



BLOOD, SWEAT AND CHEERS

2ND EDITION

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What's this all about then?

Blood, Sweat and Cheers (BSC) is a tactical, card and dice game for one or two players, that recreates single combat between gladiators in the arenas of the Roman world from the mid-third century BC to the start of the fifth century AD.

Cards are used to abstractly represent the different options available to a player's gladiator during the ebb and flow of a gladiatorial bout, while dice are used to resolve interactions. The watching crowd interacts with the gladiators in the arena by rewarding showy attacks and spilt blood with favourable cheering which may in turn be utilised to buoy up a gladiator's performance.

Changes from the 1st edition

There are few substantive changes between *Blood, Sweat and Cheers* 1st and 2nd editions; clarifications to certain aspects of the rules have been added, as have an expanded campaign system, and the inclusion of new rules to facilitate solo games.

What's in the card deck?

The main game component of *Blood, Sweat and Cheers* is a deck of 40 red-backed cards used by players during a bout. A complete play deck should include:

9x STEP cards

11x STRIKE cards

9x GUARD cards




6x GLORY cards

3x ROAR OF THE CROWD cards

1x FORTUNA'S FAVOUR card

1x IMPERIAL INTEREST card

In addition, card packs also contain two ACTION SUMMARY cards, two FAVOUR cards, six ARENA cards and 10 GLADIATOR cards profiling different fighting styles.

Players select one GLADIATOR card which provides their chosen gladiator with key attributes (Speed , Attack , Defence ) and two special attack combinations using GLORY cards.



What else do you need?

In addition to the card pack, the game requires one counter to mark the crowd's favour and each player will also need one six-sided die (hereafter known as a 1d6), a model or counter to represent their champion, and up to four wound markers.

Representing gladiators and the arena


Gladiators may be represented on the table top by miniatures, meeples or counters. The arena should consist of 12 zones, arranged in three rows of four. The six ARENA cards included in the pack can be laid out in a grid to create a game-ready arena as illustrated to the right.

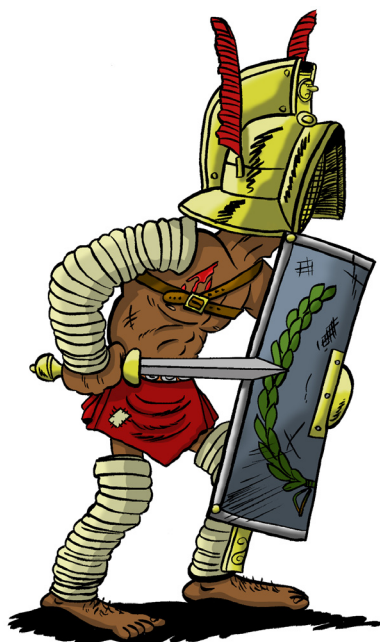


One gladiator starts in each of the two central zones. All movement is conducted by zone. Gladiators within the same zone can attack each other in hand-to-hand combat.

How to play the game

The game is divided into turns and each turn is divided into two phases which are resolved consecutively. At the start of the game, players should be dealt a hand of five cards from the play deck.

The player with the lowest modified  value at the start of each turn decides which card, or combination of two cards (see p.IV), they wish to use in the first phase. They place these face up on the table and then declare their intended action (e.g. STEP+GUARD - "Lycus raises his shield and takes a step into the same zone as Hector").






Their opponent then does the same. Both gladiators are moved, or remain in the same zone, according to their declaration and then any attacks are resolved simultaneously (see p.V).


The played cards are then placed face down in a discard pile. Repeat the process for the second phase with the opposing gladiator playing their cards first.

If neither gladiator is defeated during a turn, players may choose to discard any or all unused cards (placed face down on the discard pile) and are dealt the number of cards required to bring their hand back up to five cards. When all cards in the deck have been dealt, reshuffle the discard pile and start again.

If the gladiators' modified  values are equal, players should roll a 1d6 with the lowest scoring player regarded as the slower gladiator.

Wounded and compromised gladiators




Gladiators receive wounds as a result of resolving attacks. A gladiator may sustain a maximum of four wounds. When a gladiator suffers their fifth wound, or any time they receive a *Telling Blow*, they are defeated and the bout is over.

For each wound sustained, a gladiator suffers a -1 modifier to their  value.

In addition, place one marker on the left side of their gladiator card. Before any dice roll, their opponent may exploit these wounds to modify the wounded fighter's next die roll by -1.

Any number of wounds may be exploited for a single roll, but each wound may only be exploited once. After a wound has been exploited, move the counter to the right side of the gladiator card.








Gladiators may also be 'compromised' by being *Knocked Down* or ensnared in a net as the outcome of an attack.

A compromised gladiator may not move other than being *Pushed* as the outcome of an attack (but may still *Dodge*) and suffers a -2 penalty to all of their attributes (, , and ) until they play the required card/s to recover (i.e. STEP to recover from being *Knocked Down*, or GLORY+STRIKE to escape the net of a retiarius).




Actions

Gladiators must perform one of the following combinations each phase.

STEP	<i>Step/Dodge/Stand</i> – may remain in zone or move to any adjacent zone, <u>or</u> stand up. If attacked, defend using  -1.
STEP+STEP	<i>Move/Dodge</i> – may remain in zone or move up to 2 zones. If attacked, defend using  .
STRIKE	<i>Jab</i> – perform an attack using  against an opponent in same zone.
STRIKE+STRIKE	<i>Thrust</i> – perform an attack using  +1 against an opponent in same zone.
STEP+STRIKE	<i>Lunge</i> – may remain in zone or move to any adjacent zone and attack using  .
GUARD	<i>Guard</i> – defend against attack using  .
GUARD+GUARD	<i>Block</i> – defend against attack using  +1.



STEP+GUARD

Cautious Step – may remain in zone or move to any adjacent zone. If attacked, defend using .

GLORY or GLORY+GLORY

GLORY cards may be played to perform special actions as outlined on their GLADIATOR card.

STEP+STRIKE and STEP+GUARD combinations may be used to move into or out of the same zone as an opponent; i.e. to either move from an adjacent zone into the same zone as an opponent and attack/block, or to attack/block as the gladiator moves out of the same zone as an opponent.

The same principal applies to a secutor's *pursuit* ability, or the *blind rush* of a crupellarius. Both abilities may be used to move into, out of, or remain within, the same zone as an opponent.




Perks

Some STEP, STRIKE, and GUARD cards carry additional perks: *adrenaline rush*, *foul play*, *lewd taunt*, *sweaty hands*, *trip opponent* or *well-timed strike*. If two cards with perks are played, each perk may only be applied once but different perks may be combined. No perks may be used by compromised gladiators when using cards to recover.



Resolving attacks

If gladiators start or end a phase in the same zone as an opponent (or are otherwise within range) and an attack was made by one or both gladiators during the phase, both players roll 1d6.

Gladiators making an attack add their  plus any other modifiers. A gladiator who did not attack adds either their  (if they played GUARD cards), or their  (if they played STEP cards), plus any other modifiers.


The opposed modified scores are compared. A tied result has no effect. Otherwise, the gladiator with the higher score has temporarily got the better of their opponent.

Veles and hoplomachus gladiators can attack an opponent in the same or an adjacent zone using GLORY cards. Such attacks are possible if they start and/or finish the phase in the same zone or adjacent to their opponent.

The FORTUNA'S FAVOUR card may be played after any opposed dice roll, allowing the player to switch die results with their opponent.

If the higher scoring gladiator was defending or dodging, their foe's attack has been successfully

blocked or avoided. If an attacker had the higher score, the outcome for their opponent is determined by the difference between opposed scores.

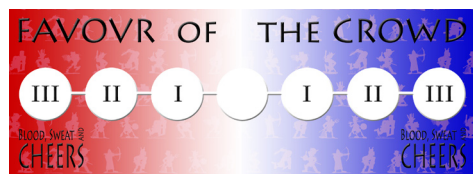
Diff. btw scores	Outcome
1	<i>Pushed</i> – move gladiator to <u>any</u> zone adjacent to the one they currently occupy(opponent chooses).
2	<i>Knocked Down</i> – gladiator compromised until they play STEP to stand up. If already compromised, suffer a <i>Flesh Wound</i> . If attacked while standing up, defend using  -1.
3	<i>Flesh Wound</i> – sustain one wound.
4	<i>Deep Wound</i> – sustain two wounds.
5+	<i>Telling Blow</i> – gladiator is defeated outright.

A gladiator may only be *Pushed* once each phase. Any additional pushes are ignored. A gladiator may not be double compromised. A *Knocked Down* gladiator who gets caught in a retiarius' net need only escape the net in order to recover. Any gladiator already compromised who suffers a *Knocked Down* outcome after an attack will receive a *Flesh Wound* instead.



The favour of the crowd

The card pack includes two FAVOUR cards, one red, and one blue. One gladiator should be assigned to each colour at the start of the bout. Place the cards together so that they form a continuous, seven point, sliding scale representing the mood of the audience as illustrated below.



At the start of a game, place the single favour marker at the neutral meeting point of the two cards. For each GLORY card played - regardless of whether any attack took place or not - move the marker one point along the scale in that gladiator's favour.

Likewise, any time a gladiator wounds their opponent (*Flesh Wounds* and *Deep Wounds*, but not *Telling Blows* - the crowd loves blood, not quick fights), move the marker one point in that gladiator's favour.

In this way, the favour of the crowd will fluctuate backwards and forwards, one moment favouring one gladiator, the next moment favouring their opponent.

If a player's hand includes one or more ROAR OF THE CROWD cards, they may play one after any die roll to modify their score by their current favour (i.e., Favour of I would grant a +1 modifier to their die roll, Favour of III would grant a +3).

If no GLORY cards are played, and no other attacks take place during a phase, the favour of the crowd will move one point back towards the central, neutral, position.

Missio

The gladiator left standing at the end of the bout is the victor.

The defeated gladiator will usually be granted *missio* - mercy - by the crowd, sparing them to fight and entertain another day. However, should a defeated gladiator's performance have displeased the audience, the crowd will be less merciful, heralding the proverbial 'thumbs down' and their immediate death.

In order for their gladiator to be spared, the defeated player must roll 2+ on a 1d6. However, their die roll will be modified by the crowd favour at the end of the game.



For example, if the favour marker is in the neutral, centre point, the roll would be unmodified; if the defeated gladiator had I favour, they will receive a +1 modifier to their die roll (ensuring their survival); if the victor had II favour, the defeated player would suffer a -2 modifier to their roll. Only the IMPERIAL INTEREST card may save a defeated gladiator from a failed *missio* roll.

Ludi Gladiatori

Players wishing to follow the careers of their gladiators beyond a single bout may choose to play a campaign between competing *ludi*, gladiatorial training schools.




Each player starts their own *ludus* with a line-up of four trained but unknown gladiators. Any class of gladiator may be chosen, but no two gladiators within a *ludus* may be of the same class.

The players' *ludi* compete for prestige over the course of multiple bouts. The first *ludus* to accumulate a set number of prestige points (we recommend 15) is declared the winner.

In a campaign between more than two *ludi*, a player's school should play an equal number of bouts with each of the other *ludi*.

Before each bout the *ludus* with the higher prestige puts forward the gladiator they will be using. The less prestigious *ludus* then does the same (roll a die if the *ludi* are equally prestigious). The opposing gladiators may never be of the same class, and no single gladiator may represent their *ludus* twice in a row.

Wounded gladiators heal fully between bouts.

An unknown gladiator who survives their first two bouts – regardless of who won – becomes famous and may permanently increase one of their attributes by +1. However,  and  may never be higher than 6, and  may never be higher than 4.

A gladiator who survives five games is granted the *rudis*, the wooden sword representing their freedom, and immediately retires from the arena.





Any gladiators who are killed or retire are immediately replaced with a new, unknown, gladiator of any class, so long as no two gladiators within a *ludus* are of the same class.

A *ludus* earns prestige in the following ways:



+1	Each gladiator who survives a bout.
+1	The gladiator who wins a bout.
+1	An unknown gladiator defeats a famous gladiator.
+2	A gladiator becomes a rudiarius and retires.

Solo games

When playing solo games, the player should nominate one gladiator as their fighter. The opposing gladiator - known hereafter as the opponent - will be controlled by the game. The player will be required to roll dice for both gladiators.

At the start of each turn, the player draws a hand of five cards as normal. At the start of each phase, turn over the top two cards from the play deck. These cards represent the opponent's actions.

If the opponent has the favour of the crowd they will always play ROAR OF THE CROWD to modify their roll. If the crowd are not in their favour, they will use the card's secondary use as a STEP/STRIKE/GUARD card.

If a STRIKE and GUARD card are drawn together, the opponent will *guard* if their  value is higher than their . Otherwise, they will always *jab*.

A sagitarius or veles opponent will always attempt to move into a zone adjacent to the player's gladiator. All other opponents will attempt to move into the same zone as the player's gladiator.

The opponent will always choose to take advantage of a gladiator's wounds at the earliest opportunity and will use the FORTUNA'S FAVOUR card if their die score is lower than the player's.

If one or two GLORY cards are drawn for the opponent, they will use them and ignore any accompanying STEP/STRIKE/GUARD cards. The opponent will always use the IMPERIAL INTEREST card as a GLORY card.

