



BLACK HAT

v. 1.3

A Game by
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BLACK HAT

A novel trick-taking board game. Hack the system and steal the data before anyone knows you're there!



Information wants to be free, but you charge by the hour...

In the world of network security, a **Black Hat** is a hacker who defeats computer systems for personal gain. These rogue data jockeys pit themselves against the most secure systems in the world for the thrill of it (and maybe to make a little money on the side). However, the most skilled hackers know it's not about getting there first, it's about ghosting in and out of the system without leaving a trace.

Black Hat is a hacker-themed game, combining trick-taking with a game board. It works well as a family game and equally well for hardcore gamers. **Black Hat** is easy to learn, has a wide variety of working tactics and luck is less important than is common in trick-taking games.

In the **OPTIONAL RULES** you can find additional rules. The Game Designers recommend using all optional rules once all players are accustomed to the basic rules.

GAME CONTENTS

90 cards: 2 alternative Black Hat (👤) cards. The Black Hat card is the same on both sides. 78 rank cards numbered from 1-13 (the number is the rank; there are six cards of each rank), 5 jokers (🐉), 4 reference cards, 1 Tracer card.

2 boards: 1 game board, 1 score board

6 double-sided game board tiles. These are used to vary the game board. Like the game board itself, they consist of different types of spaces which depict the systems to be hacked.

4 markers: 2 double-sided +1/-1 markers for the Exploit, 2 tracer player markers

19 pawns: 3 pawns each in six colors (one for the score board, two for the game board), 1 Tracer pawn for the optional TRACER rules.





SETUP

Each player puts one pawn on 'Internet Cafe' and 'Public Server' on the left side of the game board and one on the number zero on the score board. Choose one of the Black Hat cards to use in this game (only the art differs). If it's your first game, start the first round.

If you are not playing the game for the first time, randomly draw up to five tiles and place them on top of the game board, on the marked locations. There is no need to fill all locations, as the game board comes fully playable. The tiles add variety and sometimes are more complex.

Start the first round.

ROUND START

Shuffle the deck.

Draw the topmost card. Count that many players in clockwise direction, starting from the player next to the dealer. Give the Black Hat to the player where the count ends. For example, in a 6 player game drawing a 1, 7, or 13 would give the Black Hat to the player next to the dealer in clockwise direction, while a 6 or 12 would give the Black Hat to the dealer. Finally, discard the card used for distributing the Black Hat.

Then each player is dealt a total of 10 cards (including the Black Hat).

The player to the **right** of the player who was dealt the Black Hat card shall lead the first trick.

TRICKS

The active player, called the "lead", may play one or more cards. When playing multiple cards, all must be the same rank. The other players, in clockwise order, then must also play cards to the trick. They can play one card or the same number of cards as the lead, their choice. After each player has played, the trick ends, and the player who played the same number of cards as the lead with the highest rank wins the round. If there is a tie for the winner, the tied player who played last will win the trick. The winner leads the next trick.

Cards played to the trick are discarded (except in Black Hat tricks, see below).

The winner of a trick is the most competent hacker and **must** either:

- advance **one** of their own (not blocked) pawns on the board
- advance **one** (not blocked) opponent pawn which is on a space with negative value
- in case neither a) nor b) are possible, draw a single card from the deck.



JOKERS

A joker may substitute for any other card; for example two sevens and a joker can play as three sevens. If played as a single card or together only with other jokers, it has a value of fourteen (14).



BLACK HAT

The Black Hat card behaves like a joker. In addition, when it is played, the trick will be a "Black Hat round" in which the lowest combination of the played type wins the trick. Tie breaking happens as always, so in the case of a tie, the last cards of the same value played are considered stronger (lower). The player who played the lowest value can then choose to take **all cards** played and put them into their hand, including the Black Hat, **or** just take the **Black Hat and as many non-Joker cards**

as the lead played into their hand while the other played cards are discarded as usual. This player then leads the next trick, just like after winning any other trick.

When the Black Hat is played, it **must** be played in a combination matching the lead. If the Black Hat is the last card a player has in a round where the lead plays multiple cards, the player has to pass. (This is the only time passing is allowed.)

Note: There are no suits, the colors of the cards just correspond to their points.



Example 1: The lead starts the trick by playing the Black Hat. He cannot win that trick, no matter what, as the Black Hat is 14 (always, when played as single, as any joker). The lowest single card wins the trick and collects.



Example 2: The lead starts the trick with Black Hat+7. It is likely that everyone plays only 1 card and the person who played Black Hat ends up collecting either all cards played, or any two cards and the Black Hat (for example, 12 and 9 if the player wants high cards, or 4 and 7 if the player wants few points, or any other combination), but he wins the trick and gets to advance on the board.



Example 3: The lead starts the trick with 7+7. The next player plays a single 6. The third player plays 8+Black Hat. Fourth plays 9+9. The first person (7+7) collects cards, as specified by Black Hat rules above. This is a double round, where only pairs can win. The Black Hat changes the game only so that smallest pair wins. The single 6 played in a pair round cannot win.



Example 4: The lead plays 8+8+8, second 5, third 7. The last player has Black Hat and one other card (13). He can not play the Black Hat, because he can not match the suit of three cards, and can not pass, because the Black Hat is not his last card. Thus, he has to play the 13.



Example 5: The lead plays 13, second Black Hat (14), third 13, fourth Joker (14). The third player collects a single 13 and Black Hat, or all cards. The player cannot take the Black Hat and a Joker,



Example 6: The lead plays 2+2, second 2+2, third 8, fourth 2+Black Hat. The fourth player collects, as he was the last player to play a pair of twos on a Black Hat round. This would be likely a brilliant move, as he'd then have 5 cards of rank 2, which is zero points, but a very strong suit to play.

HACKING ACTIONS (MOVEMENT)

There can be only one pawn on each space (except for the 'Internet Cafe' and 'Public Server').

Players move pawns by one space according to the possibilities allowed by the arrows.

If an adjacent space is occupied by a pawn, it can be jumped over. This can happen several times in a row, so basically you can move the pawn to the next empty space on any path chosen by you. You can only follow complete arrows (both shaft and arrow head need to be there).



Pawns can only be removed from the board when the Tracer eliminates them (see the optional Tracer rule on page 10).

When a player has to move but cannot (all pawns are blocked, e.g., on Honeypot or Denial-of-Service AND none of the opponent pawns are in negative spaces), the player **must** draw a card instead.

TYPES OF SPACES



Internet Cafe, Public Server – All pawns start the game from here.



Router, Database Server, Cell Phone – A standard component.



Critical Asset – The goal: A pawn entering it ends the game.



Denial-of-Service – An attack. The player owning the pawn entering this space moves any one pawn back to 'Internet Cafe' or 'Public Server' (their choice), except the pawn that triggered the Denial-of-Service. Note that no player can have two pawns on the same 'Internet Cafe' or 'Public Server' at any given time. The pawn who enters the Denial-of-Service will be blocked on this space for the duration of the game. Denial-of-Service is the only way to move blocked pawns again (on an 'FBI Server' or different Denial-of-Service space).



FBI Server – This is part of the optional Tracer rule. See the **OPTIONAL RULES** section. If the rule is not in effect, treat this like a standard Honeypot.



Honeypot – The pawn which enters the honeypot is blocked and cannot move for the duration of the game (the following pawns will just jump over it).



Exploit – Whenever a player enters exploit, he or she can modify the value of a host by one, either up or down. Put an Exploit Marker with the corresponding side face up on this space



Randomizer – Whenever a pawn enters the randomizer, the player owning the pawn may draw a random tile. If the player does that, they must put it on the game board. Pawns that were on the board there before get put on the corresponding host on the tile. Trigger special hosts with pawns on them on the new tile in clockwise order, starting from the top left host.

END OF THE ROUND

The round ends if either of the following conditions is true at the end of a trick:

- 1) one or more players are out of cards
- 2) a pawn is on top of the Critical Asset space (game ends)
- 3) no pawn can move (game ends)

When the round ends, a scoring happens (see below). Then all players discard their remaining cards and, if the game didn't end yet, a new round is started.

SCORING

Round points are scored by adding the points from the cards left in a player's hand and the points for the player's pawns on the board. Each card has a number of points and each pawn accumulates points based on its current space (evidence left when hacking into the system). The minimum score is zero; negative scores count as zero.

Round points are accumulated into a running game score on the score meter.

END OF THE GAME

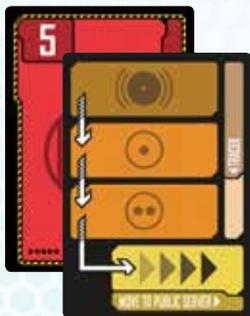
When the round ends due to a pawn reaching the Critical Asset or all pawns are blocked, the game ends after a final scoring. The player with the lowest game score wins. In case of ties, the player with the lowest round score in the last round wins.

2-PLAYER VARIANT

There is a Robot which plays the third player. This Robot is played by the player who is not leading. (Exception: In the first round, by the player without the Black Hat.) The Robot is always the second player (i.e., the turn order is lead, Robot, other player). If the Robot wins a trick, it advances its pawns just like any other player would and stays in the control of the same player.

- All robot cards are constantly visible (open).
- It is possible that the Robot wins. You should be ashamed of yourself if that happens.
- The Robot can end the game.
- The Robot can also do any other special action.
- We do not suggest using the Tracer with the Robot, as it leads to too uneven situations.

OPTIONAL RULES



TRACER

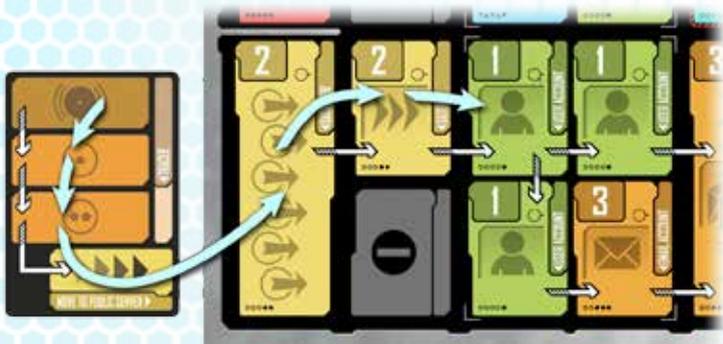
The Tracer is triggered by a pawn entering 'FBI Server'. The pawn is blocked on the FBI Server and can not leave. The Tracer pawn starts on the special Tracer tile; after a few moves it will appear on the 'Public Server'. It must be moved whenever a player who has a pawn in FBI Server wins a trick (in addition to the normal pawn move).

After the Tracer pawn leaves the Tracer tile, turn it over – the backside shows the jail. After leaving the Tracer tile, the Tracer pawn can move to any adjacent space (even occupied ones), ignoring any arrows (not on the black spaces and off the board, of course). The tracer pawn also ignores any blocking effects, i.e. it can move out of honeypots. It may however not move nearer to the starting locations; at most, it can move sideways.

Should the movement end on a slot where there is a player pawn, that pawn is eliminated and put in the 'Tracer Jail' (value 5). There is no limit on the number of pawns in the jail.

The tracer fills a space just like a player pawn. A player can jump over it, even though it is risky. If the tracer moves to the "Critical Asset", the game ends.

Moving a Tracer does not count as moving your own or an opponent's pawn; if a player is unable to move their own or opponents' pawns, the player must draw a card (see TRICKS item c).



REDUCING LUCK

If you'd like to reduce the amount of luck in the game, you can opt to reduce cards when there are fewer players than the maximum (6). For each player less than six, remove one card of each rank and one joker, down to a minimum of four of each rank and three jokers. You will always need one Black Hat, anyhow.

You can also deal fewer cards after any player's pawn entered a honeypot. When dealing after such an event, one should deal HALF the normal hand size (e.g., 5 cards only) to every player. This is intended to decrease the luck aspect in the critical end-game.

K VARIANT: CELEBRITY STATUS

At the beginning of the game, each player secretly draws one status card. The cards have values from 10 to 50 on them and represent the level of famousness the hacker is most comfortable with.

At the end of the game, the player who is closest in points to the value on their status card wins the game. Ties go to players who are below their status value.

Example: The players drew status cards with values 15, 35, and 40, and end the game with 12, 37, and 38 points respectively. Both the second and third players' difference to their status aim is two, but the third player wins because they stayed below their target.

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DRAGON DAWN
PRODUCTIONS



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