OAK & IRON
TACTICAL FLEET COMBAT IN THE AGE OF SAIL

By Mike Tuñez.

FIRELOCK GAMES
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INTRODUCTION

Oak & Iron is a game set in the age of fighting sail. It allows players to recreate battles between small fleets and squadrons of armed sailing ships. The game is designed to be simple and intuitive while also challenging players by providing significant tactical depth and being true to the theme and tactics of the period.
GAME COMPONENTS

CHAPTER 2.

SHIP CARD BREAKDOWN

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SHIP CLASS
SKILL UPGRADE
FORTITUDE VALUE
BROADSIDE VALUE
CREW VALUE
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SPECIAL RULES
UPGRADE OPTIONS
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Playing the Game

Chap. 3.

Oak & Iron is played over a series of turns. Each turn will be broken down into four phases:

I. The Initiative Phase
II. The Movement Phase
III. The Attack Phase
IV. The End Phase

The Initiative Phase

New Terms for this Section

Squadron A Squadron is a group of two or more ships, including a Flagship, belonging to a player.

Flagship Each Squadron must have a Flagship. The Flagship is denoted by having an Admiral card assigned to it.

Skill Test A Skill Test is used when a ship’s crew is attempting to do something complex, like working the ship’s rigging to attempt to adjust its current speed. To perform a Skill Test roll 5 dice (augmented by special rules and Fatigue). If any ♦ or ♦ results are rolled, the test is successful.

Challenge Test A Challenge Test is a type of Skill Test where both players make the test using their Flagship’s special rules and Fatigue, then compare results. The player who rolls the most ♦ and/or ♦ wins the Challenge Test. If there is a tie, the Flagship with the highest skill value is the winner. If both Flagships have the same skill value, continue rolling until there is a winner.
During this phase, players will reveal their initiative cards to determine which player has the initiative. Each player will also choose a new card for the following turn. Take the following steps to complete the Initiative Phase:

1. **REVEAL INITIATIVE CARD** Each player reveals the initiative card they chose during the previous turn’s Initiative Phase. If playing the first turn of the game, each player reveals the initiative card chosen during deployment. The player who reveals the card with the highest initiative value has the initiative and will go first in each following phase for this turn. If both players reveal a card of equal value, an event card is drawn from the event deck and its effects are resolved before moving on. If resolving the event is not possible for some reason, the event card effect is ignored. Once the event has been resolved, the player whose Squadron has the highest admiral value has the initiative. If there is still a tie, both players perform a Challenge Test. The winner has the initiative. Once initiative has been determined, the cards remain face up to remind both players of the effect granted by their initiative card for that turn. Initiative and event effects last until they are discarded or returned to the hand (Unless otherwise noted on the card).

2. **SELECT NEW INITIATIVE CARD** Each player now chooses a new initiative card from their initiative hand and places it face-down. The chosen facedown initiative card will be revealed and applied at the beginning of the following turn’s Initiative Phase.

3. **RESOLVE INITIATIVE CARD EFFECTS** Initiative card effects note when each effect is to be used. Apply the effects that state “Immediately” now, and make note of effects will be used later in the turn.

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**THE MOVEMENT PHASE**

**New terms for this section**

- **BOW** A ship’s Bow is the front edge of its base.
- **STERN** A ship’s Stern is the rear edge of its base.
- **WEATHER EDGE** The Weather Edge is the side of the table the wind is blowing from.
- **POINT OF SAIL** A ship’s Point of Sail is its heading in relation to the wind. In Oak & Iron there are 3 possible points a ship can be sailing on:
  - **LARGE** A ship is sailing Large if its Stern is closer to the table’s Weather Edge than its Bow.
  - **WINDWARD** A ship is sailing Windward if its Bow is closer to the table’s Weather Edge than its Stern.
  - **IN THE WIND’S EYE** This denotes a ship with its Bow closer than 45º to the Windward Edge. If at the beginning of a ship’s movement its Windward side midpoint is further away from the Weather Edge than every point of your ship’s Bow, your ship is considered In the Wind’s Eye.

To test this, find the ship’s Windward midpoint and the point of the Bow that is far-
N.T.  

...thest from the Weather Edge. If the midpoint measures equal to or closer than the farthest point of the Bow, then the ship is not In the Wind's Eye.

A ship at this Point of Sail cannot make any forward movement but may make a turn using the speed 1 tool.

Any time a ship is directly between two Points of Sail, the controlling player may choose which one to use.

**SAIL SETTING**

A ship's Sail Setting describes how much sail a ship is using. There are 4 possible Sail Settings:

- **Full Sail** This is the highest possible Sail Setting. A ship on this Sail Setting takes a Full Sail token. While on this Sail Setting, ships increase their speed rating by 1. While at Full Sail, a ship may not make Reload actions during the Crew Action step.

- **Battle Sail** A level lower than Full Sail. This is the default Sail Setting and requires no token. The speed values found on a ship's card assume a ship is on this Sail Setting.

- **Minimal Sail** The ship is using the least amount of sail possible. A ship on this Sail Setting takes a Minimal Sail token. While on this Sail Setting, ships reduce their speed rating by 1.

- **Anchored** At this setting, the ship is carrying no sail at all and cannot move. A ship on this Sail Setting takes an Anchored token.

**DOWNWIND** A turn or move described as being Downwind indicates that it will cause the ship’s Bow to move farther away from the Weather Edge.

**FATIGUE** represents the condition of the ship's crew, equipment, and weaponry. Factors such as casualties, morale, and physical exhaustion of the crew cause Fatigue. For every point of Fatigue a ship has, it reduces the number of dice rolled for any Skill Test or Attack by 1 (to a minimum of 1). If a ship has any special rules that grant it additional dice, these additional dice are added after the Fatigue penalty is applied. A ship may never take more than 7 Fatigue points. Any amount of Fatigue taken over this is ignored.

**SHAKEN** A ship becomes Shaken and takes a Shaken token when it receives 7 points of Fatigue. A Shaken ship may not take Seamanship Actions and the only Crew Action it may take is Rally. A ship will remain Shaken until its Fatigue points are reduced.

**CRIPPLED** A ship becomes Crippled and takes a Crippled token when it has taken 7 points of Damage. A Crippled ship no longer takes damage points. Instead, for every point of damage the ship would have taken, a point of Fatigue is taken instead. A Crippled ship's speed rating is limited to 2.

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**DESIGNER’S NOTES**

Sail setting is an abstract idea in *Oak & Iron*. It reflects the total amount of effective sail a ship is currently making use of. Damage to the a ship's rigging can have the same effect on a ship's speed as changing its sail setting and therefore is treated the same way in the game.
ENTANGLED A ship that is Entangled is stuck to another ship and will not move during the Movement Phase as long as they remain Entangled. Entangled ships may not take Crew Actions and may only take the Cut Free Seamanship Action. Opposing ships Entangled together may make Close Combat Attacks against each other. Enemy ships Entangled with friendly ships may not be the target of Broadside or Partial Fire Attacks.

AGROUND A ship that is Aground has usually struck the bottom and become stuck, but this status can also be used to indicate significant damage to a ship that causes it to become immobile, such as losing a mast. A ship in this state takes an Aground token and may not move until the Aground token is removed. To remove an Aground token, the ship must take a Repair Crew Action and instead of removing a point of damage, it rolls a Skill Test. If the test is passed, the Aground token is removed. If it is failed, the token and its effects remain.

DIRECTLY AWAY If a ship must move Directly Away from another ship (or object), it moves the declared distance in whichever direction it can go farthest without pivoting or touching an obstruction.

During the Movement Phase, players will alternate activating 1 ship at a time. Each time a ship is activated it will determine it’s speed, take a Seamanship Action (optional), move, and then take a Crew Action (optional). Once a ship has completed these 4 steps, place a Wake marker behind the activated ship to show that its move is complete. The opposing player now chooses 1 of their ships to activate. Players continue alternating ships until all ships have activated. If one player is left with multiple ships and their opponent has moved all of their ships, the player with the remaining ships will activate the rest 1 at a time until all ships have gone. Once all ships have activated, proceed to the Attack Phase.

1. DETERMINE SPEED RATING A ship’s speed rating is the distance a ship will move on the table. To determine speed rating, start by checking the ship’s Point of Sail (detailed on pg. 8 & FIG.2). The ship’s Point of Sail is always checked from where it began its activation. If it at any point of its move, a ship ends up in a different Point of Sail this new position has no effect on its speed rating. The ship will move at its printed speed value (plus or minus the effects of its Sail Setting, special rules, and initiative card effects the ship may receive) canno.

2. SEAMANSHIP ACTION Before a ship moves, the controlling player may attempt to perform a Seamanship Action by rolling a Skill Test. If the test is passed, the ship may take one of the following actions:

- **Change Heading** If this ship is not In the Wind’s Eye, Entangled, Aground, or Anchored, the ship makes a turn before it moves using the speed 1 tool.

- **Adjust Speed** If this ship is not In the Wind’s Eye, Entangled, Aground, or Anchored, the ship may increase or decrease its current speed rating by 1. This is not a permanent adjustment and its effect only lasts for this move.

- **Cut Free** The ship moves Yard Arm distance Directly Away from any ships it was Entangled with. If the ship cannot move Yard Arm distance Directly Away, it cannot Cut Free and remains Entangled. After a ship is Cut Free, it retains its current Sail Setting but its speed rating is limited to 1 this turn.

3. MOVE To move a ship, select the movement tool that matches the ship’s current speed rating. A ship may never move faster than speed 5 for any reason. A ship with a speed greater than 5 will use the speed 5 tool instead. Place the ruler against either side of the ship and line up the arrow on the bottom
of the movement tool with the arrow on the mid-point of the ship’s base. Move the ship along the edge of the tool until the arrow on the ship’s base lines up with the arrow on the opposite end of the tool. A ship must always move the full distance between the two arrows on the movement tool and must always move forward. The angle at the end of the ruler is only used for turning and is not counted for the move distance. Remember, a ship in the Wind’s Eye cannot move at all, but may still make a turn using the speed 1 tool.

As part of its movement, the ship may also perform a single turn either at the beginning or at the end of its move. To perform a turn, place the ruler against the side of the ship and line up the top arrow on the movement tool with the arrow on the ship’s base. The ship may then pivot towards the direction of the angled edge of the movement tool (up to where the ship’s edge lays flat against the angled edge). Partial turns are allowed. Note that some movement tools have a different angles on the turning edge. Be sure to use the same ruler for turning as for movement.

4. CREW-ACTIONS After a ship completes its move, it may take a single Crew Action from the list below. If a rule or game effect prevents a ship from moving, it may still take a Crew Action.

- **Reload**: Remove a reload marker from 1 of the ship’s sides.
- **Rally**: Remove 1 point of Fatigue.
- **Repair**: Reduce the ship’s total damage points by 1 if the ship is not Crippled. Or attempt to remove an Aground token. To remove an Aground token, roll a Skill Test. If the test is passed, the Aground token is removed. If it is failed, the token and its effects remain.
- **Change Sail Setting**: The ship may change its Sail Setting by 1 level (up or down). A ship will continue to use the current Sail Setting until this action is taken again or another game effect, such as rigging damage, causes it to change.

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**EXP.** (Figure 1) Lily has the initiative, so she will be the first to activate a ship and check the ship’s point of sail (Figure 1).

It is determined that her ship is sailing Large, because her stern is closer to the table’s weather edge than her bow. The ship’s large point of sail is 3 and it is currently at battle sails, so Lily needs to use the 3 speed template.

Before moving, Lily decides she wants to try to go a little faster. She uses the seamanship action “Adjust Speed” to try and go faster. She succeeds her skill test and will now use the 4 speed template instead.

Lily now places the template to either side of her ship, making sure to align the starting arrow of the template with the side arrow of the ship.

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**FIG. 1**

[Image of a ship with a speed template]
**FIG. 2** Without moving the template, Lily must slide her ship along the full length of the template until her side arrow is at the ending arrow. She will turn the ship by having it pivot along ending arrow’s corner towards the template’s turning edge. (Figure 2)

Lily completes her movement activation by taking a **Reload Crew Action** to remove a reload marker from one side of her ship so that it is ready to fire a broadside in the Attack Phase.

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**EXP.**

- **Boarding:** A ship may attempt to board an opposing ship within Yard Arm distance. To attempt to board, roll a Skill Test. If passed, move the ship taking the action directly toward the target ship until their bases touch. A ship may move directly sideways, forward, or backward when making this move. Once touching, pivot the boarding ship in place until its leading edge lays against the nearest edge of the ship being boarded (Figure 3). If neither edge of the ship being boarded is closer, the boarding ship may choose which edge to contact. The ships are now Entangled. If the boarding ship is not able to place its edge flush against the target ships nearest edge for any reason, the action is not possible (Figure 5).

- **Row:** A ship with the Sweeps special rule or upgrade may make an additional move using the speed 1 tool. This move can be made even if the ship is at Anchor or In the Wind’s Eye. This move may not include a turn.

- **Transfer Flag:** A Squadron’s flagship may move the Admiral card to a target friendly ship that is within Pistol Shot of the flagship and not Entangled. The target ship is now the flagship. If the target ship had a captain card, that card is turned facedown and ignored while the Admiral is present on that ship.

- **Landing Party:** A ship that is not Shaken, has its Sail Setting set to Anchored, and is within Pistol Shot of an island or landmass may send a Landing Party ashore. To do so, place a Landing Party token anywhere on the island or landmass within Musket Shot of the ship. While ashore, the Landing Party may make Close Combat attacks against any other Landing Party token within Musket Shot of the token using the crew value of the ship that deployed it. If a ship with a Landing Party token ashore ever becomes Shaken or moves, the Landing Party token is immediately removed.
MIKE'S SHIP IS WITHIN A YARD ARM LENGTH AWAY FROM LILY'S SHIP. HE IS GOING TO ATTEMPT TO GRAPPLE AND BOARD LILY'S VESSEL! HE ROLLS A SKILL TEST FOR THE SHIP ATTEMPTING TO BOARD AND SUCCEEDS. NOW HE HAS TO MOVE HIS SHIP INTO PLACE, LAYING THE SHIP'S LEADING EDGE AGAINST THE NEAREST EDGE OF LILY'S SHIP. BELOW ARE A COUPLE EXAMPLES OF WHAT THAT MIGHT LOOK LIKE:

EXP. IN THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE, MIKE'S SHIP HAS NO SPACE TO LAY FLUSH AGAINST LILY'S SHIP AND CANNOT COMPLETE THE BOARDING ACTION. IN THIS CASE, MIKE MAY ATTEMPT A DIFFERENT CREW ACTION:
Mike’s ship is entangled with another ship, he wants to cut grapples and move to escape. Mike’s ship is in the wind’s eye and it is currently at battle sails. In order to move, he uses the Seaman-ship Action “Cut Free”. His skill test is successful. Mike moves his ship yard-arm distance away from his opponent.

Normally, the cut free action would cause Mike’s ship to move using the speed 1 template, but, because the ship is in the wind’s eye, all Mike can do is make a turn using the speed 1 template turn. He chooses to use the Rally Crew Action to remove one point of fatigue and ends his ship’s move activation.

FIG. 6
THE ATTACK PHASE

**NEW TERMS FOR THIS SECTION**

**OUT OF ACTION** A ship becomes Out of Action when it is both Crippled and Shaken. A ship that is Out of Action is no longer combat effective and its status is marked by having both a Shaken and Crippled token. Once in this state, a ship can no longer move, take Seamanship or Crew Actions, make attacks, and is effectively out of the game. Out of Action ships remain on the table as obstacles unless they sink during the End Phase.

**FULL TURN** If a rule calls for a ship to make a Full Turn, the ship must pivot all the way until its edge lays flat against the movement tool’s angled edge.

**LINE OF SIGHT** This determines whether or not a ship can clearly see its target. There is Line of Sight if a line can be drawn from the mid-point of any of the ships’ edges to the mid-point of any edge and at least one corner of the target ship’s base (FIG. 7).

**BROADSIDE PATH** The area into which a ship may make Broadside attacks. To determine the Broadside Path, draw two parallel lines perpendicular to the width the firing ship’s base going toward the target ship. If any part of the target ship’s base falls within those two lines, the ship is within the Broadside Path (FIG. 8).
A.P. During the Attack Phase, players will alternate making attacks, 1 ship at a time, until all ships have activated. After a ship has activated, remove its Wake marker to indicate that it has attacked this phase. During an activation, the ship may make 1 of the following attacks:

» **BROADSIDE** A ship may fire 1 or 2 Broadside attacks in a turn (one from each side of the ship). The following qualifications must be met for each side:

- The target ship is within Cannon Shot or less of the firing ship.
- The target ship must be at least partially within the Broadside Path of the firing edge.
- There must be Line of Sight to the target ship from the firing edge.
- The side firing has no reload marker.

If all the qualifications are met, the attack may be made by taking the following steps:

1. **ROLL BROADSIDE DICE** Roll a number of dice equal to the ship’s Broadside value (reduced by 1 for each point of Fatigue the firing ship has). Unlike other attacks, Fatigue never reduces a ship’s Broadside Value to less than the ship’s Crew Value. The range of the attack will determine which results score hits:

   - At Cannon Shot, \(\text{\river}, \text{\river}, \text{\river}\) and \(\text{\river}\) results score hits.
   - At Musket Shot, \(\text{\river}, \text{\river}, \text{\river}\), and \(\text{\river}\) results score hits.
   - At Pistol Shot, \(\text{\river}, \text{\river}, \text{\river}\), and \(\text{\river}\) results score hits.

2. **RE-ROLL** Players will sometimes be able to re-roll dice by using skill value, Fortune Points, and special rules. All re-rolls on the attack are taken during this step.

3. **APPLY FATIGUE** If at least 1 hit was scored, the target ship takes a point of Fatigue.

4. **INFlict DAMAGE** Compare the number of hits scored against the target ship’s Fortitude. For every number of hits that equal the target ship’s Fortitude, it takes 1 point of damage. Any remaining hits have no additional effect (FIG.9).

5. **CHECK FOR CRITICAL DAMAGE** If any of the dice results were a \(\text{\river}\), the target ship may take Critical Damage. To check for Critical Damage, roll an additional die for each \(\text{\river}\) result. If any \(\text{\river}\), \(\text{\river}\), or \(\text{\river}\) results are rolled, the target ship has taken critical damage. Any other results have no further effect. Critical damage effects are as follows:

   - If any \(\text{\river}\) results are rolled, a vulnerable part of the ship has been hit causing the target ship to take a point of damage. If 2 or more \(\text{\river}\) are rolled, the ship immediately becomes Crippled. If the ship was already Crippled, it is now Out of Action.
   - If any \(\text{\river}\) results are rolled, the ship reduces its Sail Setting by 1 (to a minimum of Anchored). If 2 or more \(\text{\river}\) results are rolled, the ship has lost 1 or more masts. The ship takes an Aground token to represent the additional effort required by the crew to get it underway again.
   - If any \(\text{\river}\) results are rolled, the ship’s helm has been struck! The target ship must make a Full Turn using the speed 2 tool in the direction chosen by the opposing player. If this move causes a Collision, it is resolved as if the ship moved at speed 2. Additionally, if this ship has an admiral or captain card assigned to it, there is a chance they could be hit. Roll a dice. If a \(\text{\river}\) result is rolled, the captain or admiral card assigned to that ship is removed from the game.

6. Assign reload markers: The ship now takes a reload marker on any side that it fired from.
Mike’s galleon (broadside 5) has an eligible shot on Liam’s 6th rate frigate (fortitude 2) at musket shot.

Mike rolls 5 dice and gets , , , , .

The result is removed leaving 4 hits.

Liam’s frigate takes 2 damage as the number of hits has equaled its fortitude twice, and 1 point of fatigue as there was a successful hit against it.

As a was rolled in the broadside attack, this die is rerolled to check for critical damage.

A is rolled and there is no critical damage.

Mike’s galleon is given a reload marker on the firing side and it is then Liam’s turn to attack with one of his ships.
PARTIAL FIRE
This attack represents firing with only a portion of the ship’s guns as well as swivels and small arms. A Partial Fire Attack follows the same rules as a Broadside Attack with these exceptions:

- Line of Sight may be drawn from any of this ship’s edges.
- Target ship may be outside of the Broadside Path.
- Attack’s range is limited to Musket Shot.
- May be made with one or more reload markers.
- Does not generate a reload marker.
- Uses the ship’s Crew Rating to determine the number of dice rolled.

CLOSE COMBAT
A ship may make a Close Combat Attack against any ship it is Entangled with. To make a Close Combat Attack, roll a number of dice equal to 5 plus the ship’s Crew Rating. If the attacking ship has a Bow or Stern edge in contact with the opposing ship, the target ship takes 1 point of Fatigue for each ⚺ result rolled. If the attacking ship has a side edge in contact with the opposing ship, the target ship takes a Fatigue for each ⚺, ⚺, and ⚺ result rolled.

THE END PHASE

NEW TERMS FOR THIS SECTION

CAPTURED
A ship that is Captured has been overtaken by an opposing Squadron. The Captured ship takes a Captured token with the opposing factions insignia. Captured ships follow all of the same restrictions as Out of Action ships, but do not count as an Out of Action ship. A ship may be re-captured by having a ship from its original squadron become Entangled with it. Once Entangled, remove the Captured token. Re-captured ships remain Shaken, but will otherwise operate normally.

STRIKE POINTS
Throughout the game, the mounting effects of battle begin to weigh on your forces, causing them to want to flee the engagement. This is represented by Strike Points. During the end phase of every turn, players will count their current Strike Point total. If a Squadron ever earns more Strike Points than their current ship total, its admiral will call a retreat and the player loses the game. Strike Points are not tracked between turns and are earned as follows:

- 1 for each ship that is Crippled (not Out of Action)
- 2 for each ship that has sunk, is captured, or Out of Action (not Flagship)
- 3 for each Flagship that is Out of Action
- Objectives cards may cause players to earn extra Strike Points
During this final phase, players count their current Strike Points and check to see if the game continues. Take the following steps to complete the turn:

1. **CAPTURE OR DESTROY SHAKEN SHIPS** A ship Entangled with an opposing ship whose crew is Shaken may Capture or Destroy the Shaken ship. If the ship is Captured, it now counts toward the ship total of the Squadron that Captured it. If the ship is Destroyed, immediately take a Free Cut Free Action. If this is not possible, remove the Destroyed ship from the table. The Destroyed ship is Out of Action.

2. **CHECK FOR WITHDRAWAL** Each player counts their total number of Strike Points. If the number of Strike Points earned this round exceeds the total number of ships in that Squadron (Aground or Out of Action ships do not count towards the ship total), that Squadron withdraws and the player has lost. If both players have earned more Strike Points than their ship total, the player with the least amount of Strike Points is the winner. If there is a tie, continue playing. During the End Phase of turn 10, whichever player has less Strike Points is the winner. If there is a tie at the end of turn 10, the defender is declared the winner (but just barely!).

3. **CHECK FOR SINKING SHIPS** Roll a dice for each Out of Action ship on the table. If a ♦ or ♣ is rolled, the ship sinks and is removed from the table.

4. **LOST ADMIRALS** If a Flagship ever ends a turn Out of Action, the controlling player may spend a Fortune Point to take a Free Transfer Flag action during this step. If the controlling player chooses not to do this or it is not possible (e.g., the ship was removed from the table), a new ship must immediately be assigned as the Flagship. Assign an “Untested Admiral” card to this ship. If the player has more than 5 initiative cards in their hand, that player must immediately remove cards from their hand until they have 5 cards remaining.

5. **RETURN INITIATIVE CARDS** Both players now return their face up initiative cards to their hands.

Once these 5 steps are complete, the turn ends. If neither player has achieved victory, a new turn begins.