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SKUTE



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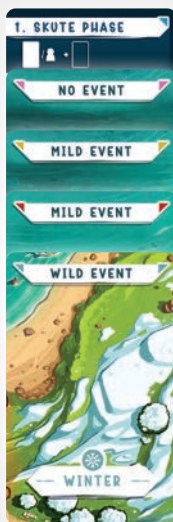
INTRODUCTION

Below the surface of the North Sea dwell the cheekiest and most colourful of creatures. But don't let their charm deceive you. With fabled precision these legendary seafolk strike with fin and fang, plundering the vessels above. As the winds howl and the waves crash, each season brings even greater challenges. For those who survive, what name will they speak, and of which ocean clans will they sing of for ages to come?

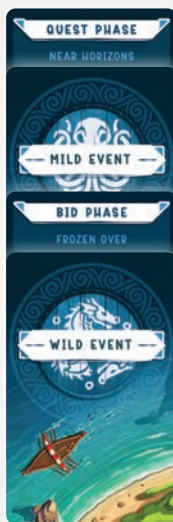
CARDS



72 Seafolk:
1-12 in each
Clan



5 Game Aids:
1 Phase
4 Season



30 Events:
20 Mild
10 Wild



30 Skutes:
1-30

SETUP

Create the 4x2 display of cards seen below using the 5 Game Aids (with the Phase Aid on its correct side for the players in the game), 2 random facedown Mild Events, and 1 random facedown Wild Event. Return all other Event Cards to the box.

Shuffle all Skutes into a facedown Draw Pile.

If playing with fewer than 6 players, return all Dusk Seafolk to the box. If playing with fewer than 5 players, also return all Clip Seafolk. Shuffle all remaining Seafolk into a facedown Draw Pile.



All 2 player rules are contained within grey boxes like this one. Ignore these boxes if learning for 3-6 players.

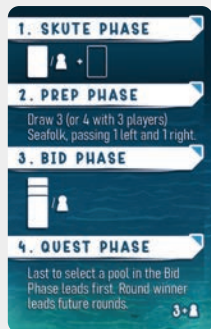
GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

A game of Skute is played over 4 Seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Each Season players will first bid to gain various Seafolk to their hand and Cave. Then they will attempt to play out all Seafolk from their hand before their opponents in order to sink the best Skutes. After 4 Seasons, the player with the most valuable collection of sunken Skutes will be declared the winner!

Looking for an easier first game when teaching new players? See the First-Play Variant on the back of this rulebook.

SEASON FLOW

During Summer, Autumn and Winter first reveal the Event that was placed directly above the current Season. There is no Event above Spring, and therefore no Event to reveal during the first Season.



Once revealed, Events remain active for the rest of the game, not just the current Season.

Each Season steps through the same 4 phases outlined on the Phase Aid:

1. Skute Phase
2. Prep Phase
3. Bid Phase
4. Quest Phase

1. SKUTE PHASE



From the top of the Skute Draw Pile, place out the indicated number of Skutes in a row for all players to see.

This is always 1 faceup Skute per player, plus 1 facedown Skute. Here is a 4 player example:



For 2 players, instead create 3 separate pools of Skutes. The first pool has 2 faceup Skutes. The other 2 pools each have 1 faceup Skute and 1 facedown Skute. For example:



At all player counts, if all faceup Skutes share a common sail colour, shuffle all placed Skutes back into the Draw Pile, and place out a new batch of Skutes.

In the 2 player example above, all 4 faceup Skutes have purple on their sails, and would therefore need to be reset.

2. PREP PHASE



During this Phase players gain starting hands of Seafolk. Each player draws 3 Seafolk (4 in games with only 3 players) from the top of the Draw Pile. All players then pass 1 Seafolk from their hand to the player on their left, and 1 to the player on their right.

For 2 players, both players instead draw 6 Seafolk. They select 2 of these to discard facedown, keeping 4 Seafolk in hand.

3. BID PHASE



During this phase, players use their hand of Seafolk to bid for even more Seafolk, and to form their Caves. Caves are an extension of a player's hand during the Quest Phase. This will be explained in more detail shortly.

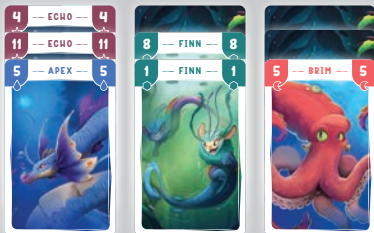
Each Bid Phase goes through 3-4 rounds of bidding (depending on the player count) until the Seafolk Draw Pile is empty. To set up each round of the Bid Phase, create pools of Seafolk revealed from the top of the Draw Pile into the centre of the play area.



There must be 1 pool of 3 faceup Seafolk per player in the game. For example, 4 pools of 3 Seafolk each in a 4 player game.



For 2 players, instead create 3 pools. The first pool has 3 faceup Seafolk. The second pool has 2 faceup and 1 facedown Seafolk. The third pool has 1 faceup and 2 facedown Seafolk.



The pools for 2 players should look similar to this.

Once the pools have been created, players bid to each claim 1 of the available pools.

Making Bids

Each player selects 1 Seafolk from their hand, and places it facedown in front of them. Once all players have done so, all players reveal their facedown bids.

The player who bid using the highest valued Seafolk claims any 1 pool, and places all its Seafolk into their hand. Then the player with the next highest Seafolk claims a pool, and so on.

If multiple players bid using Seafolk of the same value, ties are broken in favour of the stronger ranked clans.

Apex  (strongest)
 Brim 
 Clip 
 Dusk 
 Echo 
 Finn  (weakest)

Tip: Both the clan's initial (A-F), and its icon's points (1-6) serve as a reminder for how it ranks against other clans.

Forming Caves

After claiming a pool, players must place the Seafolk they used for their bid into their Cave. Each Seafolk added here must be placed faceup on top of any existing Seafolk in such a way that all Seafolk are still visible. Here is an example of a Cave with 3 Cards:



Here we can see the history of this player's bids over 3 rounds: a Clip 8, Echo 9, and an Apex 9.

Caves are an extension of a player's hand during the Quest Phase. Since players will usually only be able to play Seafolk from the top of their Cave, the order in how they form their Cave can be important (see page 11).

End of a Bidding Round

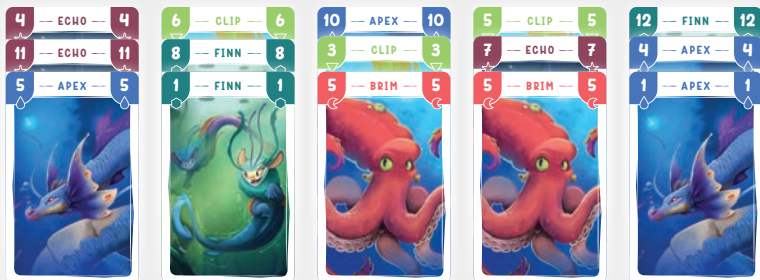
Once all players have claimed a pool, and added to their Cave, a new round of bidding begins. Follow all the same steps for the new round and for future rounds. Seafolk claimed from pools can be used for bidding in future rounds of the same Bid Phase.

In 2 player games, discard the unselected pool each round without revealing any Seafolk that were facedown.

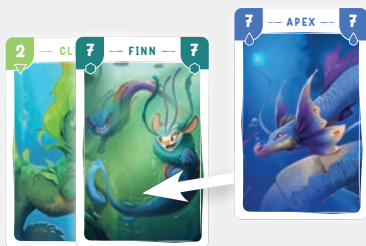
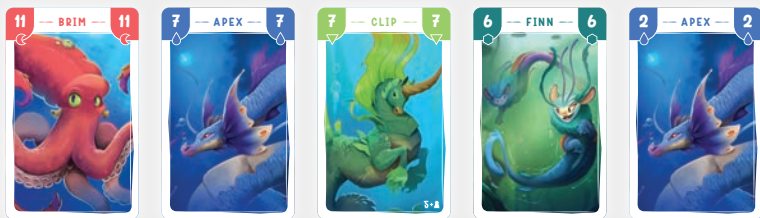
After 3-4 rounds of bidding, play will proceed into the Quest Phase. This will be when there are no Seafolk left in the Draw Pile. At this point, all players should have 3-4 Seafolk in their Cave, and a bunch of Seafolk in their hand.

Bid Phase Example

Below are the 5 pools consisting of 3 faceup Seafolk each for this final round of bidding in a 5 player game.



Here are the 5 bids made by the players, which have been sorted left to right in order from the highest bid to the lowest bid:



Acting second, this player selects 1 of the 4 remaining pools when it is their turn, adding all 3 Seafolk to their hand. They also place their Apex 7 used to bid into their Cave, joining their Seafolk from the previous 2 rounds of bidding.

4. QUEST PHASE



During this phase, players are aiming to play out all Seafolk from their hand before their opponents in order to sink the best Skutes. Players may also seek to clear their Cave of its Seafolk, but this is not usually required.

Each Quest Phase goes through a number of rounds. For each round, the “lead” plays a group of 1 or more Seafolk of the same value in front of them. The next player in clockwise order can then either play a group with the same number of Seafolk of a higher value, or pass. Once they pass, a player is out of the current round. Players are always allowed to pass, even if they could legally play.



For example, if a player played this group of 2 Seafolk, the next player would also have to play a group of 2 Seafolk, or pass. If they were to play a group, their group would need to be of a value higher than 4.

The round ends only once all but 1 player has passed. In this way, it is possible for players to play multiple groups of Seafolk during a single round. The player who did not pass (they placed the last group of Seafolk) is declared the winner of the round.

The Lead

For the first round, the last player to select a pool of Seafolk in the final round of the Bid Phase takes the lead. For future rounds, the player who won the last round takes the lead.

End of a Quest Round

When a round ends, discard all Seafolk that were played during the round, and then proceed into a new round of playing Seafolk.

Playing a Group

A group is 1 or more Seafolk of the same value. When playing a group, Seafolk can come from a player's hand or Cave, in any combination. The only guiding rule is that Seafolk can only be played out from the tops of Caves.



In the example above, this player has the Brim 9 in hand, and the Apex 9 and Echo 9 in their Cave. If they wanted to play a group of 9s, they would have the following options available:

- Play the Brim 9 from their hand
- Play the Apex 9 from their Cave.
- Play the Brim 9 together with the Apex 9 from their Cave.
- Play the Apex 9 together with the Echo 9 from their Cave.
- Play all 3 of their 9s together.

Notice that while Seafolk can only be played from the top of a Cave, those below are immediately available to be played as part of the same group.

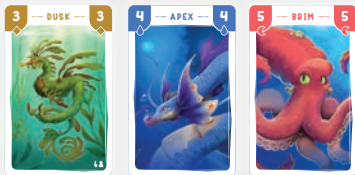
Runs

Any time 3 consecutive groups are played during a round that feature the same clan, a clan run is initiated.



In the example above, 3 Apex and 3 Echo have been played consecutively. Any future groups played this round would also need to feature Apex and Echo.

Any time 3 consecutive groups are played during a round that each increase in value by 1, a number run is initiated.



In this example, numbers 3, 4, and 5 have been played consecutively. The next Seafolk to be played must be a 6, then a 7, and so on.

Once a run has been initiated, all future groups played during the round must continue the run. If a player cannot continue the run, they must pass. It is possible for multiple clan runs to be initiated, and for both clan runs and number runs to be in play during the same round.

Emptying Caves

If a player empties all Seafolk from their Cave while still having at least 1 Seafolk in hand, they may secretly look at any 1 facedown Skute. If they empty both their Cave and their hand at the same time (by playing a group of multiple Seafolk), they cannot look at a facedown Skute.

Emptying Hands

Once a player empties their hand of Seafolk, they immediately sink any 1 remaining Skute, and discard any Seafolk still in their Cave. They no longer take any turns during the Quest Phase. Players keep their sunken Skutes facedown in front of them.

In 2 player games, both players will sink a pool of 2 Skutes.

Players often empty their hands mid-round. Be sure to continue the current round to determine a winner. If a player emptied their hand and also won the round, the player to their left is the lead for the next round. Players can sink faceup or facedown Skutes. Players can look at their own facedown Skutes, but do not have to reveal them to other players.

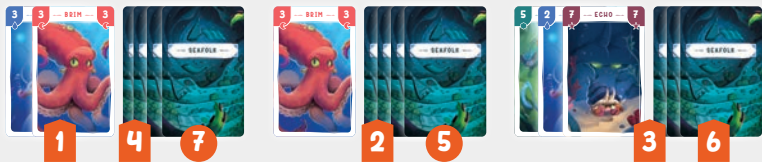
End of the Quest Phase

Once all but 1 player has emptied their hand, the last remaining player discards their hand and Cave, and sinks a remaining Skute. Place any unselected Skutes facedown at the bottom of the Skute Draw Pile.

If this was Spring, Summer, or Autumn, shuffle all Seafolk Cards back into a new Draw Pile for the next Season.

Quest Phase Example

After a few rounds of play, the 3 players have the following Seafolk in their hands and Caves remaining:



1. The lead plays down a group of 2 3s from their Cave. As this has emptied their Cave of Seafolk, they may immediately look at any 1 facedown Skute.
2. The second player follows with a group of 2 6s from their hand.
3. The third player continues with 2 7s - 1 from their hand and 1 from their Cave.
4. Returning to the lead, they play 2 8s from their hand, which initiates a number run (6, 7, 8...).
5. The second player cannot play 9s, and therefore must pass.
6. The third player plays 2 9s, which were the last 2 Seafolk in their hand. They select a Skute to sink, and discard the 2 remaining Seafolk from their Cave.
7. The lead could still play 2 10s if they had them available, but they choose not to. They will also remain the lead for the next round of the Quest Phase.

END OF THE GAME



The game ends after the Quest Phase of Winter. All players reveal their collection of sunken Skutes, and add up their values. The player with the highest total is the winner! In the case of a tie, all tied players share the victory.

EVENTS



Once revealed, Events remain active for the rest of the game, not just the current Season. So by Winter, both Mild Events, and the Wild Event will be active.

Events change up the rules of the game. They often allow new ways to play Seafolk, add an interesting restriction, or modify how pools are formed each round. Each Event also specifies if it is active during the Bid Phase or Quest Phase.

Unless specified, Events can also break certain rules. In these cases, Event rules take priority over the basic rules.

ADVANCED VARIANT



For a more advanced variant, try adding in 1-2 faceup Mild Events during Spring. These will persist across all 4 Seasons. These can be selected to create a certain preferred ruleset, or placed randomly.

FIRST-PLAY VARIANT



When teaching the game to new players, this variant can be used to slowly introduce new rules each Season. Unless specified below, follow all other rules as normal.

Game Setup

Do not place a Mild Event above Summer (leave that space empty).

Spring

Deal out all Seafolk evenly amongst players in the Prep Phase (discarding 20 facedown for 2 player games).

Skip the Bid Phase. This Season is purely to teach players how Seafolk are played during the Quest Phase to sink Skutes. Players do not have Caves for this Quest Phase

Randomly determine a first player.

Summer

No Mild Event is revealed. Teach how the standard Prep Phase, Bid Phase and Caves work.

Autumn & Winter

All standard rules are now in play.