one player is suddenly looking away from the board and won't talk. And when you asked another player if they had any books they screamed. And the other has suddenly lost control of their thumbs.... And you only



Players: 3-5  
Ages: 14+  
Duration: 60 min.

have 10 seconds left to finish this before terrible things happen! This might appear to be an extreme example, it's really not! As the game continues, players will receive higher tiered madness cards. Tier 1 may be something as simple as pretending to shiver, Tier 2 may be that you can't speak after something happens while Tier 3 could make communication and planning nigh impossible. And having ranges to meet ensures that players aren't just dumping their hands to hit a minimum, they are forced to communicate no matter how hair-pullingly frustrating it may be! By the time it's over, you may be questioning if Rob Daviau isn't some emissary of Cthulhu himself!

There is a ton of replay value with Mountains of Madness. The board has more tiles than needed for set up to ensure no expedition is the same. It's difficult to win in a good way, making victory feel like a much-earned accomplishment. And to top it off, there will be many times where you're laughing so hard during the Encounter phase while everyone displays their madness, you'll want to come back for more.

Mountains of Madness will have a limited release this August with a full release coinciding with Essen this October. ■







## RENEGADE GAME STUDIOS GAME NIGHT AT TABLETOP GAME CAFÉ



The Origins Game Faire this year was the best it's ever been and continues to grow. One of the most impressive things was the sheer number of events going on not just at the convention, but all around Columbus, OH. An event that really stood out was Renegade Game Studios' game night at Tabletop Game Café on North High Street. Gamers were welcome to come out and hang for a few hours while checking out games like Flipships, Clank!, Shiba Inu House, Honshu, The Fox in the Forest, and more! Renegade staff was on hand to help answer rules questions, hand out promos, talk to fans and just have fun.

The café was busy but we had a chance to catch up with store owner Aaron Brown to ask a few questions about running a successful gaming event for the community:



**GameBuyer: What brought you and Renegade Game Studios together? Have you held many other publisher-specific events in the past?**

Aaron: Renegade has quickly become a staff favorite because their games fit our space well. They're more casual than heavy Euros, but more strategic than traditional family games. Aside from Renegade, we reached out to several game companies who we knew were going to be at Origins Game Fair about hosting special events off-site. That same week we hosted a private event for IELLO Games. We'd love to host more events like this and are in discussion with several publishers about events in the Fall to introduce more gamers to the games they're releasing at GenCon.

We've also hosted several events for local game designers in conjunction with their Kickstarter campaign - either as a promo event to bring attention to their Kickstarter or as a launch event when they have the game in hand.

**GB: What do you believe are the most important aspects of running a successful game night? How did you prepare for such a large event? How do you get the word out?**

Aaron: Promotion and creating a work plan are very important. We handle parts of the event and the publisher handles others. Making sure that everyone knows what their job is and creating a timeline for those jobs is key. Communication leading up to the event is important so everyone knows where they are and to keep the project in both parties' minds.

**GB: What's the most challenging aspect of running a large game night?**

Aaron: Since we serve food and drink the biggest challenge is the first wave rush because everyone arrives at the same time and everyone puts in an order when they arrive. Once that large rush dies down, we can handle the additional orders. We have extra staff on hand during those events to keep wait times down and be available to answer questions or help the publisher out where we can.



**GB: Have you even run demographic specific events like "new gamers" or "ladies night"?**

Aaron: Every month we host a local group, Columbus Board Gamers. They have a mission of creating a safe space for gamers in the LGBTQ community. Those events are always really well attended and we enjoy partnering with a group dedicated to creating inclusive gaming spaces. We've also done nights where we do demos of popular games, like "Learn 40k" or "Learn Clank!" so new gamers can expect to learn a new game.

**GB: That's amazing! Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our questions. Seeing what you've done and hearing how you've reached out to your local gaming community, we hope it might inspire other retailers with new ideas.**

*Are you holding an event at your store for those that can't make it to Gen Con? Reach out to [marketing@gtsdistribution.com](mailto:marketing@gtsdistribution.com) with pictures from your event and you may be featured in our next issue of GameBuyer!*



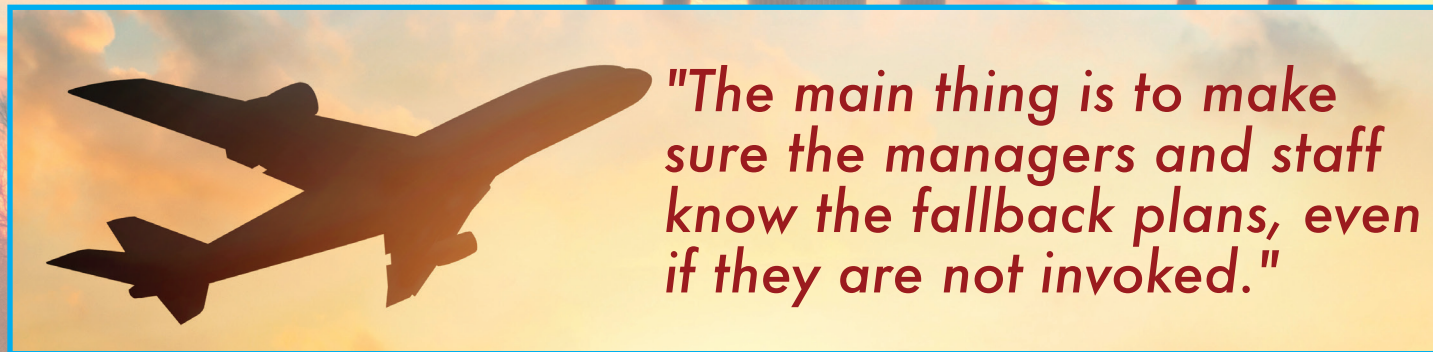




## Avoiding Catastrophic Failure In Your Absence

by Michael Bahr, Desert Sky Games

It seems like only yestermoth that I observed how badly I needed a vacation, and I finally took one last week, driving with the family out to the balmy climes of Anaheim for a day of merriment at Disneyland California Adventure. The girls had been to the main Disneyland Park five years ago, and Greggles had never been, so we chose the alternate and enjoyed a day of Radiator Springs Racers, California Screamin', Ariel's Undersea Aquarium, and the rest.



As I predicted in an earlier blog article, having Griffin on hand to cover eventualities worked perfectly; he was available to write checks for overlimit buys where the seller didn't have PayPal, and he ended up not having to do so. He was available in case of critical customer service failure, and we had none. No physical plant problems came up, no serious supply outages occurred, and only two special orders failed to get put in, and I got that done when I returned. Our two store managers, Chris and Jake, largely had continuity handled, and my online store manager, Tanner, proceeded virtually unchanged from a normal work week. The main thing is to make sure the managers and staff know the fallback plans, even if they are not invoked. Confidence that you know what you're doing goes a long way toward ensuring strong execution. Business continuity is a dry subject that most store owners don't want to spend any time on. I love dry subjects that everyone hates, so here we go.

### Internet outages

Every store uses internet connectivity for at least its credit card processing, and often uses it for all TCG pricing on both purchases and sales. An instance of the internet going down is no joke. There must always be a backup plan other than "stop making money." Fortunately, mobile hotspots are available from a variety of carriers, and depending on the store's scale, it may justify having its own service for these.

### Credit card processor outages

There is no real excuse for this in a world where both Square and PayPal Here exist. Whichever one is down, use the other. I used to use Chase Paymentech until I learned that their chargeback protection was awful. I had iPayment for a while and the service is both good and cheap, but you are forced to use antiquated equipment, basically the cheapest possible Ingenico chip readers. That is my in-store backup system now, relegating the PayPal Here chip reader to third place. Fortunately, it can use the same iPads as our Square terminals.

### Water outages

There's no real answer to this one other than closing the restrooms until your municipal water provider gives the all-clear, but be prepared to do so and have a process in place so your employees know how to do it when an owner is not there.

*"Confidence that you know what you're doing goes a long way toward ensuring strong execution."*

### Power outages

There's not much you can do about this and for about ten months out of the year there is not anything my stores can do about it, due to the desert climate. If the power goes out for more than a few minutes, the store must close. Have a process in place for your crew to know the drill.

### Crime situations

Fortunately, most people understand how to call the police, and you should impress upon your staff that you approve of them doing this. Have the local police general response line posted where your staff can see it. You don't want them calling 9-1-1 unless there is an actual life-threatening emergency. This will require your followup when you get back, but a competent manager can generally interact as needed with the police in situations like this, and will get better as more such occurrences take place.

### Staff mutiny/Store fire/Building safety incident/Natural disaster/etc

Tell your staff to close on up until you get back. There are things you simply can't have them handle without you. But these should be outlier events that don't happen often, perhaps ever. And you should have insurance that covers employee misconduct, not that you hope ever to need it.

Those are some examples of things that threaten your ability to keep doing business. There are other issues that can keep you from doing business well. Those also need to be addressed.



**Cash shortages**

Prepare before you leave so that someone in your stead can run to the bank or else there is enough currency in your safe to continue normal operations. This is especially critical if you do a lot of buying from the public.



**Staff no-shows**

This generally falls within your manager's purview. If you don't have a manager separate from yourself, you probably aren't taking a vacation yet. Or if you are, you don't really have business continuity independent of yourself. This is also an empowering authority for your manager, because it is a very simple issue, very well understood in any industry, and gives your manager a chance to follow the disciplinary process you wrote into your employee manual, sharpening his or her management chops. You did write an employee manual, didn't you?

**Supply outages**

Staples charges like eight times more than U-Line for toner drums or receipt paper rolls, so take care of your supply situation as best you can while you are still in town, and if you end up out of a mission-critical supply, just accept that your manager will have to take cash from the safe, go to the store, buy the thing at a not-good price, and leave the receipt for you, your administrator, or your accountant to add to the regret ledger. Live and learn.

**Credit card interruptions**

You're on vacation on the Island of Saint-Marie, 3270 miles away from your store, and your manager messages you that he can't charge postage to your store AMEX because it was flagged as stolen after being swiped a bunch of times... on the Island of Saint-Marie, 3270 miles away from your store. You check your wallet... and your store AMEX isn't there. Uh-oh. Or even if it is there because it's your own AMEX you happen to use for the business, not recommended but many stores still do this, and it was flagged as a security precaution, you still have a problem. This is one of those situations where you need a multi-pronged continuity plan in place. Your store should have multiple credit card options even if you don't use them all, and separate accounts for the business and your personal use are a must in any case. When I fly somewhere I don't even take my keys with me. For the store, prepare cash, PayPal, checks, and if possible even alternate means of paying for business operations in your stead. For example, we can ship from eBay, from Crystal Commerce (Endicia Postage), from PayPal Ship Now, or at the end of it all someone can go to the post office and get that parcel out on time. Most of your distributors should be getting paid by ACH, so as long as you have a way of managing your banking remotely, that should hopefully suffice. Have a backup for your backups and a way to put any funds where you need them, and make sure you contact your credit card issuer before traveling.

**Overlimit buys**

This won't apply to all of you, but if your attorney checks into it, it may apply to more of you than you think. My municipality limits cash buy totals before triggering pawn sequestration and reporting requirements, and many other localities have similar "know your customer"-style laws, regulations, or ordinances. In my case, paying with an audit trail (business check or PayPal) can be done without limit. Without a limit other than your available balance, obviously, which if you leave town you want to make sure is as high as possible. My staff knows they can always dip into PayPal for an overlimit buy, and I make sure another owner is available in case a check is the only way to proceed. I want those buys. Buys are crucial to running a healthy business. My staff knows they are at liberty to spend every dime on the premises if we are getting the right merch for the right price. We just have to follow the legal requirements.

**Product outages**

Ours is an industry with stockouts every day, but there are outages (K-Wings, which nobody can get right now), and there are outages (the store ran out of Amonkhet boosters). Planning ahead should stave off all but the most unexpected of these situations. You do not turn away the customer with cash in hand who wants to buy you out of matte black Dragon Shields. But it is an economic reality that stores cannot always stock ultra-deep on everything. Have a plan ready. In my case, my staff uses a shared cloud notes app to jot down anything we need ordered, and any critical orders in detail. My manager has the authority to put in orders from some of my suppliers, and they check with me before firing off, but even that might be more protection than we need. In a pinch, another owner could also do this. End of the day if your plan is simply that your vacation gets interrupted for the length of a phone call or email to your distributor rep, and they send the goods. If it's Friday morning and you just ran out of Magic boosters going into the weekend, congratulations, you suck.

Obviously, the foregoing is not a comprehensive list of issues that can interrupt business continuity or impede business effectiveness, but it should serve as an ideal primer and something that every owner can look at and be sure they've covered.

I am far from perfect, and in no way should this article be construed as braggadocio. At one point or another, I have learned the lesson of most of these problems the hard way. You'll end up doing the same at least once or twice, and hopefully your business survives to open another day without such problems. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, won't get fooled again.

*Michael Bahr is the managing partner of Desert Sky Games and Comics, with two store locations near Phoenix. He served four years as a DCI Level 3 Judge, holds a law degree from Arizona State, and spent seven years in government health care administration.*



# SHARK ISLAND

## Shark Island – The Idea and the Design

By Pete Shirey and Richard Launius

The design of the game *Shark Island* grew out of the love of all things sharks by co-designer Pete Shirey and the love of cooperative adventure games by co-designer Richard Launius. Pete, a first time designer, shared his ideas and vision for a shark verses man game with Richard. What Pete had mapped out was a largescale game whereby players would hunt for a monster shark terrorizing a small set of islands. After reviewing Pete's ideas and design notes, Richard felt the game was too massive and the mechanics not right for this type of game. After some discussion, Richard suggested they work together to create a game on a smaller scale that still encompassed the heart of Pete's vision – a strategic game of deduction, quick search and dynamic combat. Pete was agreeable to the idea and together they established the basis of the game *Shark Island*, starting with a simple principle of head to head competition between a shark player and cooperatively hunters. By choosing to make the shark a competitive player in the game rather than using artificial intelligence for a pure cooperative game (all players against the AI in the game) as Richard traditionally designed previously in games like *Arkham Horror* and *Defenders of the Realm*, the intellectual deduction of where the shark would strike and the strategies that could be used would be increased significantly. With this direct competition and deduction process established, the designers began to build mechanics that supported the theme of the game, a classic battle between man and shark. To take the game to the epic level it deserved, the mechanics needed to provide more than just deduction between the players, it needed a high level of action as well, to create those great scenes of terror and heroics so thrilling in books and movies about classic battles between man and beast.



Using hidden movement for the shark during each round and placing of fins on the active hunting grounds, with only 1 fin representing the real location of the shark and limiting the search actions for the hunters, the game delivers a quick and tense search each turn to find the shark before it terrorizes an area around the island. Establishing variable terror points for the shark player to score on the few hunting grounds available each turn, terror points driving the shark player's victory conditions, created a deductive process between the shark player and the hunters as to whether he would take a major risk for more terror points, or a lower risk for fewer points. The hunters cannot protect

all areas, so if they fail to find the shark in the search phase of the game, they need to determine where they will patrol in hopes of catching him as he strikes. This tense game of cat and mouse is played out rapidly each turn and often results in a heated battle between the monster shark and the hunters. Additionally, as with any Launius design, the focus on theme would have to be strong. To do this the shark and the hunters need to have clear identities. Pete brought the shark knowledge and Richard the heroic hunters, together designing decks of cards for each character and shark; adding skills, background, and defining each character uniquely in game play.

Last, but certainly not least would be a dynamic combat system. Several combat systems were tried before finalizing on the card based battle that shares some mechanics with the popular game *Blackjack*. But this combat deck goes far beyond the numbers on the cards in the form of and special cards such as *Sharks*, *Harpoons*, and *The Heat of Battle*, each altering the classic game and moving it to something far more exciting and uncertain, yet easy to learn and play.

In the end, the designers created an adventure game in *Shark Island* that gives a nod to all the classic books and movies that pit man against creatures of the deep, bringing them to life in a 45 minute game experience.



Pete Shirey retired from UPS in 2013 to work in the gaming industry. He currently works in Marketing and as a Volunteer Coordinator for CMON and part time as a game designer. New to game design, Pete hopes to create new and innovative games that are high in theme and easy to play for all types of gamers. In addition to publishing *Shark Island* by The Upper Deck Company, he has another untitled game that will be published later this year.

Pete has a life-long obsession with sharks and all things shark related. *Jaws* was his favorite movie growing up and he has watched *Shark Week* religiously since 1988.

Pete and his wife Elisabeth live in Simpsonville, SC. They have two children, James (18) and Isabella (5).



Richard Launius retired from AT&T in 2009 to fully dedicate his time to designing games. Richard is known for designing cooperative adventure games that are strong in theme. His design credits include: *Arkham Horror 1st & 2nd Editions*, *Defenders of the Realm*, *Elder Sign*, *Dragon Rampage*, *Defenders of Last Stand*, *Ace Detective*, *Legends of the American Frontier*, *Run, Fight or Die*, *Pirates VS Dinosaurs*, *Draco Magi*, *Thunder Alley Crew Chiefs*, *Alien Uprising*, and *Cthulhu's Vault* as well as many expansions for his games. Richard's games scheduled to be published in 2017 include; *Fate of the Elder Gods*, *Saving Time*, *Madness at Midnight*, *Dragon Rampage 2nd Edition*, and *Shark Island*.

For those of you that like baseball trivia, Richard designed the uniform the Chicago White Sox wore from 1982 – 1986 and is now worn as their Sunday special uniform.

Richard and his wife Carolyn reside in Simpsonville, SC. They have three children and 4 grandchildren.



## Never Start an Event Late Again *By Jordan Comar*

Starting events on time is consistently a top priority for players when evaluating stores.

But, as every organizer knows, it's not that simple. For instance, if players call to say they'll be late, should you wait for them? If they show up after pairings are made, should you try to squeeze them into round one? Should you poll your punctual players about it or should you have a firm policy?

You can help dodge this issue altogether by clearly defining what your start time means and consistently abiding by that definition.

### What does "starting on time" mean?

Andrew Schwab of Anime Kat asked the same question:

*How do you define "starting on time?" If your event starts at 2pm, do you announce the pairings then or is that when you start the timer? What does "on time" mean to you? Take the following event for example:*

*Friday Night Magic - Standard - 6:30pm*

Is 6:30 when registration starts, or when pairings go up? When packs get handed out, or when players are seated? If I'm a player, when should I show up? And if I'm an organizer, what should my cutoff be for registering players?

### The consensus solution is easy to apply.

We specify registration time and starting time. Starting time is always when packs are handed out for sealed or pairings are up for constructed. — Anna O'Keefe, CCGHouse  
You can avoid the ambiguity by communicating registration start time and round one (or draft seating) start time in your messaging. Just being a little more specific can make all the difference.

Consider the previous example, but with Anna's method in place:

*Friday Night Magic - Standard - Registration: 5–6:15pm; Round 1 pairings up at: 6:30pm*

Now, expectations are set. If I'm a player, I know precisely when to show up, and precisely when the event begins. If I'm an organizer, I've got an explicitly stated cutoff to stand by if anyone shows up late. I can issue them a match loss and add them to round two.

Use this strategy and never start an event late again!

## EVENT QUALITY CHECKLIST

### EVENT PREPARATION

#### Staff

- Dedicated event organizer or judge
- Dedicated sales staff member

#### Supplies & Tools

- Consistent access to WER
- Printer with spare toner & paper
- Spindown life counters or pens & paper
- Basic Lands
- Backup computer with WER

### PLAY AREA

#### Atmosphere

- Clean and tidy
- Comfortable room temperature
- Well lit

#### Amenities

- Comfortable chairs
- Sturdy tables

### EVENT EXECUTION

#### Pre-Event Announcements

- Share code of conduct
- Announce format, time per round, prize structure
- Promote upcoming events, products, accessories
- Point out store amenities

#### On-Time Start

- Take preregistration
- Advertise both registration time and start time
- Have new players get DCI numbers at [accounts.wizards.com](http://accounts.wizards.com)

#### Quick Time Between Rounds

- Display Round Timer
- Issue 15-minute warning
- Use match slips
- Have a match slip return box
- Have a pairings location
- Use table numbers

#### Rewards

- Hand out participation and achievement rewards early
- Reward the behavior you want to see in your store
- Offer a flat prize structure (most events)
- Provide flyer listing upcoming events





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