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RIVER
RATS

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RULEBOOK

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River Rats is a cooperative game where wealthy *River Rats* challenge players in a poker game to take their money. Communication is limited, and strategy is key. Use your cards' abilities and Player Powers to collectively craft stronger poker combinations than the *River Rats* and send them scurrying back to their cabins in debt!



GAME OBJECTIVE

Defeat both *River Rats* by ensuring each accumulates five Debt before you collectively gain five Debt.

GAME SETUP

First Time Playing: If this is your first time playing River Rats, skip Player Powers ✨ and River Rats' Abilities 🐭.

- 1. Character & Player Power:** Each player chooses an Ace and places it in front of them, representing their Character with a unique Player Power ✨.
- 2. River Rats:** Take the four Kings. Shuffle them. Draw two and place one face-up (active) and one face-down (inactive). These are now the River Rats.
- 3. Jokers:** Place two Jokers face-down next to the play area.
- 4. Draw Deck:** Shuffle all unused cards (including remaining Aces and Kings) to form the Draw Deck.
- 5. Individual hands:** Deal two cards to each player.
- 6. Market:** Reveal three cards and place them face-up in the Market.
- 7. Joker's Prediction Reference:** Place the Joker's Prediction Reference card next to the Jokers.
- 8. Player's Debt:** Leave space next to the Joker's Prediction Reference to track the Player's Debt.

After the Game Setup, continue with Round Setup.

ROUND SETUP

1. **River Rat's Hand:** Reveal five cards and place them next to the active River Rat. Draw two extra cards and place them face-down. The River Rat's hand consists of the face-up River Rat(s), five face-up cards and two face-down cards.
2. **Joker's Prediction & Debt:** Reveal one card and place it face-up next to the Jokers. This is the Joker's Prediction and the place where you place the first Debt card of the round. The Debt card represents the ante of the round.
3. **Collective hand:** Leave space below the River Rat's Hand for five cards to place the collective player hand.
4. **River Rat's Ability:** Read the active River Rat's Ability 🐭 and adjust setup if needed.

COMMUNICATION RESTRICTIONS

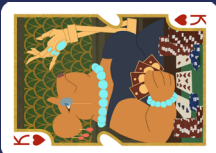
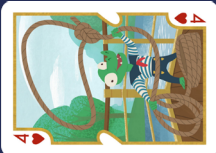
Players cannot reveal or hint at their hands. General strategy discussions are allowed as long as they don't reveal card specifics or desired collective hand.

EXAMPLE SETUP

Inactive
River Rat

Active
River Rat

RIVER RAT'S HAND



Places for
River Rat's Debt

COLLECTIVE HAND



Spaces for
additional cards

JOKERS

JOKER'S PREDICTION REFERENCE

For different
Player's Debt

For different
River Rat's Debt

A	5	6	7	8	9	10	J	Q	K
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	A

DEBT

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	A
----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

PLACE

6	7	8	9	10	J	Q	K	A
---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	---

DEBT

6	7	8	9	10	J	Q	K	A
---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	---

DEBT

6	7	8	9	10	J	Q	K	A
---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	---

Player
Debt



Discard



Deck



MARKET

Empty space for
additional cards

GAMEPLAY

The game consists of rounds and turns. A round ends after resolving hands. A turn is a player's turn.

1. In your turn, choose to Draw & Play or Use a Joker:

a. Draw & Play:

1. You have a hand limit of three cards. At the start of your turn, if you have fewer than three cards, draw cards until you reach your hand limit by either:

- Taking a face-up card from the Market. Refill the Market if it contains less than three cards.
- Drawing one card from the Draw Deck.

2. Play a card from your hand into the collective hand. Place it face open. You **may**:

Perform the action based on the card's suit  (p. 12),
or

- Use your Player Power  if the card's suit matches your Character's suit (see p.13).

b. Use a Joker: Add a face-up Joker to the collective hand. A Joker can represent any card. During hand resolution, the players collectively decide its suit and value. Only one Joker can be used per collective hand.

2. End of turn: If the collective hand contains five cards, proceed to Hand Resolution. Otherwise, the next player takes their turn.

Whenever the Draw Deck runs out, shuffle the discard pile to form a new deck.

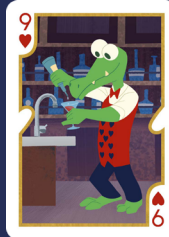
1. DRAW

Refill your hand to 3 cards. Take cards from Draw Deck or Market

Deck



Market



2. PLAY

Place card in Collective Hand



3. CHOOSE TO TAKE ACTION

SUIT ACTIONS ●

You may...

- ♥ Increase the Debt by 1.
- ♠ Discard a card from your hand or the Market.
- ♣ Add a card from your hand to the Market (max. 6 cards).
- ♦ Swap another card from the collective hand with a card from your hand.

PLAYER POWERS ✨

You may...

- ♥ Open a card from River Rat's hand before deciding to increase Debt.
- ♠ Discard any number of cards from hand or Market.
- ♣ Add up to two cards from hand to the Market (max. 6 cards).
- ♦ Choose to swap a card from the Market instead.

JOKER'S PREDICTION

JOKER'S
PREDICTION IS
CORRECT

1st Debt card

Poker combination to earn Joker

A	5♦6♦7♦8♦9♦
K	9♦9♣9♥9♠
10JQ	5♦5♣5♥5♠
6789	Q♦Q♣Q♥Q♠

HERE

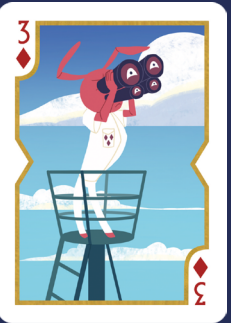
DEBT

PLACE

9♠



6♣



COLLECTIVE HAND

OPEN UP
JOKER

Player
Debt

JOKER'S PREDICTION REFERENCE

1st Debt card

Poker combination to earn Joker

A	5♦6♦7♦8♦9♦
K	9♦9♣9♥9♠
10JQ	5♦5♣5♥5♠
6789	Q♦Q♣Q♥Q♠

HERE

DEBT

PLACE

9♠



6♣



HAND RESOLUTION

To resolve hands, follow these steps:

1. **Joker's Prediction:** Regardless of the outcome, if the collective hand matches the Joker's Prediction, flip one Joker face-up. It can now be used. See also the Joker's Prediction Reference.

First Debt card	Joker's prediction
Ace	Straight flush
King	Four of a kind
Queen, Jack, 10	Full house
9, 8, 7, 6	Flush
5, 4, 3, 2	Straight

2. **Reveal cards:** Turn any face-down cards face-up, except for the inactive River Rat, in both the River Rat's and the collective hand.
3. **Determine best hand:** The best hand consists of five cards. If more cards are available (e.g., in the River Rat's hand), form the best possible combination of five cards. The River Rat's hand consists of the face-up River Rat(s), five face-up cards and two or more face-down cards. See *Hand Ranking Overview* for the hierarchy of combinations.

JOKER'S PREDICTION REFERENCE

Irish Ball and
 A

Shogun Ball
 54 64 84 94

Hand of Jack
 94 94 94 94

Inactive	Active
River Rat	River Rat

Face up cards

A playing card, specifically the 6 of diamonds, is shown. On the card, there is a red ladybug and a purple insect. The ladybug is on the left, and the purple insect is on the right. They are both facing each other. The card has a yellow border and a red diamond symbol in the top right corner.

COLLECTIVE HAND

4. Determine outcome

- Players win: Place all Debt face down on the River Rat. When a River Rat has gained five or more Debt, it has been defeated.
- River Rat wins: Assign one player to collect all Debt for the players. Place the accumulated Debt in the game on top of their Character card. If the players have collectively accumulated five Debt, the players lose the game.
- Tie: River Rats win all ties.

5. Clean up

- Discard your collective hand.
- Discard the River Rat's hand (except the River Rats themselves).
- Remove used Jokers from the game.
- Perform a new Round Setup. Players' hands and the Market remain untouched.

If the Deck runs out, shuffle the Discard pile to form a new Deck.

DEFEATING A RIVER RAT

A River Rat is defeated when it has accumulated five or more Debt. Follow these steps:

6. Discard its Debt.
7. Rotate the River Rat. Its ability becomes inactive, but it stays part of the second River Rat's hand.
8. Read the River Rat's defeat bonus .
9. Flip the second River Rat face-up and perform a new Round Setup.

SUIT ACTIONS ●

When you play a card, you may perform the Suit Action of its suit. If the card matches the suit of your Ace, you may choose to activate your Player Power instead.

●♣ Add a card from your hand face-up to the Market (max. six cards).

Solo: Add the top card from the Draw Deck face-up to the Market.

Note: ●♣ *does not increase the number of permanent slots in the Market; it temporarily gives you extra cards to choose from. The Market still refills only when there are two cards or less.*

●♦ Swap another card from the collective hand (not a Joker or this card) with one from your hand. No new ● or ✨ are triggered.

●♥ Increase Debt by placing the top card of the Draw Deck face-down on the Debt pile.

●♠ Discard a card from your hand or the Market. Refill the Market if needed.

PLAYER POWERS ✨

When you play a card, you may perform the Suit Action of its suit. If the card matches the suit of your Ace, you may choose to activate your Player Power instead.

✨♣ Add up to two cards from your hand face-up to the Market (max. six cards) instead of ●♣.

Solo: *Add up to two cards from the Draw Deck instead of from your hand.*

Note: ✨♣ does not increase the number of permanent slots in the Market; it temporarily gives you extra cards to choose from. The Market still refills only when there are two cards or less.

✨♦ Swap another card from the collective hand (not a Joker or this card) with a card from the Market. No new ● or ✨ are triggered.

✨♥ You may flip a card from the River Rat's hand face-up. Choose whether or not to increase Debt.

✨♠ Discard any number of cards from either your hand or the Market. Refill the Market if needed.

RIVER RAT'S ABILITIES

& DEFEAT BONUSES

  When the River Rat wins, increase Debt by one before assigning Debt.

  Remove one Debt card from the players' total Debt.

  The first card of each round cannot be a Joker and must be placed face-down in the collective hand. It does not trigger any  or . It cannot be swapped.

  Increase the Market's **permanent** capacity to four cards. Refill the Market once there are three cards or less.

  The River Rat's hand has two extra face-down cards.

  The next River Rat's hand has one fewer face-down card.

  During Round Setup, deal the top card from the Draw Deck as the first card in the collective hand. It does not trigger any  or .

  Future hands are resolved with six cards. Choose the best combination of five cards when resolving such a hand.

HAND RANKING OVERVIEW

Hands are ranked from highest to lowest.

Straight flush: Five cards of the same suit in sequence (e.g., 5♦, 6♦, 7♦, 8♦, 9♦).

Four of a kind: Four cards of the same rank (e.g., 9♠, 9♦, 9♣, 9♥). The fifth card is any other card

Full house: A combination of three cards of one rank and two cards of another (e.g., Q♠, Q♦, Q♥, 5♣, 5♠).

Flush: Five cards of the same suit, not in sequence (e.g., A♥, 7♥, 5♥, 3♥, 2♥).

Straight: Five cards in sequence but from different suits (e.g., 4♦, 5♠, 6♣, 7♠, 8♥).

Three of a kind: Three cards of the same rank (e.g., 8♠, 8♥, 8♣) with any two unrelated cards.

Two pair: Two sets of two cards of the same rank (e.g., 10♠, 10♣, 4♦, 4♥) and one unrelated card.

One pair: Two cards of the same rank (e.g., K♠, K♣) and three unrelated cards.

Highest card: When no better combination is available, the hand

is ranked by the highest single card (e.g., an Ace beats a King).

TIEBREAKERS

Full house

If both parties have a full house, the highest three of a kind wins.

Straight flushes, Straights and Flushes

If the River Rat and the players have the same ranking hand (e.g. a Flush), the highest card decides the winner. If the highest card is the same for both parties, it is a *True Tie*.

TWO PAIRS AND PAIRS

If the River Rat and the players have the same ranking hand in the same value (e.g. a pair of 8s), the value of the highest card additional card decides. If both hands have the same highest card, compare the second-highest card, then the third, and so on until the tie is broken. In case all cards are exactly the same, it is a *True Tie*.

TRUE TIES

River Rats win *True Ties*.

CARD VALUE RANKING

Card values rank from highest to lowest as follows: Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10 to 2. The Ace can also count as 1, the lowest rank, when it is part of a Straight from A to 5. Suits are of equal value.

JOKERS

Earning Jokers: If a collective hand matches the Joker's prediction, flip a Joker face-up.

Using Jokers: Use a face-up Joker instead of Draw & Play. Only one Joker can be used in a collective hand.

END OF THE GAME

The game ends immediately when one of the following conditions is met:

- **You win:** Both River Rats are defeated when each has accumulated five Debt.
- **You lose:** The players collectively accumulate five Debt. In this case, the River Rats win.

INCREASED DIFFICULTY

You can increase the game's difficulty using the Advanced and Expert modes.

Notes on using Jokers in ADVANCED and EXPERT modes:

Instead of adding a face-up Joker to the collective hand, set it aside until hand resolution. Before hand resolution, perform the action as written.

ADVANCED MODE

River Rat's Hand: During Round Setup, add one additional face-down card to the River Rat's hand.

Using Jokers: Remove any card from the River Rat's hand, except the River Rat(s), and add two additional face-down cards. Then remove the Joker from the game.

EXPERT MODE

River Rat's Hand: During Round Setup, add two additional face-down cards to the River Rat's hand.

Using Jokers: You can use the Joker only during Hand Resolution. When using a Joker, you may reveal cards from the top of the Draw Deck, one at a time. You may choose to stop revealing cards at any given point.

- Add each revealed card to your collective hand, unless it matches the suit of the active River Rat.
- If a revealed card matches the River Rat's suit, discard all cards revealed this way and immediately gain one Debt.
- Proceed to resolve the hands as normal.
- Remove the Joker from the game by returning it to the box.

CREDITS

Game Design and Development: Mathijs Jansen & Robin Stokkel

Artwork and Graphic Design Cards: Rixt Heerschop

Graphic Design Rules: Studio Monyet

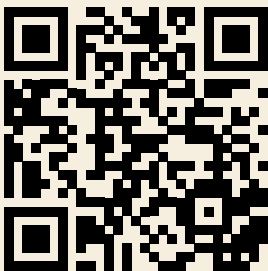
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*Scan QR-code for rules
and 'How to play'-video.*



