PHALANX DUEL CLASSIC v3.0

Face-to-Face Tabletop Quickstart · 2 Players · 2 Standard 52-Card Decks · 10–15 Min

20 LP · 4×2 Grid
Zero RNG after deal

1. Setup & Formation-First Deployment

- **Decks & Life:** Each player brings one shuffled 52-card deck and starts at **20 LP**.
- **Opening Draw:** Each player draws **12 cards** (leaving 40 in drawpile).
- **4×2 Battlefield:** Four columns, each with a **Front Rank** (faces opponent) and a **Back Rank** (reserve).
- **Alternating Deploy: P2 deploys first.** Alternate placing 1 card face-up into any open slot until both players have **8 battlefield cards** and **4 cards in hand**.
- **First Strike: P1 attacks first.**

2. Card Values & Special Eligibility

- **Number Cards (2–10):** Face value = Attack & HP.
- **Face Cards: J = 11**, **Q = 11**, **K = 11** (or Classic rank hierarchy):
  - A **Jack** can destroy only a **Jack** (or number card).
  - A **Queen** can destroy **Jack / Queen**.
  - A **King** can destroy **Jack / Queen / King**.
  - **Ineligible face target:** Survives; attack stops with **0 carryover**.
- **Aces (Value 1):** Only a **front-rank Ace** can destroy another Ace. Against any non-Ace attacker, an Ace absorbs 1 damage, **cannot be destroyed**, and passes remaining carryover through!

3. The Turn Sequence (Repeat Until 0 LP)

1. Attack or Pass
Strike with one of your **Front-Rank** cards into the matching or chosen opponent column (or Pass).

2. Cascade
Damage flows **Front** → **♦/♣** → **Back** → **♥/♠** → **Opponent LP**. A surviving card stops the cascade.

3. Cleanup
Destroyed cards go to discard. If Front fell and Back survived, **Back advances** to Front.

4. Reinforce
Defender may place 1 hand card into the **attacked column** (or pass reinforcement).

5. Draw & Swap
Defender refills hand up to **4 cards**. Empty deck is **not** a loss. Roles swap!

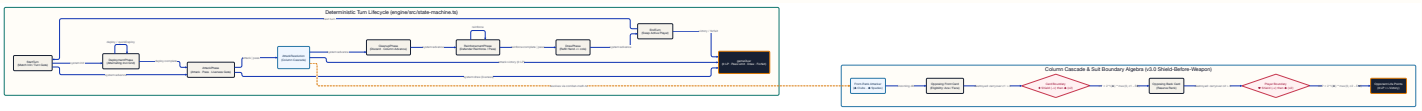


Figure 1: Turn lifecycle and v3.0 Column Cascade flow (generated directly from `docs/diagrams/turn-lifecycle-and-cascade.d2`).

Suit Boundary Rules — Red Shields (♦ ♥), Blue Weapons (♣ ♠)

Suits are **timing rules**, not passive stats. In v3.0, **Shields always resolve before Weapons** at each boundary.

♦ DIAMONDS — Card-to-Card Shield

Trigger: Fires when a **Diamond** is **destroyed** and carryover is headed to the **Back card**.
Effect: Subtract the Diamond's own value from carryover **before** Clubs can double it:

$$c' = \max(0, c - v_{\blacklozenge})$$

♣ CLUBS — Breakthrough Weapon

Trigger: Fires **once** when a **Club attacker** destroys a card and carryover crosses to the **next card**.
Effect: Double the post-Diamond carryover:

$$c' = 2 \cdot \max(0, c - v_{\blacklozenge})$$

♥ HEARTS — Life-Point Ward

Trigger: Fires when the **last card destroyed** before Opponent LP is a **Heart**. Hearts do not stack.
Effect: Subtract the Heart's value from carryover **before** Spades can double it:

$$\text{LP loss} = \max(0, c - v_{\heartsuit})$$

♠ SPADES — Finishing Blow Weapon

Trigger: Fires when a **Spade attacker** carries damage across the final boundary into **Opponent LP**.
Effect: Double the post-Heart LP damage:

$$\text{LP loss} = 2 \cdot \max(0, c - v_{\heartsuit})$$

Worked Cascade Examples (Check Your Math)

Attacker	Defending Column	Step-by-Step Resolution (v3.0)	LP Loss
9♣ (Club)	Front **4♦**, Back **5♠**	9 hits 4♦ → 4♦ destroyed, carryover 5. ♦ **Shield first:** $5 - 4 = 1$. ♣ **Doubles:** $1 \times 2 = 2$. Hits 5♠ → 5♠ survives at 3 HP.	**0 LP**
10♠ (Spade)	Front **6♣**, Back **2♥**	10 hits 6♣ → destroyed, carryover 4. 4 hits 2♥ → destroyed, carryover 2. ♥ **Ward first:** $2 - 2 = 0$. ♠ **Doubles:** $0 \times 2 = 0$.	**0 LP**
10♠ (Spade)	Front **5♣**, Back **2♦**	10 hits 5♣ → destroyed, carryover 5. 5 hits 2♦ → destroyed, carryover 3. No Heart at LP boundary. ♠ **Doubles:** $3 \times 2 = 6$.	**6 LP**
8♥ (Heart)	Front **A♦**, Back **3♣**	Non-Ace vs Ace: A♦ absorbs 1, survives (`hp = 1`), carryover 7 hits 3♣ → destroyed, carryover 4 hits LP.	**4 LP**

Victory & Draw Conditions

- **Knockout:** Reduce opponent to **0 LP** immediately.
- **Forfeit / Pass Limit:** Conceding or exceeding consecutive/total pass limits forfeits.
- **Empty Deck: Not a loss** — keep playing with cards in hand and on board.
- **Competitive Liveness (v3.0):** 3× exact position repetition, 50 turns with no irreversible progress, or 200-turn cap ends in a draw.

Tabletop Habits & Digital Companion

- **Damage Resets:** Surviving cards reset to full HP at end of turn (Classic mode).
- **Open Information:** Both battlefields and discards are face-up; only hands and drawpiles are hidden.
- **Combat Lab:** Verify tricky suit interactions live at **phalanxduel.com/tools/combat-lab**.