Dueling Runes

Designed by	Jorge Arroyo
Players	2 (Works with 1-4)
Length	20m
Extra Material	Some markers, a die for each player

A game of spell casting and dueling.

Introduction

This game depicts a battle between 2 (or more) wizards that cast spells at each other by using rune runes with different energy bolts. Each suit in the deck/set represents a rune. Cards can have from 1 to 3 runes that wizards can use in their spells.

Two types of runes

First, there are the Energy Runes: Suns, Waves and Leaves. These runes are used to power up different type of spells, but by themselves don't produce any effect.

Then there are the Activation Runes: Moons, Wyrms, Knots. They draw power from earlier energy runes to produce a variety of magical effects.

Basically, the type of activation rune determines how the energy is used, specifically:

- Moon Runes direct energy at the caster. These spells are usually about protection/healing
- Wyrm Runes violently direct the energy at a target. These spells usually damage the target in some way.
- Knot Runes weave the energy to create more elaborate spells that can be directed to anyone.

Spell Sequences

Each turn, players choose a card secretly and then reveal it at the same time.

Each player then plays the card face up in front of them. If there are cards already on the table in front of them, the new card is placed over the old one but displaced a bit to the right, so the suits from older cards can be seen. This is the spell sequence.

The Runes from the cards a player has on the table can be used as energy for one spell that can be activated by an Activation Rune played on the current turn. So spells cannot be activated using activation runes from earlier turns, while energy remains and can be used for later turns. Multiple spells can be activated in a turn as long as they use different runes, so each energy rune can only power one spell up each turn and each activation rune can only activate one spell per turn.

There is a limit of 4 cards on the spell sequence, so older cards get discarded as new ones are played.

Setup

Shuffle the decktet (including pawns but leave the Excuse out). Place the excuse around the middle of the deck and then deal each player 5 cards. Leave the decktet within easy reach for all the players.

Each player gets a 12 sided die (or 12 generic markers) and places it in front of them showing the largest numbered side. The die represents the wizard's health points. (If players of different skill are playing together, consider lowering the starting health points for the more experienced player).

A variety of markers can be used to represent spell effects that remain for more than one turn. Color Beads, die, etc... (or just pen and paper).

Game play

Each turn all the players secretly choose a card (unless a player is "confused" see below). When everyone is ready they all reveal it simultaneously and place it on their spell sequence to the right of their last placed card, so that suits from all earlier cards can be seen.

After that, spell effects are resolved in this order: Moon Runes, Wyrm Runes, Knot Runes. If more than one player is casting a spell of the same type, the player that played the highest numbered card resolves their spell first. If two players activate a spell in the same phase with the same number on the card, they are considered simultaneous (so if both spells kill their targets, both players die and the game ends in a draw).

Spells are activated by specifying an Activation Rune from the card just played and stating what other energy runes from the whole spell sequence will be used to power it (including ones available on the card just played). If the last card played has two activation Runes or more, then more than one spell can be cast in this turn but each one must use different energy runes, as each one can only be used for one spell each turn.

Here are the spell effects for the Basic Game:

	Caster (Moons)	Enemy(Wyrms)	Spell (Knots)
Sun	Resist Cold	Fire Ball	Haste
Waves	Resist Heat	Ice Bolt	Invisibility
Leaves	Heal	Drain	Amnesia
Nothing	Shield	Hit	Confusion

Any activation rune + the other two activation runes used as energy = Counter Spell
Any activation rune + one other activation rune used as energy = Counter Magic Mirror

- Resist Cold - The caster is immune to cold attacks for as many turns as activated Sun Runes. Player is protected starting this turn.
- Resist Heat - The caster is immune to heat attacks for as many turns as activated Waves Runes. Player is protected this turn.
- Heal - The caster immediately recovers as many health points as leaves activated.
- Shield - The caster is protected from: Hit, Confusion and Drain spells this turn
- Fire Ball - The target loses as many hit points as suns activated (unless protected from Heat)
- Ice Bolt - The target loses as many hit points as waves activated (unless protected from Cold)
- Drain - The target loses as many hit points as leaves activated and the caster recovers the same number of points (unless a Shield is in effect).
- Hit - The target loses one hit point (unless a Shield is in effect).
- Haste - The target gets to play two cards each turn for as many turns (starting next turn) as suns activated. The first card will be solved by the all the players under a haste spell first, and then the second one will be solved with everyone else. So players under this spell get an extra mini-turn to cast spells or play energy runes before the regular turn is solved.
- Invisibility - The target cannot get targeted by anyone else for as many turns as waves activated. Player is still visible starting next turn but might be a bit rusty. Player is also invisible if targeted with a knots spell or a Poker-Equal Vase with the new spell visible (if targeted with a knots spell or a Poker-Equal Vase the caster turns face down on this spells from the target's spell sequence as leaves activated. Caster can choose which cards. The face down cards remain in the sequence but cannot be used by the wizard. They leave play normally when enough turns have passed. Note that if due to timing rules the target of the Amnesia spell has his last played card turned face down before he was able to activate a spell with that card, that spell is lost (This can happen if it's a knot card with a lower value than the card used for the Amnesia spell).
- Confusion - The target has to randomly place his card next turn.

Special Spells

These two spells are casted with runes from the hand of the player. The player must discard a number of cards containing at least one of each required rune. These spells can be cast at any time during a turn.

- Counter Spell: The target of this spell will not be affected by spells cast on them (either by their opponent or themselves) this turn. This works for all Moons and Knots spells plus the drain spell (the other damaging spells do their damage by physical means).
- Magic Mirror: Any effect cast on the target is reversed and is instead applied to the caster with the original target being considered the new "caster". The reflected spell works normally and can be stopped by the usual spells, even a Counter Spell and another Magic Mirror (Fire Ball is still stopped by Resist Heat, etc...)

After all the activated effects have taken place, players draw up to 2 cards so their hand never exceeds the maximum total of 5 cards. Any player that has more than three cards on their spell sequence, must remove the oldest card (or cards) so that only three cards remain there. Then a new turn is started.

Whenever a player draws the Excuse, the remaining cards are shuffled together with the discard pile to make a new draw deck. Then the Excuse is placed around the middle of the deck.

The End

When only one living wizard remains, the game ends and that player wins the game.

Variants

Solitaire: The game can be played solo by playing the opponent's cards randomly from the deck. This may not make for a very challenging opponent, so playing solitaire with the cards face down and then checking the results later can be challenging. Opponent spells should be decided fairly by the player when activated (so if the opponent has a choice between shooting a fire ball or an ice bolt and you are protected against heat, they won't choose a fire ball).

Also, if you confuse the random player, draw a card normally but if you don't like it, you can redraw once. The second card must be used.

My guidelines for the random player are:

	Moons	Suns	Knots
1-6 hp	heal then protection (depending on player's spell sequence)	attack only if can't use moons or knots deflectively	only if can't heal: invisibility if possible, then haste. Else use wyrms if possible and if not, amnesia/confusion.
7-12 hp	if not wyrms/knots then heal only if necessary, else protection or shield	attack if possible with most damaging spell	only if no wyrms: first agressive then defensive

Multiplayer: I think multiplayer games won't be a problem. The main difference is that there are more potential targets for offensive spells. Players should announce the targets as the spells are activated (in the correct order). The game gains a diplomatic aspect lacking in the 2-player version.

Note that if two or more players have to decide on a target simultaneously (because they used the same number on their played card) you can use some colored tokens to decide secretly and then show them at the same time.

Advanced Game: The advanced game has more spells that can be casted with combinations of energy spells. For example, a lighting bolt spell using sun and moons as energy and wyrm as activation. This variant is not yet done and ideas are welcomed.

Here's a posible table of advanced spells:

	Caster (Moons)	Enemy(Wyrms)	Spell (Knots)
Sun + Waves	Summon Troll	Lightning Bolt	Electric Touch
Sun + Leaves	Summon Fire Elemental	Fear	Remove Enchantment
Waves + Leaves	Summon Ice Elemental	Poison	Magic Mirror
Sun+Waves+Leaves	Protection	Charm	Dispel Magic

- Summon Troll - Brings a monster that sides with the caster. It has as many health points as Waves used and does as many damage points to a target of the owner's choice as suns were used to cast it. Hits can be deflected by the shield spell
- Summon Fire Elemental - Brings a monster that sides with the caster. It has as many health points as leaves used and does as many damange points to a target of the owner's choice as suns were used to cast it. Its attacks can be deflected by the resist heat spell.
- Summon Ice Elemental - Same as Fire Elemental but using waves instead of Fire
- Protection - The Caster is shielded (like with the shield spell) for as many turns as the number of suns, waves and leaves used for the spell.
- Lightning Bolt - Does as much damage to the target as the total number of suns used for the spell. Can only be countered with Counter Spell or Dispel Magic.
- Fear - For as many turns as leaves in the spell, the target cannot use a wyrm rune (too afraid to attack). If cast on a monster, the monster cannot attack.
- Poison - For as many turns as Waves in the spell, the target loses 1 point of damage per leaves in the spell
- Charm - For as many turns as Leaves in the spell, the caster plays a card (and draws one more at the end) instead of the target choosing a card. If cast on a monster, its owner changes to the caster.
- Electric Touch - For as many turns as waves on the spell, any physical attack on the target produces one point of damage to the attacker (applies to Hit and monster attacks). It doesn't prevent the damage to the target.
- Remove Enchantment - Any spells that are in effect on the target are removed. This includes Protection, Resist heat or cold, invisibility, etc... If casted on a monster, it disappears.
- Magic Mirror - Any spells that have been casted that turn on the target are applied instead to the caster. Reverse the effects of the affected spells and apply them to the new target. Example, Player A casts FireBall, and does 2 damage to player B. Then Player B casts Magic Mirror and recovers their 2 points while damaging player A with 2 points.
- Dispel Magic - Like Remove Exchantment but applies to everyone. All the monsters are removed from play too.

Credits

The game was designed by Jorge Arroyo and is loosely based on Waving Hands by Richard Bartle.

Thanks to P.D. Magnus and tsilver33 for playtesting the game.

Links

- BGG Entry for Dueling Runes
- Dueling Runes in Pocket Mod format.
- Duelo de Runas - Wiki page for the Spanish translation

Comments

show comments

page revision: 30, last edited:

Unless stated otherwise Content of this page is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Sharealike 3.0 License

Table of Contents

fold

Introduction
Two types of runes
Spell Sequences
Setup
Game play
Special Spells
The End
Variants
Credits
Links
Comments