



Rule Book

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General Rules

House of Cronies is a 3-4 player game of resource management, where players must decide each turn whether to gather resources, bid for votes, or sabotage one another through tactics. The player with the highest number of votes at the end of the game wins.

There are two decks on the table. The main deck, made up of influence, corruption and crony cards; and the tactics deck, which contains only tactic cards.

Each player's cabinet consists of up to 6 **cronies**, each carrying a set number of votes, plus an optional foreign ally. All cronies, besides foreign allies, can be placed as president or vice-president. Other positions (Finance, Justice, Service delivery, Communications, Foreign ally) can only be filled by specialists.

Players **start** the game with 7 cards drawn from the main deck (6 for the player that will get to go first) and 2 tactic cards. Any cronies or foreign allies drawn in a player's initial hand or won through a bid must be placed down immediately in that player's cabinet. Any crony or foreign ally that cannot be placed immediately must be discarded.

Tactics allow players to gain an advantage or sabotage others. They can generally only be played during a player's turn, unless stipulated otherwise on the card itself. Each player starts the game with 2 tactics. Players can purchase additional tactics at any point during their turn for 5 influence/corruption or more. Some Cronies also give their player 1 or 2 free tactics when they first come into play.

Each **round** starts with 5 cards (4 cards if 3 players) being drawn from the main deck and placed face up in the middle of the table. In turn order, players can either pick up an influence/corruption card, or bid influence, corruption or a combination of both for a crony. Players can only gain one card each round so any player that outbids another player forfeits their turn. Any player that is outbid gets their turn and their influence/corruption bid back.

The **end of the game** is triggered when there are no cards left in the deck or fewer than need to be drawn for a new round to take place. A final round is played for players to buy and use tactics one more time before the election takes place. Players without a full cabinet at that point must deduct 2 votes from their total. The player with the highest number of votes wins the game.



Crony Cards

X 28



Foreign Ally

X 7



Tactic Cards

X 28



Influence Cards

X 24



Corruption Cards

X 13



Position Tile

(7 for each player)
X 28



Speaker Token

X 1

Setting up the board



Each of the 3-4 players participating in House of Cronies should receive 7 cabinet position tiles of a single colour at the start of the game: President, Vice-President, Finance, Justice, Social services, Communication and Foreign Ally. Players should lay out their position tiles on the table in front of them, with enough space to place a card above or next to it. All players should be able to see all other player's position tiles and associated cronies.

The main deck and the tactics deck should be placed in the middle of the table, with sufficient space to lay out 4 or 5 cards, depending on the number of players. Players should also make space for two discard piles: one for tactic cards, and one for crony, influence and corruption cards.

The first player should receive the Speaker token at the start of the first round and pass it on the next player in clockwise fashion at the start of the next round, once each player has had a turn.



- 1 Crony name
- 2 Minimum influence/ corruption bid required to obtain this crony.
- 3 Great looking puppet
- 4 Cabinet positions in which this crony can be placed, besides President and Vice-president
- 5 Number of free tactics which the player can draw when this crony first comes into play.
- 6 Number of votes which the crony grants to the player at the end of the game.

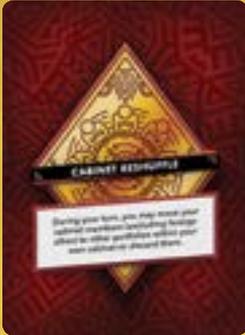


- 7 Card type: influence or corruption
- 8 Amount of influence or corruption which can be bid by the player using this card

Tactics

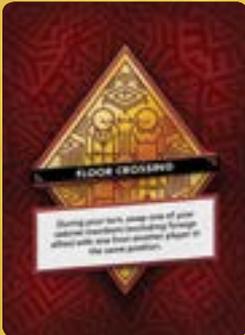
Most tactics can only be played during a player's turn, with the exception of Point of order, played immediately after another player has played a tactic, and Motion of no confidence, played at the start the round. Players must throw tactics into the tactic discard pile when they play them.

The effects of tactics play out using the rules listed below.



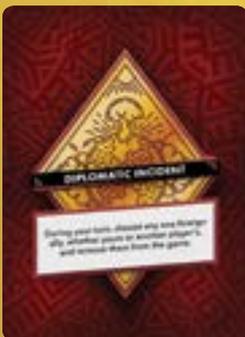
CABINET RESHUFFLE

Cronies cannot normally be removed from a player's cabinet or moved between positions. A player can use the Cabinet reshuffle tactic during their turn to remove and move cronies within their own cabinet. Removed cronies must be thrown into the main discard pile. A Cabinet reshuffle does not allow a player to remove their foreign ally or affect another player's cabinet.



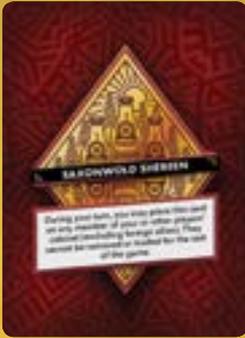
FLOOR CROSSING

A player can use the Floor crossing tactic during their turn to swap one of their cronies for another player's. The cronies must be traded position for position, based on the position they currently occupy within the cabinets (e.g. Justice for Justice, or President for President). A Floor crossing does not allow a player to trade foreign allies.



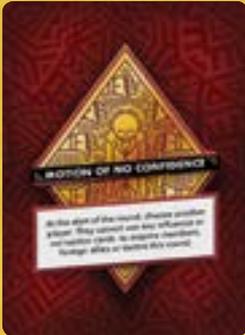
DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT

A player can use the Diplomatic incident tactic during their turn to remove a foreign ally from the game. The foreign ally can be theirs or another player's. The foreign ally must be thrown into the main discard pile.



SAXONWOLD SHEBEEN

A player can use the Saxonwold shebeen tactic during their turn to prevent a single crony from being removed or traded for the rest of the game. The tactic can be played on a player's own crony or an opponent's. Saxonwold shebeen must then be placed underneath the selected crony. The tactic cannot be used on a foreign ally or swapped to another crony during the course of the game.



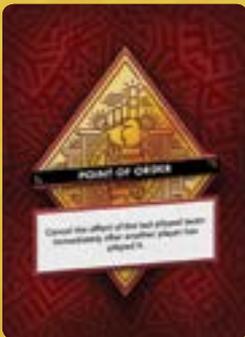
MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE

A player can only use the Motion of no confidence tactic at the start of the round, once the cards have been drawn and laid out on the table, but before the player with the speaker token's turn. The player who uses this tactic designates another player. That player is not allowed to make bids for cronies or purchase tactics until the start of the next round. They can however still pick up influence or corruption cards, or play tactics. Motion of no confidence can be played at the start of any round, including the last one.



HAWKS INVESTIGATION

A player can only use the Hawks investigation tactic immediately after a player has just won a bid for a crony, or purchased a tactic, using a corruption card. The player using the tactic can then select and remove a crony of their choice from that player's cabinet, with the exception of the crony won via this turn's bid. Players can use corruption cards and play Hawks investigation against themselves should they wish to remove a crony from their own cabinet.



POINT OF ORDER

A player can only use the Point of Order tactic immediately after another player has played another tactic. The effects of that tactic are cancelled and both cards are discarded. A Point of Order can be played after another Point of Order to allow the effects of the first tactic to carry through.

Start of the game

Players may decide amongst themselves, in any way they wish, which player gets to start first. This player will then receive the Speaker token and be referred to as the Speaker while in possession of the token. In a series of games, the starting player should rotate at the start of each game.

The player with the Speaker token must distribute opening hand cards in the following way:

- **7 cards** from the main deck to other players, and **6 cards** to themselves;
- **2 cards** from the tactics deck to all players, including themselves.

In turn order, players must then place down any cronies present in their opening hand. Any cronies or foreign allies drawn in a player's initial hand or won through a bid must be placed down immediately in that player's cabinet, paying attention to restrictions for specialist positions (Finance, Justice, Service delivery, Communications, Foreign ally). If a Crony has no specialist position, they can only be assigned to the president or vice-president position. Any crony or foreign ally that cannot be placed immediately must be thrown into the main discard pile.



Rounds

Each player should get a turn within a round, starting with the Speaker. Turn order happens clockwise. Each round starts with the Speaker drawing 5 cards (4 if 3 players) from the main deck and laying them out face-up in the middle of the table. The round ends once all players have picked up a card from the table. The last card remaining on the table gets discarded. The Speaker then passes the Speaker token to the next player in clockwise fashion.



Turns

At the start of their turn, a player may decide whether to pick up an influence/corruption card or bid for a crony or foreign ally. Once a player has picked up a card, whether influence, corruption, crony or foreign ally, they cannot participate in any further bidding for the remainder of the round.

To bid, a player must place one or more cards on the table in front of them, made up of influence, corruption or both. The value of the bid is the sum of these cards' value. In the case of a bid, the next player in clockwise fashion is then asked by the Speaker whether they would like to bid too. Any new bid must be superior to the initial bid. The Speaker continues asking all players, including themselves, in clockwise fashion for a new bid, until no new bid is offered. The player with the highest bid obtains the crony or foreign ally and must throw the influence or corruption cards they had bid in the main discard pile. All other players recover their bid. The player with the winning bid must place that crony immediately in their cabinet, noting any restrictions, or discard it. Cronies and Foreign Allies can only be placed in empty cabinet positions.

Should a player be outbid during their turn, they may bid on or pick up another card. Players may only gain one card each round so any player that outbids another player forfeits the opportunity to bid on, or pick up, another card during their turn this round. They may still however purchase or play tactics.

A player may play multiple tactics during their turn, either prior to, or immediately after picking up a card. A player's turn ends once they have picked up a card from the table and, in the case of a crony, placed it within their cabinets or discarded it. If a player cannot either pick up an Influence or Corruption card and are too broke to bid on a Crony, they will not pick up a card this turn, but may still play tactics.

EXAMPLE OF A ROUND

- Baleka, Thuli, Pravin and Jacob are playing House of Cronies. Baleka has the speaker token.
- Baleka draws 5 cards from the main deck and lays them out on the table for all to see.
- Baleka offers a bid of 5 influence for a crony. Thuli and Pravin decide not to bid. Jacob offers a bid of 7 using a 4 influence and 3 corruption card. Baleka does not offer a higher bid. Jacob wins the crony and places it within his cabinet.
- Baleka then offers a bid of 4 corruption for a crony. Thuli and Pravin decide not to bid. Jacob cannot bid. Baleka obtains the crony and places it within her cabinet.
- Thuli picks up an influence card and uses a tactic. Baleka uses a Point of order tactic to cancel Thuli's tactic.
- Pravin bids 3 for a crony. All other players have taken their turn so no one can bid against him. Pravin obtains the crony and places it within his cabinet. Pravin then plays a tactic.
- The round ends and Baleka passes the Speaker token to Thuli.

Final round and end of the game

The final round is triggered when there are not enough cards left to draw the required amount to fill the table. The final round is triggered when there are no cards left in the deck or fewer than need to be drawn for a new round to take place. A final round is played for players to buy and use tactics one more time before the election takes place. Besides tactics, players cannot pick up additional cards or bid on cronies this round. Players without a full cabinet during the vote counting must deduct 2 votes from their total. Players without a foreign ally are not penalised. The player with the highest number of votes wins the game.

EXAMPLE OF FINAL ROUND

- Jacob has the speaker token. No more cards can be drawn from the main deck.
- Jacob purchases 1 tactics card using 5 influence. He then plays a “Saxonwold Shebeen” tactic on one of his cronies.
- Baleka plays a “Floor crossing” tactic to swap her President for Thuli’s.
- Thuli chooses not to play any tactics during her last turn.
- Pravin purchases 2 tactics cards using 7 corruption and 3 influence. Thuli plays a “Hawks Investigation tactic” and removes one of Pravin’s cronies.
- Pravin plays a “Cabinet reshuffle” tactic to remove his cronies with negative votes.
- The vote counting begins. All players have a full cabinet, except Pravin, whose vote total is therefore reduced by 2.
- Baleka has the highest number of votes and therefore wins the game.

Typical game strategies

House of Cronies can be played in many different ways. Foreign allies can influence the effectiveness of your strategy or lead you to change it midway through the game. Here are some typical strategies to help you get started.



THE GOODY GOODY

Players using this strategy will typically avoid picking up corruption cards and choose to use their tactics towards defensive ends. The player will generally try to spend their resources on cronies which grant them a larger number of votes and then look to protect them.

THE AMORAL

Players using this strategy will look to beat other players by focusing on damaging their chances. These players will look to pick up as many tactics as possible in the early game by bidding on cronies with either few or negative votes. They will then look to either get rid of these cronies or swap them with other players' in the late game.



THE INCONSPICUOUS

Players using this strategy will look to swing the game right at the end. Their early game strategy is to pick up low value cronies, bidding a minimal amount of influence/corruption and stockpiling resources. They will typically look to purchase a large number of tactics and higher value cronies right at the end.

THE ANNOYANCE

Some players don't really follow a strategy but rather enjoy being the centre of attention throughout the game. They will play or bid on any card or tactic which they find pretty or which allows them to feel relevant and have a say



Acknowledgements

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