

Example of Combat

El Blind Monkey (5)
vs. **El Diablo Azul** (4).

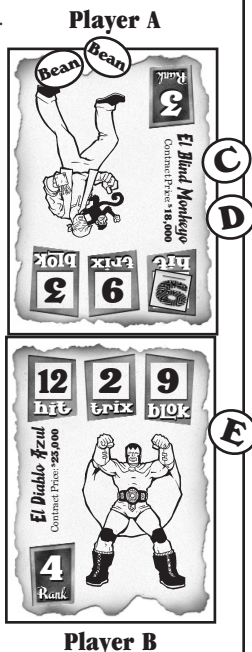
El Blind Monkeyo started the game as rank 3, but two beans have made him rank 5. He also has a tile left from a previous bout.

Draw: Player A drew 1 tile, Player B drew 2 because his fighter was of lower rank.

Side Bets: Players C and D bet on El Blind Monkeyo, Player E bet on El Diablo Azul.

Side Pot: \$15,000
(3 side bettors).

First Move: Player A is losing, so he may play the first tile. He may also pass or forfeit.



About the Counters:

A long time ago, when jokes about the Internet were still funny, a man named John Nephew made a game called Spammers. It was about hackers and spam and the Internet, and it was a fine little game. But John made more counter sheets for that game than he was ever going to need.

One day, while staring at his surplus of Spammers counters, John Nephew mused: "If I were James Ernest, I would write a game that uses these pieces." But several years later, he had made no progress in this direction.

Then John Nephew thought, "I'm not James Ernest, but I know someone who is!" And thus, for the price of shipping, James Ernest became the custodian of 5,000 sheets of Spammers counters. And, after several more years, he's finally constructed the perfect game for them. Perfect, except that the art on the counters has nothing at all to do with the game.

Players who made winning side bets collect their share of the side pot, and if no one bet on the winner, that money also goes into the purse.

If the match ends in a *perfect tie*, then all side bets are off, no one dies, no one pays, and both fighters go home with a bean.

Beans: When a fighter wins a fight, he gets a "bean," a counter that sits on his card and permanently increases that fighter's rank by 1. The Fighter's combat values and contract price do not change, just his rank.

There is no upper limit to the rank a fighter can attain by earning beans. There is no benefit to gaining beans; one's rank simply determines who can challenge whom, and who (if anyone) draws a bonus tile at the beginning of a fight. By attaining higher rank and a stronger reputation, a weak fighter can more readily be challenged by fighters who can easily beat him.

Winning: The game ends when one player has no fighters in play, and can't play another from his hand.

To win, you must have the most money when the game ends. However, before counting your money you must *pay for all your fighters*, even those still in your hand.

At the end of the game, players must pay the contract price of all their surviving fighters (those on the table), and must also pay a "kill fee," equal to *half* the contract price, for all the fighters left in their hands. Deduct these amounts from your stake, and the player with the most money wins.

If there is a tie for most money, the tie is settled by a contest of strength. Each player hits the others as hard as he can until only one remains standing.

Secret Tijuana Deathmatch

Secret Tijuana Deathmatch was designed by **James Ernest**. Art by **Cheyenne Wright**. Playtesting by the usual assortment of bankrupt and suicidal American guinea pigs, including but not limited to Rick Collins, Rick Fish, Julie Haehn, Dave Howell, Blue Haired Steve, Toivo Rovainen, Cathy Saxton, Tom Saxton, Tonya Winter, and Eric Yarnell. ©2005 James Ernest and Cheapass Games, www.cheapass.com.



Welcome to Tijuana, where bankrupt and suicidal American businessmen come to drown their sorrows in tequila, end their wasted lives, and/or somehow earn back the riches they have squandered. They accomplish that last bit by fighting in secret and lucrative deathmatches.

Okay, perhaps not many of them are aware of the deathmatch option, but as an unscrupulous wrestling promoter, it's your job to apprise them.

Each year you and a cadre of fellow sophisticates venture into the untamed wilds of the United States to recruit five desperate wrestlers and bring them home. To fight, to win, and probably to die. It may be sordid, but it pays the bills.



What Comes With This Game:

- 36 fighter cards
- Sheet of cardboard tiles
- A small plastic bag for storing the tiles
- These rules

What Else You Need:

- Money, in denominations of \$1,000 and up (or you may use \$1 to mean \$1,000, and so on)
- One unique betting token for each player
- Some beans (about 20)

Setup: If this is your first time playing, separate all the tiles from their frame. Put the tiles in the game box, or into another box or bag, and mix them.

Before the game, each player draws two random tiles to start his collection. Tiles are secret, like a hand of cards, but the *number* of tiles you hold is not a secret.

Give each player a colored token, which will be used for betting, and a stake of \$100,000. Put the rest of the money into a bank.

The Draft: To begin the game, each player drafts a stable of five fighters. This represents a trip to the United States on which you convince another year's crop of foolish and suicidal businessmen to jump on the deathmatch train.

To begin the draft, shuffle the deck and deal 6 cards to each player. Each player keeps *one* card from these six, and passes the other five to his left. Place the card you keep face down on the table in front of you.

This process repeats, with players taking one card and passing to the left, until each player has drafted a total of five fighters. When you have only one card to pass, discard it instead.

The cards each player has kept now become his hand. The discarded fighters, and any others left in the deck, will not be used.

Each player places one fighter face down on the table, and these cards are then revealed together. The player who played the highest-priced fighter will take the first turn, and from this point the turn will proceed to the left. If there is a tie for highest price, it is broken by highest Hit value.

About the Fighter Cards: Each fighter has the following five statistics: **Hit**, **Trix**, **Blok**, **Contract Price**, and **Rank**.

Hit, **Trix**, and **Blok** are combat stats, used in determining which fighter wins a fight. Number tiles can be played to change these values.

Contract Price is the price that you have promised the fighter if he survives the wrestling season, but is also the amount you risk each time you enter him in a match. Essentially, whether the fighter lives or dies, this price is the money you have agreed to pay for him.

Rank is a rating based on the fighter's combat stats, and it determines who can challenge whom. A fighter's rank increases by one point each time he wins a fight, and this is tracked by adding a bean to the card. Ranks start between 1 and 5.

Replacing Fighters: Whenever a player has no fighter on the table, he *must immediately* play another fighter from his hand. This happens as soon as his last fighter dies, and does not require a turn. When a player has no fighters in play and none in his hand, the game ends.

Turns: On your turn, you must take exactly *one* of the following four actions:

(1) **Play another Fighter.** Play another fighter from your hand onto the table. This ends your turn.

(2) **Pick a "Fair Fight":** Choose one fighter on the table (owned by someone else) whose rank is *equal to or greater than* one of yours, and start a fight between those two fighters. The fighter you select can't refuse the challenge, though he can forfeit the match. Fighting is described below.

(3) **Make a Call for Victims:** If you make a Call for Victims, first specify which of your fighters is doing the calling-out. In turn, starting on your

left, opponents may put forward one or more of their fighters to accept your challenge. Only fighters who are *smaller* than yours (by rank) are allowed to accept. You may then fight any single challenger from those who stepped forward.

If no one steps forward, or if there are no legal challengers on the table, you draw two tiles and end your turn.

(4) **Manage Your Tiles:** You may discard any number of tiles (or even none), and draw the same number of replacements. In addition, after swapping your tiles, you may draw one more tile for \$5,000. Managing your tiles ends your turn.



Fights: When two fighters enter a fight, their owners can play tiles to help decide who wins, and all other players make side bets on the outcome. To begin, put both fighters in the center of the table, head to head, so that each fighter's Hit aligns with his enemy's Blok, and each fighter's Trix lines up with his opponent's Trix. (See the last page.)

Each player draws one tile before the fight begins. If the fighters are *not* the same rank, the lower ranked fighter draws a *second* tile.

Side Bets: Each player who is not in the fight must make a side bet on the fight. Betting goes in turn, starting on the left of the player who called this fight. To bet, simply place your betting token beside whichever fighter you think will win. Side betting does not cost anything, but it does pay money to the players who choose correctly.

The total prize money for the side bets is called the "side pot" and is equal to \$5,000 per bettor. For example, in a 5-player game there will always be 3 players betting on the side, and thus \$15,000 in the side pot. This money comes from the bank.

The side pot will be divided as equally as possible (to the nearest thousand) among all players who bet on the winner, with the remainder going back to the bank. If no one bets on the winner, the side pot becomes part of the purse.

Purse: The Purse is equal to the contract price of the losing fighter, so it's not set until the fight is over. The *loser* of the fight must pay the *winner* the contract price of the losing fighter. For example, if Angela Skye, at left, loses a fight, her owner pays the winner \$17,000.

The Fight: To determine which fighter is winning, compare the values in all three columns: Hit vs. Blok, Blok vs. Hit, and Trix vs. Trix. If a player is winning in at least two columns, he wins, regardless of the difference. If he is winning in one column, and the other two are tied, he wins. If there is a tie for number of columns, *then* the fighter who is beating the other by more total points wins. (It is also possible to have a perfect tie, described below.)

Whoever is *losing* the fight will take the first turn in the fight. If the fight *begins* as a perfect tie, determine randomly who will play first, but only after all side bets have been placed.

Forfeit: After the side bets are placed, but before the first tile is played, the player who would normally go first may *forfeit* the match instead of playing a tile. If he does this, the fight is immediately lost, but both fighters live. All bets, including side bets, are paid as usual. The player who goes second in the fight can *not* forfeit.

Proceeding with the Fight: In turn, players may either pass, or play one tile as follows. Passing does not knock you out of the fight; you can pass on one round and still play on the next.



Number Tiles: These range from 1 to 12 and can be played on top of any combat stat (on your side or your opponent's) that *does not have a tile on it already*. The tile's number replaces the one on the card.



Swearing Tiles: These are *erasers*. They can remove a number tile from either side.



Money Tile ("Cash"): The Money Tile adds \$5,000 to the purse for this fight, which comes from the bank.



Lips Tile ("Tell Me A Secret"): The Lips tile allows you to look at your opponent's tiles, and then to immediately draw another tile.



Computer Tile ("System Error"): The Computer tile allows you to rearrange all the number tiles on the fighters. (Rearrange, not discard.) Tiles can be moved from any spot to any other. This is a very powerful tile once there are a few number tiles in play.



Junk Tile ("Supplies!"): The Junk tile stops the fight immediately. Note that this tile is only useful if you are already winning the fight!

Except for the number tiles, all tiles return to the box as soon as they are played.

The fight continues until a Junk tile is played, or until both players pass. As mentioned above, passing does not necessarily drop you out of the fight.

After the Fight: The loser of the fight is killed, and is discarded along with any number tiles remaining on him. The winner returns to his owner's side of the table, *retaining* any number tiles that are still on him. He will carry those tiles into his next battle.

The loser of the fight pays to the winner an amount equal to the contract price of the losing fighter (the purse).