Stak BotS™

Instructions

Welcome to the land of Bot........ You have arrived to help your Bots during a time of great crisis, for they are in the midst of what will later come to be known as 'The Great Bickering'. Bots who once stood alone have found others with similar ideals and formed together to create mighty Staks, with new Bots coming to join them at every turn. You must guide your Stak of Bots to victory, by scrapping all other Bot Staks that stand against you, for they are clearly in the wrong.

Use this manual to help you learn what each of your Bots is capable of and how to command them. Stak them wisely, choose your attacking Bots carefully, rely on your skills, trust to luck and maybe you will be able to defend what you and your Bots stand for.

Aim

Reduce your opponent's Stak of cards to zero (even if they have cards left in their hand they are out of the game). The last player with cards left in their Stak is the winner.

Follow the turn structure and carry out actions (play, scrap, attack) to give you the strongest position; choose a card to attack with, play cards to support it, scrap as many opposing cards as possible and try not to leave yourself open to attack.

Setup

Deal 9 cards face-down in front of each player. This is their Stak. (Deal less cards for a shorter game, or if there are a lot of players).

Players then turn the top card of their Stak to face-up. (During the game, the top card must always be turned to face-up. Note that ⊙ entry effects shown on the cards do not apply during the setup).

Deal 2 cards face-down to each player for their starting hand.
Place the rest of the cards face-down to become the supply pile from which all players draw.

Leave an empty space for the scrapheap; cards that are discarded from a player's hand or cards that get scrapped from a Stak get placed face-up here (in any order).

Select a player to go first and follow the turn structure. Gameplay then moves clockwise to the next player.

Game Layout

Scrapheap pile

Their Stak and hand

Supply pile

Your Stak and hand
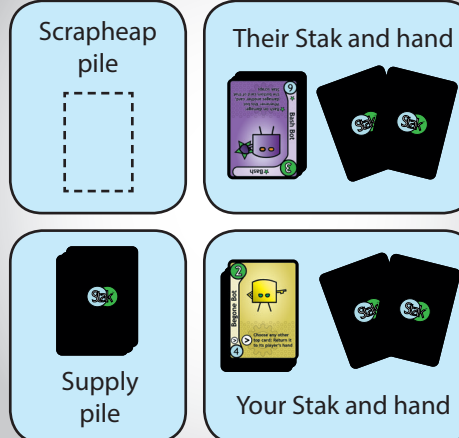
The anatomy of a Stak Bot

Ability: Some cards have abilities that can affect what happens when they do battle with other cards. These are detailed on the cards that have them and only apply when they are the top card.

(P) Power: This number is how much damage a card can inflict during a battle with another card, as well as how much damage it can take before it scraps. *eg. A power 4 card can deal 4 damage to every card it battles; if it takes 4 or more damage in a turn it will scrap.*

Sidebar: This shows the bot's name as well as little reminder symbols so you can see what the card's abilities and effects are when it is partially covered.

(>) Entry effect: If a card has this symbol, follow the instructions as soon as it enters play from your hand or turns face-up at the top of its Stak. It doesn't matter whose turn it is, or whether or not it is helpful to you, these effects always trigger.

(R) Rank: This shows how strong the card is in comparison to other cards but does not normally affect gameplay. (This allows you to setup a game where each player has cards of similar strengths. See the game variations overleaf).
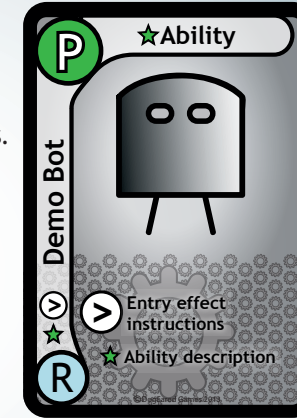
Turn Structure

Start of turn

Draw a card from the top of the supply pile into your hand

Actions: carry out any of the following, in any order, any number of times:

- **Play a card** from your hand

- **Scrap** your Stak's top card or discard from your hand

- **Attack** with the top card of your Stak
(only one attacking card per turn)

Feed the scrapheap: at least one card (from any player) has to enter the scrapheap before your turn can end

End of Turn

Play a Card

Place a card from your hand face-up on your Stak: It becomes your new top card. Place it so you can see the sidebar of the card below it.

Check for ⊙ entry effects: Follow the instructions on the card immediately.

Note:
The sidebars of all face-up cards must be visible at all times during play, even if they are further down the Stak and below face-down cards.

Combining entry effects with attacks is key to victory, so think carefully about when to play cards, in what order and which card to choose as your attacking card.

Scrap

Scrap your top card or discard from your hand: If you are unable to scrap an opponent's card you may end up having to do this to feed the scrapheap.

You may also do this to work through your Stak with the hope of finding a better attacking card, or a card with a helpful entry effect.

Attack

Choose an opponent's Stak to battle with: Your top card inflicts damage equal to its power value to the opponent top card; their top card does the same to yours at the same time. Then...

...Scrap cards that have taken too much damage: If a Bot takes damage equal to or greater than its power, then it scraps; place it face-up in the scrapheap.

Note:
Damage builds up over the turn: *eg. Your Bot with power 5 attacks their Bot with power 2. Their Bot takes 5 damage and scraps. Your Bot takes 2 damage. If your Bot takes a further 3 or more damage this turn then it will scrap.*

Damage does not reduce power: Damaged cards still have their full power, so will still inflict their full damage to any cards they battle.

Healing: All cards heal at the end of the turn, so they start each turn with no damage.

One attacking card per turn: You can attack as many times as you like during your turn, but you have to use the same card to attack with each time so choose carefully. You can choose again next turn.

Attack gets stopped: If your chosen attack Bot gets reset (turned face-down), returned to your hand or if it scraps, then you can no longer attack with it this turn.

(>) Entry effects

Triggering: Entry effects trigger as soon as a card is played from a hand, or when it turns face-up at the top of its Stak (if it is already face-up and then becomes a top card, it doesn't trigger). The effect has to be carried out, even if it is to your disadvantage or it is not your turn.

Priority: If more than one entry effect needs to trigger at the same time, the player whose turn it is plays first and the others wait.

Chains: One entry effect may trigger another entry effect; if so, this takes place immediately. **Any resulting new entry effects take place before already waiting ones.**

If a waiting entry effect card stops being the top card then it does not trigger.

Also note, in the rare event that a player's Stak has just run out but an entry effect chain is still happening, the chain continues and must finish before they are out of the game.

www.stakbots.com If you have any questions or comments please get in contact, we'd love to hear from you.

DogEared Games

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Glossary

Ability - A characteristic of the card that affects what happens when it battles another card

Action - Play/Scrap/Attack. Carry out any combination of these on your turn

Attack- Action taken by your top card against the top card of another Stak

Bottom card - The last card in a Stak

Damage - This is caused when one card battles another card. It does not affect the power of the card

Entry effect - Some cards have effects which occur when they are played from your hand or when they turn face-up at the top of a Stak

Feed the Scrapheap - At least one card must get scrapped every turn. It can belong to any player

Play a card - Place a card from your hand face-up on the top of your Stak

Power - How much damage a card can deal and also how much damage it can take before it scraps

Rank - How strong a card is in the game, compared to the other cards

Scrap - A card moves from a Stak into the scrapheap

Scrapheap - The face-up discard pile for scrapped or discarded cards

Sidebar - The information panel on each card

**Stak** - The pile of cards on the table from which you play

Supply pile - The pile for drawing cards from (if it runs out, shuffle the scrapheap; place it face-down as the new supply pile)

Top card - The topmost card of a Stak. It must always be face-up. If you only have one card left it is also your bottom card
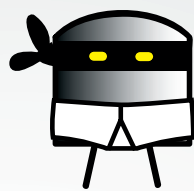
⭐ This symbol means a Bot's ability takes effect when it damages another card

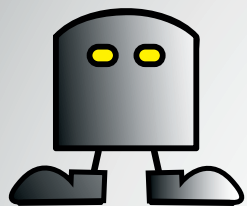⚠ This ability takes effect when the card attacks
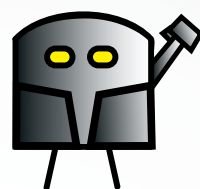
Meet the Bots
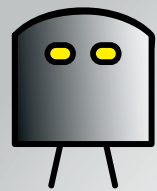
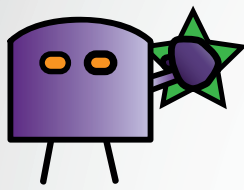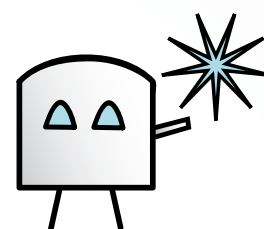**Core Bot:** The staple of the Bot force. Simple attack and defence.

Stomp Bot: When this Bot attacks it continuously battles the same Stak until it gets scrapped or is stopped by an entry effect.

Bash Bot: When this Bot deals damage to a Stak it also scraps the bottom card of the Stak it damaged. This happens whether it is attacking or defending, and whether you scrap their top card or not.

Spike Bot: When this Bot damages a top card, it also scraps the first card underneath the card it damaged. This happens whether it is attacking or defending, and whether their top card scraps or not.

Clumsy Bot: When this card enters it bashes its own Stak, which causes the bottom card of its Stak to scrap. Note that if this is the last card in a Stak it will bash itself and scrap when it triggers.

Shot Bot: When it enters, it does a one-off shot of damage to a top card of your choice. Note that entry effects are not attacks, so a Shot Bot that fires will not receive damage from its target.

Reaper Bot: The entry effect of this card allows you to choose any other top card and scrap it.

Fatal Bot: This Bot deals fatal damage, so any card it damages gets scrapped.

Sidekick Bot: This Bot supports other cards by falling down one place when it enters (it stays face-up when it falls).
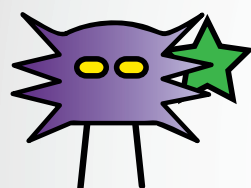
Leader Bot: The power of this card is variable and equal to the number of face-up cards in a group together with it (ie. with no face-down cards inbetween and including itself). *eg. 3 face-up cards with it makes its power 4.* If its power is reduced enough after having already taken damage it will scrap.
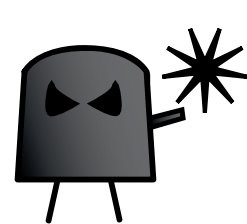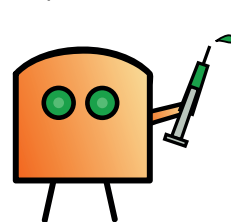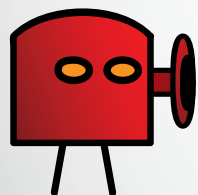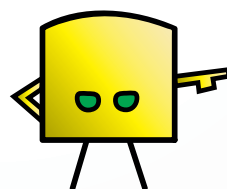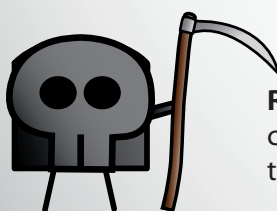
Bountiful Bot: When this card enters you draw a card from the top of the supply pile into your hand.

Expel Bot: When this Bot enters choose a player to discard a card from their hand. (You can choose a player with no cards).

Tranq Bot: On entry choose any other face-up card to reset (turn it to face-down). If it resets a top card, that card immediately turns face-up; it will be free of damage and any entry effect will trigger. If that top card was the chosen attacker, it will no longer be able to attack this turn.
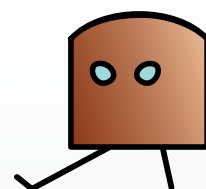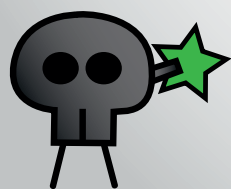
Begone Bot: When this card enters, return any other top card to its owner's hand. (This may not always work to your advantage).

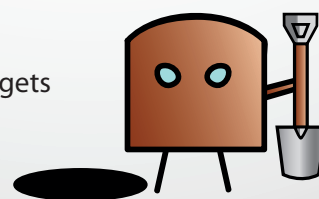**Trip Bot:** When this card enters, choose a top card to fall one place (that card remains face-up).

Pit Bot: When this card enters, choose a top card and place it face-up at the bottom of its Stak.

Game Variations

Blitz game

The rules are the same as normal with one exception - you do not draw a card at the start of your turn, but instead you have the option to place your top card face-up at the bottom of its Stak (you can only do this once at the start of your turn. Remember to feed the scrapheap. If you are playing Multi-Stak, choose only one top card to drop).

This is the quickest and simplest way to play and is also good if you are starting out, as it limits the number of cards and choices you have to deal with at any one time. Try playing with no starting hand at first, then build up when you are more experienced. A large hand with reactive play (see toggles below) can be interesting!

Team games

Staggered: Divide the number of players into teams of equal numbers. The game plays as normal except that as long as anyone on your team is still in the game you are not out, even if your Stak is empty; draw cards and play them as normal until all of your team's Staks run out. You can try different seating arrangements so you are either all sat opposite your teammate, or seated randomly.

Synchronous: All members of your team sit together each with their own Stak and all participate in the team's turn, taking actions between them in any order, *eg. one player could attack, then another player on your team attacks, then the first player plays a card.* Each team member gets to choose an attacking card from their Stak. This can get complicated so it can be helpful to move a Stak back slightly once it is no longer able to attack to help keep track of things!

Each player on your team draws a card on your team's turn and the minimum amount of cards to feed the scrapheap is equal to the number of players on your team. As with staggered team play, each team member stays in the game until the whole team's Staks run out.

Multi-Stak games

This plays the same as a synchronous team game except that each player has two (or more) Staks, rather than having a team controlling those Staks. The main difference is that a player can play from their hand onto any of their multiple Staks.

Each player draws one card on their turn and must feed at least one card to the scrapheap.

You can choose an attacking card from each of your Staks and keep attacking in any order (or as a simpler variation, limit each player to one attacking card per turn).

Ranked games

These allow you to have a more balanced game where each player has cards of a roughly equal strength.

To setup: sort the cards into piles based on their rank and divide each rank pile equally between the players to create separate decks (any excess cards per rank are left out of the game). Each player shuffles and deals from their own deck and has their own supply and scrapheap pile to play from, rather than a shared pile. Other than this the game plays as normal.

You can alternatively setup by taking turns to choose cards from each rank, thereby building a deck that adjusts to the strengths and weaknesses of the cards your opponents choose.

Toggles

Change the gameplay with these options; try one at a time or a combination!

- **Stak depth:** Set up with either more or fewer cards face-down for each player, to make the game longer or shorter respectively. (If the supply pile runs out, shuffle the scrapheap and turn it face-down to become the new supply pile).
- **Reactive play:** when you are attacked you may protect yourself by playing a card onto the defending Stak before the attack takes effect. If you do, the attack is cancelled. The attacker can choose a different attacking card if they haven't already completed an attack. Entry effects trigger as normal.
- **Recycling:** if a player scraps their top card at the same time as discarding a card from their hand, they may draw a card into their hand from the top of the supply pile (and then turn over their new top card if it is face-down).
- **Setup entry effects trigger:** Choose who plays first before turning over the top cards during setup. Any of these top cards with entry effects trigger at the start of the first player's turn (before drawing a card). If there is more than one due to trigger, the priority follows the clockwise order of play while the other cards wait (remember that any new entry effects will take place before these waiting ones).
- **Borderless play:** you may play your cards onto other players' Staks to support them (or hinder them!) If an entry effect triggers on their Stak, they choose the outcome. For a team game, you could limit this to just playing cards onto your team's Staks.
- **Feeding the scrapheap:** see what happens if you change the number of cards that have to be fed to the scrapheap each turn.

Feel free to experiment with your own ways to play and share them with others to try out!
There are more ideas for gameplay on the website.

www.stakbots.com