

Mahabharata

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A strategy dice game for 2 – 4 players, by:

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History

The Kurukshetra War, also called the Mahabharata War, is a war described in the Hindu epic poem Mahābhārata. The conflict arose from a dynastic succession struggle between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas and Pandavas, for the throne of Hastinapura. It involved several ancient kingdoms participating as allies of the rival groups.



“Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win”

— Sun Tzu, The Art of War



An Akshauhini was a battalion consisting of 21,870 chariots; 21,870 elephants; 65,610 horses and 109,350 infantry as per the Mahabharata. The smallest group called a Pati was formed by 1 chariot : 1 elephant : 3 cavalry : 5 infantry soldiers (1:1:3:5). In each of these large number groups (65,610; 109,350 etc.), the digits added up to 18. A total of 18 Akshohini fought the war (11 on Kurava side and 7 on Pandava side). These auspicious numbers were thought to provide these battalions with the best odds of success at any scale of battle.

In Mahabharata, players are attempting to gain the favor of other leaders while compiling their own army to obtain military advantage for the ensuing Kurukshetra War. Once a player has perfectly assembled their Pati, the game ends and the war begins. Whoever is the most prepared for the war, will end the game victorious.

Goal of the Game

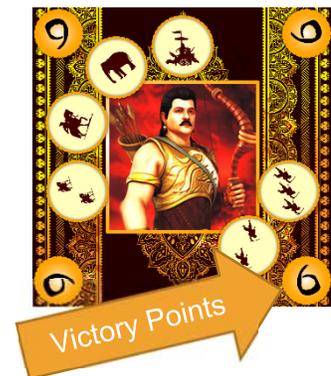
To score victory points, you will need to present the most influence on the regional leaders. To do this, you will devote corresponding tokens to them and whoever has the most influence of that leader will win their favor, earning you victory points. Each player also will be secretly building a “Pati” using that exact 1:1:3:5 ratio of chariots, elephants, cavalry, and infantry. Once completed, at the end of the round that player may reveal it and end the game, also earning them 7 points.

Game Components

- This rulebook
- Player aids
- First player marker (Elephant figure)
- 4 player screens
- 8 Dice (2 of each kind)
- 10 Leader Cards
- 120 tokens (30 per player color)

Setup

- Reveal 4 leader cards. If the sum of the victory points is not equal to 18, draw another card until you reach exactly 18. If you exceed 18, discard the excess cards until you can form exactly 18.
- Each player chooses a color and collects their 30 matching tokens and screen.

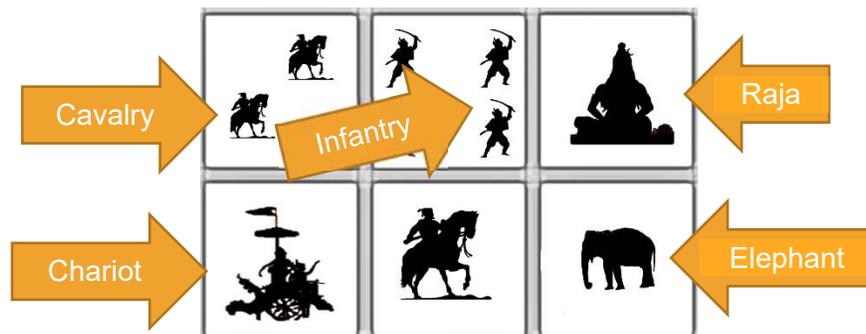


How to Play

The last person who saw an elephant (real or in a movie) takes the elephant (1st player token). Note that all tokens are supply-limited, you only have 3 of each token.

Each round:

1. The player with the elephant rolls the 8 dice in an area central to all players.
2. The first player with the elephant selects one die and moves it away from the other dice, indicating that it has already been selected for the remainder of the round. They then immediately place a token of their matching color.
3. The player to their left selects one die and places a token, and so on.
4. The last player to select a die instead may choose 2 dice and place both matching tokens.
5. The player to the last player's right selects a die and places a token, and so on.
6. Once all players have selected 2 dice and placed tokens, the round ends. If a player chooses to do so, they may announce and reveal that they have formed a Pati and the game ends. Alternatively, if all 18 spaces of the leader cards in play have at least one token, the game also ends.
7. If the game does not end, pass the elephant to the left and begin a new round!



Placing Tokens:

When a player selects a die, they immediately also must place a matching token from their pool in one of two locations:

- a. Behind your screen, to secretly form your Pati.
 - i. **You may not use a selected Raja die to form your Pati.**
- b. On a matching icon space on a leader card.
 - i. **If you selected the Raja die, you may choose to place any token from your pool of your choice.**
 - ii. If another player already has a token on a leader space, you cannot place one there.
 - iii. If you already have a token on a leader, you may stack your matching token on top of it.

Winning the War

When one (or more) players choose to reveal their completed Pati at the end of the round or all 18 spaces of the leader cards in play have at least one token, the game ends and players need to count their scores to determine the victor.

For each player who completed their **Pati**, that is a perfect set of 1 Chariot, 1 Elephant, 3 Cavalry, and 5 Infantry - they will **score 7 victory points**. You may have more tokens than you need to complete your Pati, so long as the ones you do use form perfect matching numbers. *For example, you may have a 2 Infantry, 2 infantry, and a 3 Infantry - since you need exactly 5 you can make it with two of the tokens. However, if you have a 4 Infantry and a 4 Infantry, you cannot form the exact match of 5 Infantry, despite having more than 5 in total.*

For each leader card, the player who placed the most influence on that leader will win their favor and gain the victory points shown on the corners of the card. **Each token counts as one influence, regardless of the number of icons shown on the tokens.** The player with the most influence earns the victory points. **In the case of a tie for the highest influence, the second highest player wins the victory points.** If the second highest are also tied, no one earns victory points from that leader.

The player with the most victory points wins! In the case of a tie, the player with the second highest points wins. If still tied, everyone miraculously manages to prevent the upcoming war by a truce since no one could clearly win - the game ends in a draw!