LOAD

RULEBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPONENT LIST

12 Heroes

Turtleback   Thrasher   Drago   Wart   Vashara   Blip and Blaine

Kril'iock   Medusa   Night Crawler   Seera   Eli Ironsmith   Allay

12 Character Cards

60 Item & Weapon Upgrade Cards

48 Lane Creeps

2 Protectors   2 Skirmishers   2 Runners   18 Regulars   2 Protectors   2 Skirmishers   2 Runners   18 Regulars

1 Game Board

50 Forest Cards

12 Dice

24 Mana   45 Gold   12 Status
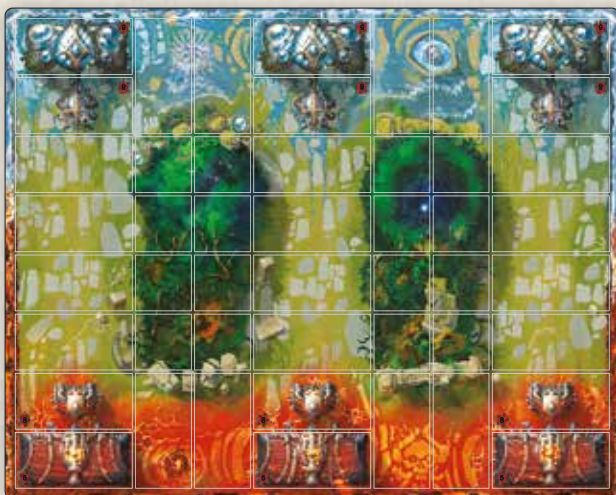
11 Revive   7 Demolish   57 Damage

THE HIDDEN KINGDOM OF ATLANTIS

Isolation. The people of Atlantis covet isolation above all things. In the beginning, our solitude was out of necessity. It was an unavoidable element of our desire to experiment, create and grow without distraction. Or so we foolishly believed. We cut ourselves off from the mainlands, from their greed and their wars, to build a city like no other. Atlantis was a refuge of enlightenment in an age of ignorance and strife. Its very existence a secret, it served as a silent steward of art and knowledge. But in our seclusion, we have grown arrogant, indifferent to the world around us. A world now crying out for our aid, even though they do not know we exist.

In the summer, the earth seared and lakes boiled on the continent to the east. Great chasms formed, revealing the unfathomable abyss below. The armies of Chaos spilled forth from these massive rifts, laying waste to everything in their path. The first kingdom fell within days and many more soon after. The monsters turned entire cities into ashen rubble, erecting mighty citadels in their place. Each fortress became a staging area for further bloody conquests. No prisoners were taken and no village or farm was small enough to be spared.

At the queen's behest, the Grand Council convened to discuss this new threat. Was it finally time for Atlantis to reveal itself to the world? The decision came to a simple vote, with many parties voicing their opinions in predictable fashion. The Guild of the Hand, craftsmen and merchants, were emphatically for the move, a position they had championed for centuries. The Royal Guard, stout defenders of queen and country, warned of the dangers of ending the wards that shrouded our island from view.

Some believed we could win the war in a day, others feared we would be dead within a week. In the end, the naysayers were victorious. They argued the mainlands were not our responsibility. Chaos could not find us here.

I believe neither to be true.

So here I stand, atop the highest tower on the island, ready to push my people to action. With colossal hubris I will either save this world or be responsible for the death of every man, woman and child in my kingdom. Perhaps both. If I do nothing, however, the mainlands will burn until nothing is left but sulfur and bone. What's more, even if we are not discovered, Atlantis will no longer be the shining beacon I know it to be. The beacon it must be. So I whisper under my breath and flick my wrists to light a torch. Not a simple stick crowned with flame, but a magical column of pure radiant energy, piercing the sky like a giant spear. Its glow shines on the waves of the Atlantic, bathing every shore of every continent in bluish-white light. To the people of Earth, I pray this spark in the darkness provides whatever small hope it can. To the forces of Chaos, I hope it is a blinding eyesore impossible to ignore.

The guards finally break through the doors. I can see the queen's disappointment in me as she walks behind them. That look pains me more than the thought of whatever form of execution surely awaits.

"What have you done, Illak," she asks, but I ignore her and answer a different question. For it no longer matters what I have done or what the council recommends or even what the queen desires. Only one thing matters now.

"They will be coming."

LEAGUE OF ANCIENT DEFENDERS

Overview

League of Ancient Defenders (LOAD) is a two-player skirmish game depicting the invasion of the island kingdom of Atlantis by the relentless armies of Chaos. Each player will field a host of frontline soldiers affectionately referred to as "creeps" as well as an assortment of Heroes whose allegiances to the cause may range from unwavering to recently purchased. Players will need to utilize every resource at their disposal to achieve victory as the forces of Chaos push ever closer to the capital and the champions of Atlantis do all they can to drive them back into the ocean.

Achieving Victory

Using their army of creeps and Heroes, players must push toward the opposing base, shattering their defenses and forcing them into full retreat. A player accomplishes this by destroying opposing objectives: Towers and Spawn Points. Each objective awards 1 Victory Point. Earn 3 Victory Points first to become the savior (or destroyer) of Atlantis and win the game!

Additional Players

This rulebook is written with the assumption the game is being played with two players; however, LOAD can also be played with four or six players.

In games with more than two players, each team (Chaos and Atlantis) should consist of six Heroes instead of five. Each team must have one of every role (Guardian, Striker, Assassin, Archer and Mage) as well as one additional Mage.

In a 2vs2 game, one of the Chaos players will take their turn first, followed by an Atlantis player, then the second Chaos player and so on. Each player controls three Heroes and has a maximum Mana Pool of 5 instead of 8.

A 3vs3 game is similar to a 2vs2 match, except each player controls two Heroes and their Mana Pool caps out at 4.

GAME SETUP

Choose a Side

There are two warring armies in LOAD: Chaos and Atlantis. Players may simply agree who will play which side or the choice can be determined by a coin flip. The army you choose determines who goes first, the style of creeps you field as well as dictating how rambunctious your victory celebration will be.

Chaos   Atlantis

Assemble Your Troops

Lane Creeps are the workhorse troops of your army. Significantly less powerful than Heroes, they succeed only in numbers. Players should take their army's 24 creep miniatures and place them on their side of the table.

Choose Your Champions

Heroes are the dominant force on any team and their items and skills can lead your side to victory. This game box contains 12 Heroes, but more will be available in future expansions. Despite appearances, Heroes do not belong to any army and can be employed by either player.

Players must select a Hero from each of the five Hero Classes. A Hero's Class identifies what areas of combat and support they excel at. However, each Hero is unique and there can be great variation even among Heroes of the same Class. Be sure to select Heroes that mesh well with your playstyle as well as with each other.

There are five Hero Classes in LOAD:

Guardian   Striker   Assassin   Archer   Mage

When you have selected your Heroes, be sure to take their associated miniatures and Character and Upgrade Cards. Place the Character Cards in a line in front of you, with the miniatures placed on or near their specific card.

Shuffle the Forest Deck

The woodlands of Atlantis are mostly unexplored and often fraught with peril. The Forest Deck is composed of 50 cards representing the dangers posed by straying from the Beaten Path into the wilderness. Shuffle the deck and place it facedown within reach of both players.

Shuffle the Item Deck

Shuffle the Item Deck and place it facedown within reach of both players. Draw nine cards from the deck and place them faceup along the side of the board as shown on the next page. An item can be purchased by any Hero on their turn as soon as they have enough gold to pay for it. Once a card is purchased, draw a new one to take its place along the side of the board.

⚑ Ready the Game Board

The game board for LOAD has two bases on opposite sides consisting of three Spawn Points and Towers each. The bases are connected by three lanes known as Beaten Paths which are separated by two Forests. More details about the game board can be found on page 10.

⚑ Spawning and Final Setup

Each player spawns three Regular Lane Creeps on each Spawn Point in their base. Heroes spawn one at a time as they are activated in the first round. Finally, collect all of the dice, gold, mana and other tokens and place them around the board as shown below.

THE ARMIES OF CHAOS AND ATLANTIS

Heroes

The most important members of your army, Heroes each bring distinct skills that can turn the tide of a battle. They are hardier than Lane Creeps and come with a unique upgradeable weapon as well as a slot for an additional item that can be purchased during the game. Each Hero miniature has a corresponding Character Card providing detailed information about that Hero. Heroes have drastically different weapons and skills, even within the same Class, and learning which ones complement each other will allow you to form more effective armies.

1 **CLASS**: A Hero's Class identifies what areas of combat and support they excel at.

2 **NAME**: The name of the Hero.

3 **HEALTH**: A Hero's resilience to damage. Once a Hero's Health reaches zero, they are slain.

4 **SIGNATURE WEAPON**: The Hero's default weapon, costing one General Action to use and can be performed multiple times in the same activation. A Hero's signature weapon begins the game at Tier 1, but can be upgraded to become more powerful. Each Hero has a two-sided Upgrade Card, each side with a different tier, to replace their existing weapon." The upgrades can be purchased at any time during the Hero's turn for the amount of gold listed on the card. The weapon tiers must be purchased sequentially (you cannot purchase Tier 3 ⬢ if you have yet to purchase Tier 2 ⬢).

5 **ITEM SLOT**: An open slot that can be filled with a purchased item. The item's type must match one of the symbols on the item slot to be equipped.

6 **SKILLS**: Special abilities a Hero can use in combat. Skills can either be defensive or offensive in nature, identified by the shape of the mana cost icon on the far right of the skill box (a hexagon for offensive and a shield for defensive). Defensive skills require only the mana listed to use while offensive skills require both mana and one General Action. In addition, offensive skills may not directly target an opposing objective nor can they be used on an objective field that contains no miniatures.

MEDUSA

SERPENT'S BOW

➡2 ⬡4 ⬚+
Subtract 1 Strike for each ⬚ rolled.

RAIN OF ARROWS ➡2 ⬡6 ⊞+ ③
Attack strikes target field and all fields adjacent to Medusa.

AQUA PROTECTION ⓪
Discard **X+1** mana to ignore **X** damage from an attack.

STARE ➡2 ②
Immobilize.

Lane Creeps

There are two types of creeps in LOAD: Lane Creeps and Forest Creeps. Both types can be killed by Heroes for gold but only Lane Creeps have miniatures.

Lane Creeps spawn in waves of up to three at a player's Spawn Points before pushing toward the opposing base. Left unchecked, they will overwhelm your Towers and destroy your own Spawn Points, forcing a hasty retreat.

A player moves all creep waves a lane at a time, starting with creeps closest to the opposing Spawn Point. A wave may move once per activation up to two fields. Lane Creeps may not finish their movement on a field occupied by other creeps or opposing Heroes and objectives. Creep waves always end their movement as soon as they are able to attack. If they begin their activation in range to attack, they will not move at all. If an opponent's Spawn Point is Demolished, the Lane Creeps will continue to move through the opposing base along the border of the map toward the closest active Spawn Point.

If a creep wave's movement would put them on the same field as another wave, the player has the option to merge the two waves. The receiving wave must have fewer than three creeps and cannot have more than three once the merge is complete. Creeps cannot be removed from the receiving wave, which must be the one closest to the opposing Spawn Point. Any creep can be merged, regardless if it is regular or specialized. Place the merged creeps onto their new field at no cost. Any unmerged creeps remain on the field behind the receiving wave.

Each Regular Lane Creep has 1 Health, a Range of 1 and rolls 1 die when attacking, with an Accuracy of 4+. Every two creeps killed with a single attack from a Hero award 1 gold.

Atlantis Regular   Chaos Regular

From the second round onward, two Regular Lane Creeps will spawn on each of a player's Spawn Points. If a player does not have enough regular creeps to spawn two per Spawn Point, they will spawn as many as they have available. In addition, the player may spawn one specialized creep of their choice at a Spawn Point. The Runner, Skirmisher and Protector are the three types of specialized creeps and each has special bonuses that apply to the wave they are a part of as detailed on the right side of this page. The first specialized creep is free, but players have the option to purchase up to two additional specialized creeps per round at the cost of 3 gold each. Each specialized creep must be spawned at a different Spawn Point and the full 3 gold must be paid by a single Hero. If a player's Spawn Point is Demolished, then they may only spawn up to two specialized creeps, and so on.

❦ Protectors

A Protector creep has two Health instead of one and can only be killed if both Health are taken with a single attack. Protectors must be targeted first in a creep wave.

Atlantis Protector   Chaos Protector

❦ Skirmishers

A creep wave with a Skirmisher rolls one additional die when attacking. Skirmishers must be targeted last in a creep wave.

Atlantis Skirmisher   Chaos Skirmisher

❦ Runners

When activated, creep waves with a Runner will move to the legal field closest to the opposing Spawn Point. Remember that a creep wave always stops movement when it is in range to attack.

Atlantis Runner   Chaos Runner

When spending gold it is important to maintain the right balance between upgrading weapons and purchasing items for your Heroes and spawning creeps to push lanes and defend objectives.

GAME BOARD

Each space on the game board, whether it is 1x1 square or a 1x2 rectangle, is referred to as a "field." Lane Creeps can only move through the rectangular fields, keeping them within their Beaten Path, while Heroes are free to move across the entire map. Neither creep nor Hero can enter a field occupied by an opposing miniature, Tower or Spawn Point. Additionally, Heroes may not end their movement on a field occupied by a allied Hero. Understanding these restrictions will be vital in the defense (or destruction) of Atlantis.
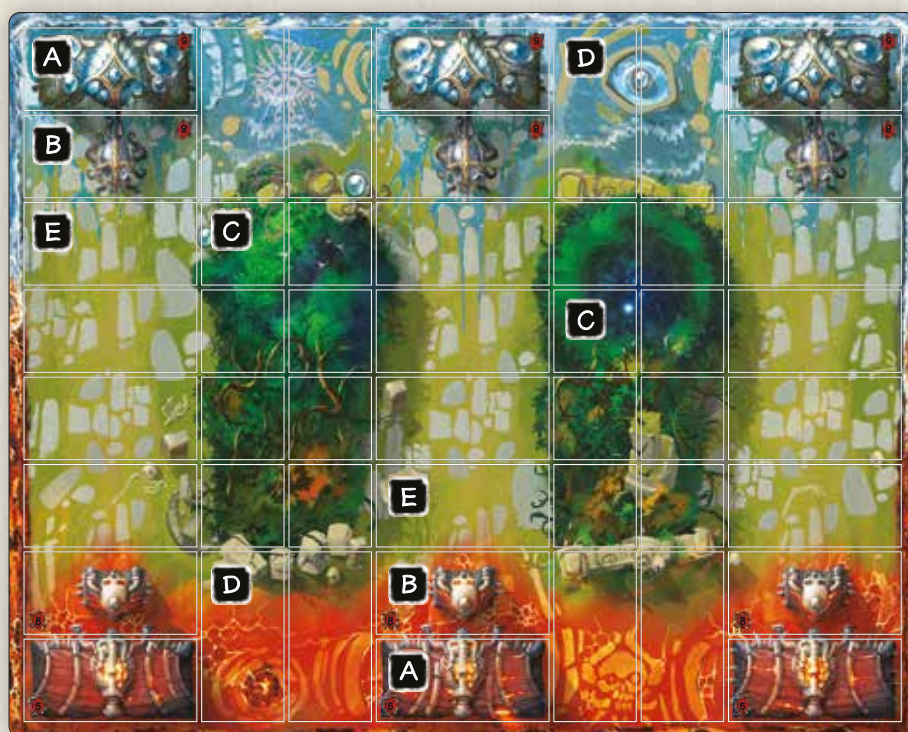
A SPAWN POINTS: Spawn Points are fields a player's Heroes and Lane Creeps will use to enter the board. They are also an important target for the opponent as their destruction permanently prevents a player from spawning creeps in that lane. Destroying a Spawn Point awards the opposing player 1 Victory Point and 5 gold to the Hero who destroyed it. Spawn Points have 5 Health and the field they are on may not be entered by an opposing miniature. Spawn Points cannot be damaged unless the Tower in the same lane is Demolished.

B TOWERS: Towers are an additional line of defense for your base. They have a range of 2 and roll 4 dice, striking with 3+. Each Tower has 8 Health and, if destroyed, awards the opposing player 1 Victory Point as well as 5 gold to the Hero that destroyed it. Like Spawn Points, miniatures may not move on or through fields containing an opposing Tower.

C FOREST: The 2x4 wooded areas on either side of the middle lane. When a Hero steps on a Forest field, they draw one card from the Forest Deck.

D EMPTY BASE FIELDS: The 2x1 set of fields between a player's Towers and Spawn Points are considered part of their base. Opposing Heroes may not enter these fields until at least one of the adjacent Towers is Demolished. Regardless of the status of the Towers, only allied Heroes may enter and exit the base through the Forest.

E BEATEN PATH: The three lanes connecting the outposts of Atlantis and the citadels of Chaos. Lane Creeps will traverse these rectangular fields as they advance upon the opponent. There is no limit to the number of Heroes a player can have in any particular lane, but the terrain is narrow and sacrificing one path for another is a risky strategy.

DECKS

Forest Deck

When a Hero enters a Forest field, they will draw one card from the Forest Deck. The deck, like the Forest, is full of both reward and peril. If a Forest Creep is drawn, it attacks first. The opposing player rolls the number of die indicated on the card, each result equal to or higher than the Accuracy number reduces the Hero's Health by one if no defense is utilized. If the Hero survives, they can choose to either use their General Action(s) to attack the creep or continue their move action. If the Hero attacks the creep and inflicts damage equal to or greater than its Health, the Hero receives the amount of gold indicated on the card. The damage to Forest creep may be inflicted across multiple attacks as long as they occur during the activation of the Hero who drew it. Regardless of the results of the Forest Creep attack, even if the Hero was unable to kill it, its card is discarded at the end of the turn.

1 **GOLD VALUE**: The amount of gold the Hero will receive for slaying the Forest Creep during their turn.

2 **NAME**: The name of the Forest Creep or event.

3 **HEALTH**: The total damage required to slay the Forest Creep.

4 **DESCRIPTION**: The Forest Creep's attack values and/or explanation of rules specific to the card.

Item Deck

Once a Hero has accumulated enough gold, they may purchase an item to place on the empty slot on their Character Card. Items can be purchased at any time during a Hero's activation. If a Hero purchases an additional item, the equipped item is discarded. Each item has a specific type as shown in the box at the bottom of this page. If the Hero's item slot does not have the matching symbol, they cannot buy and equip that item. Once an item is purchased and equipped, it is immediately available for use by the Hero. Items with a range value require one General Action to use, while all others may be activated without cost. Regardless of the type of item, they can only be activated once per round unless otherwise noted on the card.

1 **GOLD COST**: The amount of gold required to purchase the item.

2 **NAME**: The name of the item.

3 **TYPE**: The type of item as well as the slot it can be equipped on.

4 **DESCRIPTION**: The item's attack values and/or explanation of the abilities specific to the card.

Offensive	⚔ One-Handed	🪓 Two-Handed	✧ Ranged	🔮 Magic
Defensive	🗡 Heavy	🏹 Light	🛡 Shield	
Other	👝 Accessory			

COMBAT

Attack Skills and Items

Heroes inflict damage upon opposing miniatures and objectives using a variety of unique skills and items while Towers and Lane Creeps have set statistics. Regardless of how the damage is done, however, all attacks share the following characteristics:

1 **NAME**: The name of the weapon or skill.

2 **➡ RANGE**: The distance the Hero can be from their target and still use the attack or skill.

3 **◉ DICE**: The number of dice rolled when the weapon or skill is used.

4 **⊞ + ACCURACY**: The minimum number that must be rolled to successfully Strike the target. Successful Strikes are not guaranteed damage; defensive skills can mitigate some or all of the blow.

5 **DESCRIPTION**: An explanation of effects that influence how or when the signature weapon, item or skill may be used or what occurs during or after its use.

6 **MANA COST** (Skills Only): The amount of mana from the Mana Pool required to perform the attack.

Establishing Range

To determine if a target is in range of your Hero's signature weapon, item or skill, simply take the range value of the attack and count that many fields from the attacker to the intended target, not including the field the attacker occupies. If the number of fields exceeds the range of the attack, the attacker must move or select a different target. Range cannot be established with diagonals but is not obstructed by either miniatures or objectives. Below is an example of a Hero establishing range.
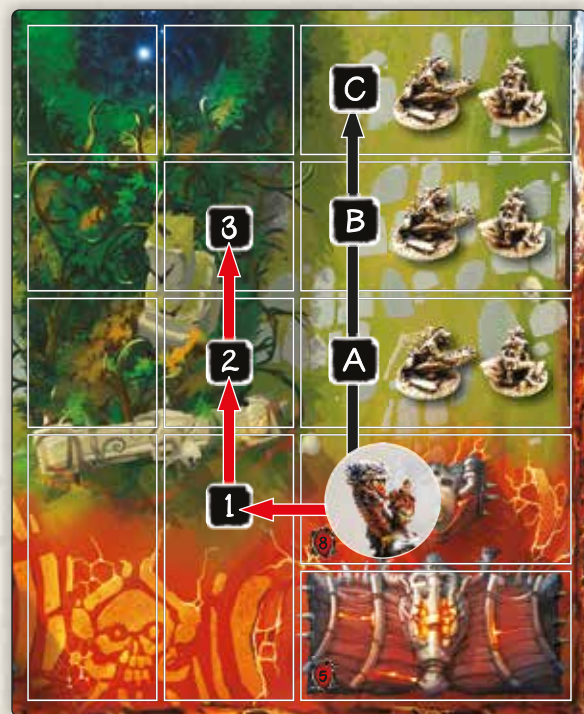
Vashara's Fire Serpent attack has a range of 2. She may target fields A or B, but field C is out of range from her current position. By moving one field to her left and another two forward, Vashara will be in range of field C. This may prove to be a costly endeavor, however, as it will require Vashara to draw a total of two cards from the Forest Deck.

Attacking

Attacking your opponent is the only way to achieve victory. The battle to save (or destroy) the world will be decided with the lives of your Heroes and creeps as well as the tears of your intrepid Tower and Spawn Point construction engineers.

⚜ Collateral Damage

This section assumes you have already established range to your target as described on Page 12. Note that most attacks target the field itself rather than a specific miniature or objective within it. Also remember that a field devoid of opposing miniatures and objectives may not be the target of an attack, even if the attack would result in an opponent being struck (such as with an area of effect attack). You cannot Strike allied miniatures or objectives, even by accident, unless otherwise noted.

Did You Know?

A One-Handed Weapon item called Backstabber can target both opposing and allied miniatures, allowing you to slay a Hero on your own team.

⚜ Making the Attack

Every attack, whether it is from a signature weapon, skill or item, has three basic statistics:

Dice 🎲, Accuracy 🎯+ and Range ➡. Some skills and items also have additional effects that should also be consulted to see how they influence the outcome of the attack.

To make the attack, roll the number of Dice and count the total of successful Strikes, dice rolls that equal or exceed the Accuracy of the attack. These Strikes are assigned to opposing miniatures and objectives within the target field in a specific order depending on the method of attack.

Successful Strikes must be assigned to Lane Creeps before any other opponent. Creeps themselves have their own priority; Protectors must be struck first, followed by Regular Lane Creeps or Runners and finally Skirmishers.

1 Protectors **2** Regulars or Runners **3** Skirmishers

After all Lane Creeps are slain (or if none were present to begin with), Strikes can be assigned to an objective or Hero.

4 Objective or Hero

If the attack used was a Hero skill, all Strikes must be assigned to a Hero (if present) after all Lane Creeps are slain. Strikes from skills can only be assigned to an objective once it is the only target remaining on a field.

Skill Limitations

Offensive skills cannot target an objective if there are no creeps or Heroes occupying the same field.

⚜ Examples

Example 1: Two Lane Creeps and a Hero with four Health are guarding a Tower when they are attacked by an opposing Hero with his signature weapon. Even though the opposing Hero's 4 successful Strikes would slay the Hero, the first two must be assigned to the Lane Creeps. The opposing Hero may then decide to assign the remaining two Strikes to either the Tower or the Hero.
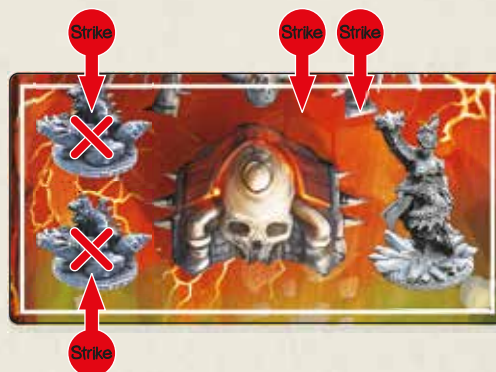
Example 2: A Hero with seven Health is guarding a Tower with one Health when an opposing Hero attacks with a skill. The opposing Hero rolls 4 Strikes, but all must be assigned to the defending Hero. If the opposing Hero had chosen to use their signature weapon (or an offensive item) instead, they could have Demolished the Tower.

Defending

Defensive skills and items can be used after Strikes are assigned to a Hero to mitigate damage from the attack. Rolling for defense is the same as attacking, with each roll equal to or above the Accuracy value successfully canceling one of the attacker's Strikes. Unless otherwise noted, defensive items can only be used to cancel Strikes against the Hero with the item equipped.

Defensive items may have additional or alternative bonuses in the card description:

1 **ADDITIONAL (ADD)**: Items with this label will, upon activation, allow rolling the specified number of dice when attacked as well as activate the ability detailed in the description.

2 **ALTERNATIVE (ALT)**: Items with this label allow the player to choose to either make a defensive roll or activate the ability detailed in the description.

Example: Seera attacks Turtleback with her Charm skill. She rolls 3 🎲 with an Accuracy of 🎲+ and luckily gets all 3 Strikes! Charm has an effect that causes it to Immobilize the target on strike. Turtleback has the defensive item Mystic Shield equipped which allows him to roll 1 🎲 with an Accuracy of 🎲+. Turtleback rolls a 🎲, thus ignoring one of the incoming Strikes. Mystic Shield also has the ADD label, allowing him to ignore 2 additional Strikes if he is targeted by a skill. Combined with his successful roll, Turtleback ignores all of Seera's Strikes. Immobilize is still applied to him, however, as Charm did successfully strike, even if every Strike was ignored.

> Accessory items do not have a set moment they can be activated. They may be useful before an attack is made, after damage is taken or even when no attack is taking place at all. Read the description carefully so you are prepared to use the accessory at the right time.

Combat Special Effects

Some skills and items have special abilities that can alter the outcome of an attack or defense roll or provide temporary or permanent effects to the attacker or defender. Read the text carefully for all of your Heroes and each new item you obtain so you know when to utilize these effects and understand their inherit advantages and disadvantages.

Some skills and items cause negative Status Effects on the defender of an attack. These negative states are tracked with specific tokens, as seen in the list below, and last until that Hero has completed their next activation. All Status Effect tokens are removed at the end of a player's Hero Phase. Creeps and objectives are not affected by Status Effects.

BLINDNESS – This Hero subtracts 1 from each die when making an attack roll, unless the roll is already a 1.

KNOCKDOWN: This Hero begins their turn with 1 General Action instead of 2.

IMMOBILIZE: This Hero cannot move.

Effects like Blindness alter the results after a dice roll has been made. They add (or subtract) the number listed from each die, sometimes affecting the outcome in glorious fashion. Be careful not to assume these effects either add additional dice to the roll or change the Accuracy required to strike. The latter would actually have the opposite effect intended by the item or skill.

Example – Wart uses his Flash Bomb skill on a field containing Thrasher, blinding the little psychopath. Thrasher, being the calm individual that he is, retaliates his next turn with his Leaf Blade skill, rolling four dice, all with the result of 3. Normally this would be a heavy blow against Wart, but because Thrasher is afflicted with Blindness, each 3 becomes a 2 and Thrasher misses entirely.

There are also effects that allow characters to roll additional (or less) dice than they would otherwise, such as the Fallen Queen's Joint Cause skill. Some skills and items benefit greatly from additional rolls and allying the former Atlantean monarch with certain Heroes can be a deadly combination. Be sure to inspect the symbols in effect descriptions so you know what your Heroes are capable of.

Inflicting Damage

Heroes, Lane Creeps and even objectives all have Health to determine how much damage must be inflicted before they are slain or Demolished. A Hero's Health is listed on their Character Card while the Health of Towers and Spawns Points is listed on the game board. Protector Lane Creeps have 2 Health, while the rest of the Lane Creeps (Regulars, Runners and Skirmishers) have only 1 Health.

Damage Tokens

Each Strike that is not mitigated or avoided represents one point of damage against the target's Health. Players should use damage tokens to keep track of the total damage a Hero or objective has received, placing the tokens on the corresponding Character Card or directly on the field in the case of Towers or Spawn Points. Lane Creeps either have only one Health or must be slain with a single attack and therefore do not need damage tokens to track their lack of Health. Once a Hero or creep has received damage equal to or greater than their Health, they are considered slain. Remove the miniature from the board and place it either on its Character Card, if a Hero, or with your unspawned Lane Creeps, if a creep. Heroes and Lane Creeps may enter the game once more, but Demolished Towers and Spawn Points are gone for good.

When a Tower or Spawn Point is Demolished, place a Demolish token on that field. If a Hero performed the action that Demolished the objective, they are rewarded with 5 gold. If a creep destroyed the objective, the gold is lost. A field with a Demolish token is treated as if it was part of the Beaten Path.

Demolish Tokens

When Demolished, objectives cease performing their functions. Towers will no longer attack and Spawn Points will no longer spawn Lane Creeps or be available for Heroes to spawn.

When a Hero is slain, remove all tokens from their Character Card, including gold, and return them to their respective community piles. Place a Revive token on the Character Card with the "2" side showing. If the Hero was slain by an opposing Hero, that player's Hero receives 3 gold. Heroes slain by creeps and Towers award no gold.

Revive Tokens

At the beginning of a player's Hero Phase, any Hero not on the game board and without a Revive token may immediately spawn from the Spawn Point of the player's choosing and activate as normal. Spawning a Hero is free, but a Hero may not spawn on a Spawn Point occupied by another Hero. At the end of the player's Hero Phase, each Revive token on their Heroes is either flipped or removed ("2's" are flipped while 1's" are removed).

PLAYING THE GAME

Each game of LOAD consists of three phases which constitute a single round. The three phases are Reinforcements, Aggression and Hero. Players complete the Reinforcements Phase simultaneously, refreshing their Mana Pools to 8, giving each Hero 1 gold and spawning as many Lane Creeps as they are able. The Aggression Phase is performed sequentially, beginning with the first player activating all of their Towers and followed by the second player doing the same. The first player then moves all of their Lane Creeps, then the second player and finally ending with the first (then second) player attacking with all of their creeps. The Hero Phase is also sequential, with the first player activating all of their Heroes and finishing with flipping or removing a Revive token from each of their Heroes before the second player does the same.
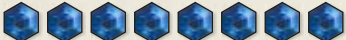
Phase Summary

The game begins with Chaos' invasion of Atlantis and their march to the capital. The Chaos player always goes first. Below is an outline of the basic components and order of each phase.

TEAM CHAOS	TEAM ATLANTIS
1 REINFORCEMENTS PHASE	
Replenish Mana Pool to 8	Replenish Mana Pool to 8
Award Each Hero with 1 Gold	Award Each Hero with 1 Gold
Buy/Spawn Lane Creeps	Buy/Spawn Lane Creeps
2 AGGRESSION PHASE	
Activate Towers	x
x	Activate Towers
Move with Lane Creeps	x
x	Move with Lane Creeps
Attack with Lane Creeps	x
x	Attack with Lane Creeps
3 HERO PHASE	
Activate Heroes	x
Remove/Flip 1 Revive from Each Slain Hero	x
x	Activate Heroes
x	Remove/Flip 1 Revive from Each Slain Hero

⚜ Replenish Mana & Award Gold

Players replenish their mana to 8 every round. In addition, each Hero (active or slain), is awarded 1 gold for their service. The Mana Pool is capped at 8 mana per player.

Mana ⬡⬡⬡⬡⬡⬡⬡⬡

⚜ Buy/Spawn Lane Creeps

Every round after the first, two Regular Lane Creeps are spawned per active Spawn Point by each player. Each player also spawns one specialized creep on any Spawn Point. Players may buy up to two additional specialized creeps to be spawned at the cost of 3 gold per creep. The 3 gold must be spent by a single Hero and the creep cannot be spawned at a Spawn Point with another specialized creep. The number of active (not Demolished) Spawn Points a player has is the maximum number of specialized creeps they may spawn per round.

⚜ Activate Towers

During Tower activation, if any of the three Towers have a valid target in range, they will activate. Each Tower has a range of 2, rolling 4 dice with an Accuracy of 3+.

⚜ Move and Merge with Lane Creeps

Each wave of creeps is activated in a lane in order, the wave closest to the opposing Spawn Point moving first. If a valid target is in range when a wave of Lane Creeps is activated, they forfeit their move action. Otherwise they will move forward up to two fields toward the closest opposing objective. The player may decide how many fields they move, but they must always move at least one field forward, if they are able. Lane Creeps may only move forward and never in a field occupied by opposing miniatures, objectives or a field occupied by allied creeps. If their move action puts them in range to attack, they must stop moving. If a creep's movement would allow them to move onto a field with another creep wave, the player may choose to merge some of the creeps into the wave. A field cannot hold more than three Lane Creeps.

⚜ Attack with Lane Creeps

Creep waves attack in the same order they moved, the closest to the opposing Spawn Point in a lane attacking first. Lane Creeps will always attack if they are capable of doing so.

⚜ Activate Heroes

The players will now take turns with their Heroes one by one in whatever order they wish. Heroes not on the board and without a Revive token may spawn at an active Spawn Point at no cost.

Upon activation, Heroes may move up to three fields from their current location. If the Hero decides to use a General Action, their move ends immediately and any additional movement is lost. Heroes may only move forward, backward, left and right. Heroes may move through a field containing a allied Hero but they cannot end movement on that field. Heroes moving through a Forest field occupied by an allied Hero do not draw a Forest Deck card. Heroes may not move onto fields containing opposing miniatures or objectives.

After a Hero is finished moving, they may use up to two General Actions before ending their activation. General Action can be spent performing one of four different tasks:

Signature Weapon — An attack with the Hero's signature weapon. Can be performed more than once, each time spending 1 General Action.

Item Activation — Using an equipped item. Not all items require a General Action to be activated.

Skill Activation — Using one of the Hero's innate skills. Each skill can only be performed once per turn.

Movement — Spend 1 General Action to move up to two additional fields. Can be performed more than once, each time costing 1 General Action.

After you have taken turns with all of your active Heroes, flip or remove the Revive token on each of your slain Heroes. This ends your Hero Phase. Once both players have each performed their Hero Phase, a new round begins.

TOURNAMENT MODE

LOAD is a competitive strategy game with special rules for tournament play. The game can be played with tournaments as small as 8 players and as large as 64. In tournaments, players may pick their Heroes regardless of role. The tournament Hero pool consists of 24 Heroes: 12 from the base game, plus 6 each from the LOADING and PLEASE WAIT expansions.

Small Tournaments

Small tournaments are played with 8 or 16 players with the following rules:

Victory Condition — 2-3 Victory Points needed to win (established at the beginning of the tournament).

Elimination Round — The winner of a match advances to the next round while the loser goes home wanting. Quarterfinals are the only elimination round for tournaments with 8 players while 16-player tournaments will have two, beginning with a round of 16.

Best of 3 — The Semifinals and Finals are played as best of 3. Whoever wins 2 games is declared the victor.

Large Tournaments

Large tournaments are played with 32 or 64 players with the following rules:

Victory Condition — 2-4 Victory Points needed to win (established at the beginning of the tournament).

Group Stage — Groups are formed with four players per group. Each player will play one game with every other player in their group. The player with the most wins advances to the Elimination Round(s).

Elimination Round — The winner of a match advances to the next round while the loser goes home wanting. Quarterfinals are the only elimination round for tournaments with 32 players while 64-player tournaments will have two, beginning with a round of 16.

Best of 3 — The Semifinals and Finals are played as best of 3. Whoever wins 2 games is declared the victor.

Hero Selection

The official Hero drafting method is Captain's Draft. Each player or team bans two Heroes in the first round, selects three Heroes in the second round, bans more Heroes in the third round and makes final Hero selections in the fourth round. In the case of 2v2 play, the team captain will be the one banning and selecting Heroes for their team. Diagrams for 1v1 and 2v2 drafting rounds can be found below.

RULES SUMMARY

⚜ Setup

Each player places 3 Regular Lane Creeps on each of their Spawn Points.

⚜ The Three Phases

Both players set mana to 8 – Players cannot have more than 8 mana. Each Hero receives 1 gold.

Every round after the first, each player spawns 2 Regular Lane Creeps as well as one specialized creep. Heroes may also purchase up to two additional specialized creeps for the cost of 3 gold each. No more than one specialized creep can spawn per Spawn Point.

Activate Towers - If a valid target is in range, the Tower will activate. Each Tower has a range of 2, rolling 4 dice with an Accuracy of 3+.

Move and Merge Lane Creeps – Players move their creep waves forward up to two fields toward the closest opposing objective. If their move action puts them in range to attack, they can no longer move (even if they are in range before moving). If a creep's movement would allow them to move onto a field with another creep wave, the player may choose to merge some of the creeps into the wave. No field can have more than three creeps.

Attack with Lane Creeps – All creeps will attack, lane by lane, starting with the wave closest to the opposing Spawn Point. Lane Creeps must attack if they are in range to do so.

Activate Heroes – Upon activation, Heroes may move up to three fields from their current location. Using a General Action will end their move. After a Hero is finished moving, they may use up to two General Actions before ending their activation. General Actions can be spent performing four different tasks:
    1. Signature Weapon – An attack with the Hero's signature weapon. Can be performed more than once, each time spending 1 General Action.
    2. Item Activation – Using an item purchased with gold. Not all items require a General Action to be activated.
    3. Skill Activation – Using one of the Hero's innate skills. Each skill can only be performed once per turn.

    4. Movement – Spend 1 General Action to move up to two additional fields. Can be performed more than once, each time costing 1 General Action.

After all of your Heroes are activated, flip or remove the Revive token on each of your slain Heroes. Also remove any Status Effects on your active Heroes.

⚜ Moving

Heroes cannot finish their movement on a field containing an allied Hero. Neither Heroes nor creeps can move onto fields containing opposing miniatures or objectives nor can they move diagonally.

⚜ Attacking

Most attacks target the entire field and successful Strikes must be applied to Lane Creeps first, followed by Heroes and finally Towers and Spawn Points. The target field must be within range of the attack skill or item used and each die result must be equal to or higher than the Accuracy listed to count as a Strike. Heroes may use their signature weapon or an offensive item to attack objectives before Heroes as long as there are no Lane Creeps remaining.

Only Heroes may earn gold from slaying opposing Heroes, creeps and objectives. Every two creeps slain with a single attack award 1 gold while slaying an opposing Hero awards 3 gold. Demolishing an opposing Tower or Spawn Point awards 5 gold.

⚜ Victory

Demolishing a Tower or Spawn Point awards 1 Victory Point in addition to the 5 gold. Earn 3 Victory Points first to become the savior (or destroyer) of Atlantis and win the game!

⚜ Status Effects

Blindness: This Hero subtracts 1 from each die in an attack roll.
Knockdown: This Hero begins their turn with 1 General Action instead of 2.
Immobilize: This Hero cannot move.