

# Pieces of Eight™

Adventure and glory await you in *Pieces of Eight*, the rousing combat game of rival buccaneer ships on the high seas. You play the game with a stack of metal pirate coins held in one hand that represents your ship. The coins you choose and the order in which you place them determine your ship's strengths, and you use the special abilities of your coins to destroy your opponent's coins one by one. Your goal is to expose the Captain coin buried deep in the middle of your adversary's ship, then take him out!

This set includes all the coins needed for one player to construct his own ship. Your opponents will each need their own ship set to play, but there's no other limit to the number of players who can join in. The coins in each set are not randomized; you can combine ship sets to gain a wider selection of coins and the advantage over your foes.

*Pieces of Eight* is designed for ages 10 and up, and takes 10 to 30 minutes to play. Each ship set includes a rulebook, 16 coins, and a velvet game bag. Some coins mentioned in this rulebook may not appear in your particular set.

## SETUP

Before playing, follow these steps:

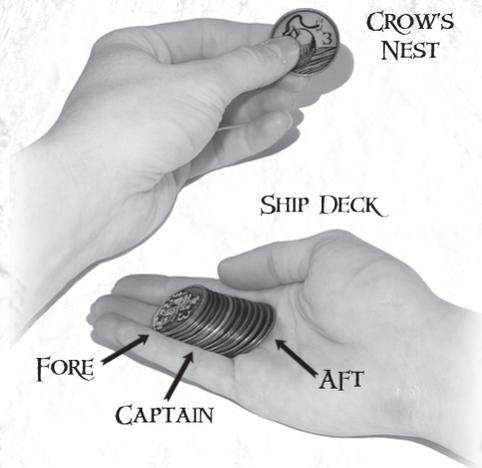
Choose 13 legal coins from your *shipyard*, which is the collection of coins available only to you to build your *ship*. Not every player's ship needs to have — or should have — the same coins; that's part of the fun! As long as your ship doesn't violate the following three rules, you can choose any combination of coins you want.

- A ship must have exactly 13 coins.
- A ship must have exactly one Captain (gold-colored coin).
- You can't include more copies of a particular coin in your ship than is that coin's limit, which is printed on the coin.

Pick one of your 13 coins to start in your off hand as your *crow's nest*, then secretly arrange the other 12 in any order you like in your dominant hand to form your *deck*. (Think "ship's deck," not "deck of cards.") Be sure that each coin's heads face — the side with unique art as opposed to the common tail face — is facing away from the Captain. This allows the coins to be identified easily during play. The coin

nearest your fingers is your *fore* coin, and the one nearest your wrist is your *aft* coin.

When all the players are ready, everyone stands or sits in a circle. The first player who finished arranging his coins and announced it out loud begins the game. Play proceeds clockwise around the circle.



## GAME PLAY

Each player's turn has three phases. First, you may *send a coin to the crow's nest*. Then you must either *play a coin*, *call coins to your Captain*, or *destroy your crow's nest coin*. Finally, you have another chance to *send a coin to the crow's nest*, again at your option. You're allowed to look through the coins in your own deck at any time, but you can't change their order unless a coin ability allows it.

### 1. FIRST CROW'S NEST PHASE

At the beginning of your turn, if you have no crow's nest coin (probably because it was destroyed on another player's turn), you may send a coin to the crow's nest by moving either your fore coin or your aft coin to your crow's nest hand. You aren't required to send a coin to the crow's nest, though — you may continue without a crow's nest coin, which means that your opponents can't use coin abilities that target your crow's nest.

### 2. MAIN PLAY PHASE

Next, you must do one of three things: *play a coin*, *call coins to your Captain*, or *destroy your crow's nest coin*. If you can't do one of these, you're eliminated from the game — there is no passing.

**Play a Coin:** You play a coin by declaring which one of your three *active* coins — crow's nest, fore, or aft — you've chosen to play, then following the rules for that coin's ability to resolve it. You can't use a coin's ability unless it's in one of these three active positions.

All players are allowed to see all other players' crow's nest and fore coins at all times; they're called *open* coins for this reason. But your aft coin is kept secret, concealed against your palm, until you're ready to use it. To use your aft coin, you must show it to the other players when you declare it.

If a coin is destroyed, take it out of your ship and place it in the velvet pouch provided with this game, which is your *hold*. It's out of the game, and is no longer considered part of your ship. You can look through the coins in your hold any time, but other players are only allowed to see them if you allow it.

When a deck is reduced to one coin, that coin is considered both the fore coin and the aft coin for abilities that target either, but acts as the fore coin in that it's visible to other players.

**Call Coins to Your Captain:** You call coins to your Captain by taking your fore coin, your aft coin, or both and moving it (or them) in your deck so that they're adjacent to the Captain coin. The coin (or coins) pulled to the Captain may be placed either fore-ward or aft-ward of the Captain, or one on each side if you call two coins.

You choose which side of the Captain each pulled coin is placed on, and — if two coins are called and both are placed on the same side — the order in which they go.

You can't choose to call coins to your Captain if you have no Captain in play, or if your Captain is in your crow's nest. You also may not return your deck to the same configuration as before, which is possible when you have few coins remaining.

**Destroy Your Crow's Nest Coin:** You destroy your crow's nest coin by placing it in your hold. This has no effect other than emptying your crow's nest hand.

### 3. LAST CROW'S NEST PHASE

Finally, you may once again send a coin to your crow's nest if it's empty, at your option.

# COIN ABILITIES

Each type of coin in *Pieces of Eight* has a *limit* and an *ability*.

The number given after a coin's name below, and on each coin itself, is the coin's limit — the maximum number of that kind of coin allowed in your ship *when the game starts*. It's not illegal to exceed a coin's limit once play begins (by Pillaging, for example). The only exception is the Captain; you can *never* have more than one Captain in your ship during play.

A coin's ability is what it does. This is activated when the coin is played during the main play phase, or in reaction to some event in the game as described below.

**Barrel of Grog (1):** Destroy this coin to remove one coin of your choice from your hold and make it your aft coin.



- Barrel of Grog is not placed in your hold until after you remove the chosen coin.



**Black Spot (1):** If this coin is one of your active coins and an opponent destroys one of your open coins, you may reactively force that player to skip his next turn.

- This coin's ability can be used even if it is the coin being destroyed.
- If you choose the player whose turn it is now, his next turn *after this one* is lost.
- You can only use this coin once against a single action, even if that action destroys more than one of your coins.
- In a multi-player game where multiple players have the Black Spot, it is legal to "stack up" lost turns on a single victim.

**Bomb (3):** If you have an active Mate, destroy this coin to destroy both of a single player's open coins.



**Broadside (1):** Destroy any coin of your choice, whether it is active or not, except you may not destroy a Captain.

- As always, non-open coins are identified positionally rather than by name.

**Buried Treasure (1):** Destroy this coin to remove two coins at random from your hold, announce their identities, and put them at your deck's aft in either order, which you may keep secret.



- If using this coin gives you a second Captain, a different coin is randomly selected instead. The second Captain returns to your hold.
- If you only have one coin in your hold, it's returned to play unless another rule prevents it.
- Buried Treasure is not placed into your hold until after the coins (or coin) are removed.



## Call to Quarters (1):

Destroy this coin to take one random coin from your hold, add it back to your deck, and then turn your back and secretly rearrange all of the coins on your deck and crew's nest to any new configuration.

Call to Quarters is not placed in your hold until after you remove the random coin.

- Call to Quarters is not placed in your hold until after you remove the random coin.

## COIN POSITIONS

**Active Coins:** Your fore, aft, and crew's nest coins.

**Aft Coin:** The rear coin in your deck.

**Crew's Nest Coin:** The coin in your off hand.

**Deck:** The coin stack in your dominant hand.

**Fore Coin:** The front coin in your deck.

**Hold:** The velvet game pouch where destroyed coins are kept. You could also use your pocket.

**Open Coins:** Your fore and crew's nest coins, which are visible to everyone.

**Ship:** Your deck plus your crew's nest coin.

**Shipyard:** The collection of coins available only to you from which you build your ship.

**Cannon (3):** If this coin is in an open position, destroy a fore coin of your choice. If you have an additional open Cannon, you may also destroy the coin directly behind that fore coin at the same time. Furthermore, you may invite other players with open Cannons to contribute as well, with each additional Cannon allowing you to destroy another coin in line.



- All coins are destroyed at once. Coins behind the fore coin that are destroyed do not come to the fore before they're destroyed, so they can't (for example) use their abilities to react.
- A contributing player does not use a turn or action to help; he must simply agree to contribute. Assisting does not affect the assisting player's coin.

- You must commit to a target before contributing players announce whether they'll help. (You can discuss it beforehand, but actual commitment comes after your announcement.)
- A Captain's Monkey in the fore coin position can react to prevent its destruction as normal, but this does not shield any other coins behind it that might be destroyed due to contributing Cannons.



**Captain (1):** Destroy any active coin of your choice.

- Captains are a gold color. This means you can see which coin in anyone's deck is the Captain just by looking at the edge, which you're allowed to do at any time.
- A ship must start the game with one Captain.
- You can never have more than one Captain in your ship at a time. Any action that would cause this — such as Pillaging a Captain when you already have one — is illegal.

**Captain's Monkey (1):** Use this coin reactively, whenever it would be destroyed, to negate its destruction.



**Cutlass (3):** Destroy this coin to destroy any open coin of your choice; *or*, if you have an active Mate, destroy any open coin of your choice *without* destroying this coin.

**Full Sail (1):** If this coin is one of your active coins and an opponent destroys one of your open coins, you may reactively declare that your turn will be next when the current player's turn is over.



- This coin's ability can be used even if it is the coin being destroyed.
- This coin's ability can be used even if the destroyed coin is destroyed on your turn, in which case you take another turn immediately after this one.
- After you take your extra turn, play continues clockwise from your position in the circle.
- If you use this coin when you are due to lose your next turn, your lost turn takes place immediately and play proceeds clockwise from your position.



**Mate (5):** Destroy this coin to destroy any active coin of your choice.

**Pillage (3):** Destroy this coin to take an open coin belonging to any other player and place it in the aft of your own ship.



- Pillaged coins go to their most recent pillager's hold when destroyed.



**Pistols (3):** Destroy this coin to destroy any aft coin of your choice; *or*, if you have an active Mate, destroy any aft coin of your choice *without* destroying this coin.

**Treachery (2):** Destroy this coin reactively whenever any coin's ability is used in play. That action is negated and that coin is destroyed.



- This coin's ability can be used in response to actions that destroy it.
- Treachery may be played in response to another Treachery, in which case the first Treachery is negated and the original action (against which the first Treachery was played) occurs as originally announced. A third Treachery may also be played to negate the second Treachery, in which case the first Treachery still cancels the original action, and so forth, for any number of Treacheries.
- Treachery can be used against reactive abilities, such as when a Captain's Monkey negates its own destruction or a Full Sail changes the turn order. The action is negated as usual, the coin is destroyed, and play continues normally.
- When Treachery is used against coin "combinations," the entire action is negated, but only the coin whose ability was activated is destroyed by the Treachery, because only its ability was used. See "Coin Combinations."

## INTERACTIONS

Follow these guidelines to resolve coin interactions during your game.

### "DESTROY TO PLAY" COINS

Some coins are destroyed when they're played, while others are not, depending on what their abilities say. If a coin is not destroyed, it remains in place in your ship so it can be played again. If it is destroyed, place it in your hold. If the coin was at the aft, show it to the other players before putting it in your hold.

## REACTIVE COINS

A coin that can be played *reactively* can be played out of turn, in response to some event defined by that coin's ability, *whether the event affects you or not*. Reactive actions do not change who goes next unless the ability says so. If multiple players wish to react to the same event, only the first player to announce his reaction may do so. If two players shout out simultaneously, flip a coin.

A player may react to a reaction, and react to a reaction to a reaction, and so forth. When this happens, more-recent reactions are resolved before previous ones. This may, of course, negate prior reactions and allow the original action to go forward, which is usually the point.

A single coin can't react more than once on the same turn. For example, if a Captain's Monkey is destroyed, but reacts with its ability to negate its destruction, and then someone else uses Treachery to negate the Monkey's ability and also destroy the Monkey, the Monkey can't then "re-react" to stop itself from being destroyed by the Treachery.

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## TURN SUMMARY

- 1. First Crow's Nest Phase** (optional)  
Send the fore or aft coin to your crow's nest.
- 2. Main Play Phase** (choose one, no passing)
  - Play a coin, *or*
  - Call coins to your Captain, *or*
  - Destroy your crow's nest coin.
- 3. Last Crow's Nest Phase** (optional)  
Send the fore or aft coin to your crow's nest.

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## NEGATING ABILITIES

Some coins can *negate* the abilities of other coins, which means the negated ability does not take effect. So if a negated coin's ability called for it to be destroyed in order to be used, the coin is not destroyed because the entire ability has been nullified. However, the original player's turn is still used up.

For example, if one player attacks a second player with a Mate on his turn — an action that normally destroys the Mate after his attack has been resolved — and the second player uses Treachery to negate the Mate attack, (a) the Mate's attack does not result in the target of the attack being destroyed as it normally would, (b) the Mate itself is not destroyed, but (c) the first player may not act again, because his turn has been used.

## COIN COMBINATIONS

Some coin abilities work only when other coins are in particular positions. For example, the Bomb's ability is "If you have an active Mate, destroy this coin to destroy both of a single player's open coins." Although the Bomb and Mate seem like they're "working together," only the Bomb's ability is actually being used. The Mate's existence as an active coin is just a requirement for using the Bomb.

Sometimes an apparent "combination" is optional. For example, the Cannon's ability allows additional open Cannons to increase damage. Even in these cases, it's still only the first coin — the one whose ability was activated — that's using its ability. Even if five players with five different Cannons gang up in a single attack, it only takes one Treachery to stop the attack.

When a coin's ability relies on the existence of another active coin in a ship's aft, where it's hidden from other players, the aft coin must be shown when the action is announced.

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## DESTROYING HIDDEN COINS

You don't need to know the identity of a particular coin to destroy it. Unknown coins are targeted positionally. "I'm attacking your aft coin with my Pistols," for example, or "I'm attacking the third coin from your fore with my Broadside."

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## WINNING

The game ends and you win if, at any time, you're the only player with a Captain in your ship. So, in a two-player game, you win when you kill your opponent's Captain. However, in a multi-player game, a player who loses his Captain is not out of the game until his ship's last coin is destroyed, or until he surrenders and leaves the game. That is, you can continue to play even when you can't win, until someone else does win. If you don't have a Captain, turn your coins so that half face fore-ward and half face aft-ward. Note that it is possible to lose your Captain but later either recover it or take someone else's. This puts you back in the running for victory!

If all players still in the game ever agree that they've reached a stalemate, so that the game can continue indefinitely with no winner, each of them chooses one coin from his hold — not randomly, and it may be kept secret — adds it back into his deck, and rearranges his ship in secret. Play then continues, with the next turn going to a randomly determined player. In a two-player game, flip a coin. In a multi-player game, all players toss a coin at a central target and the closest goes first.

# PLAY OPTIONS

The following options can be introduced to add variety to *Pieces of Eight*.

## STARTING PLAYER BY COMPETITION

If you don't like letting the first player to arrange his deck go first, place one coin on the ground or table equidistant from all players. Then, each player tosses one coin at the first coin. Whoever's coin lands closest goes first.

## USING A TABLE

You don't need a table to play *Pieces of Eight* unless you want one, since there's nothing to put on it. But if you don't want to hold your coins all the time — if ye be needin' a free hand to swill yer grog, fer instance — there's nothing wrong with setting them down. Just place your crow's nest coin by itself on the table, heads side up, and your deck in a stack beside it with the fore coin at the top. Everyone can see your fore coin and your crow's nest coin all the time, and you can pick up your whole deck with one hand to see your aft coin or show it to others when you use it.

## TWO-PLAYER BLITZ

Two-player games of *Pieces of Eight* can be made more interesting with a chess timer set to give each player a relatively short amount of time — typically two to three minutes — to prevail. A player who runs out of time loses the game whether he has a Captain or not, though it's still possible to lose or be knocked out of the game in the normal way.

## MATCH PLAY

For two-player games, matches — best two of three games, or best three of five — are

recommended. Groups of more than two players can also try matches by playing until someone wins a pre-determined number of games to become the match winner.

In match play, all players *other than the last game's winner* may rebuild their ships from their shipyards before the next game begins. This allows players to react to the winning ship's coin composition, and encourages players to build ships that can win in different situations. All players — even the winner — can rearrange their decks and crow's nests before the beginning of the next game, though. Pillaged and destroyed coins are returned to their original owners' shipyards between games.

## NO HONOR AMONG PIRATES

For multi-player games with an even number of players, you can play team games. Six players could play three vs. three, or two vs. two vs. two, for example. A winning team is declared when it is the only team with at least one Captain left. When that happens, all the other players are out, and the winning team's survivors fight among themselves to determine the grand champion! Sure, it's great to be on the winning team, but don't let your teammates get too far ahead of you ...

## POOLING COINS

Each player normally has his own set of at least 16 coins from which to choose his ship. To add more randomization to your game, try pooling the available coins between all the players. In this case, each player takes a number of coins from the pool to form his shipyard. There are lots of ways to divide the pool of available coins into shipyards. Five variants are described below, but you can also invent other methods as long as everyone agrees. For all of the variants, however, each player gets a Captain first, for free.

**Draft:** Make sure the pool is divisible by the number of players and set aside any remainders. One of the players, determined randomly, selects a coin. The player on his left chooses next, and so on, until all the coins are gone.

**Random:** The available coins are placed in a pouch or other opaque container. Each player draws an equal number of coins randomly. Again, set aside any remainders.

**Random + Trades:** This variant is identical to the Random variant, save that players may trade coins among their shipyards before play begins. Any trades are legal as long as each player, in the end, can construct a legal ship.

**Draft + Random:** This variant begins like the Draft variant, except that the drafting ends when all players have drafted an agreed-upon number of coins — a number between three and six works best. Then, all the remaining coins are allocated according to the Random variant. Alternately, you can do "Random + Draft," giving each player a random assortment first and then drafting those that remain.

**Draft + Random + Trades:** This variant, predictably, works like the Draft + Random variant, with players being allowed to trade coins before play begins. Again, trades are legal as long everyone can construct a legal ship in the end.

## SPOILS TO THE LOSERS

If you're playing a match and pooling coins, you can allow each player other than the last game's winner to choose one coin from among the leftovers to add to his shipyard. You can even set aside more coins than the remainder to create a bigger pool of "loser's spoils." In multi-player games, losers select their spoils in the order they were knocked out of the game — that is, the biggest loser chooses first.

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