

# The Acorn Race

Key Word: Regret

by Seth Karstad, Logan Yue, Morgan Cselinacz

## Introduction

*4 - 5 players*

*30+ minutes*

The animals of the forest have come together for the annual Acorn Race! Choose which animal you will be as you vie for fastest critter of the forest by building the best deck you can. Beat the other animals to the finish line and show the tortoise and the hare who the fastest animal *really* is!

- You are attempting to win a race through a forest.
- Do this by building the best deck, and beating your opponents to the finish line.

## Contains:

- Deck of Forage Cards
- x5 Starting Deck of Cards
- Deck of Trap Cards
- Game Board
- x5 Pawns

## Setup:

- Choose who will be going first.
- Each player receives a starting deck composed of 6x *Walk*, and 2x *Run*, and the pawn corresponding to their chosen player color. Each player will also choose 2 special animal cards, which are above the starting decks in Tabletop Simulator. The person to the right of the starting player will get to pick an animal and grab the 2 corresponding special animal cards, followed by the next person counterclockwise, until every player has picked their animal cards. Have the players shuffle their starting deck and place it face down in their zones. Players will add cards to their **'deck'** over the course of the game.

<b>Walk</b> Gain 1 A	<b>Walk</b> Gain 1 A	<b>Walk</b> Gain 1 A	<b>Walk</b> Gain 1 A	<b>Walk</b> Gain 1 A	<b>Walk</b> Gain 1 A	<b>Run</b> Gain 2 Acc	<b>Run</b> Gain 2 Acorns
Move: 1	Move: 1	Move: 1	Move: 1	Move: 1	Move: 1	Move: 2	Move: 2

- Players should make room for a **'Nest Pile'** beside their deck. All newly purchased cards, used cards, or cards discarded through actions will be placed in the Nest Pile.
- Each player places their pawn on one of the three starting positions of the game board (on the starting green, brown, or blue square).
- Everyone draws the top 4 cards from their deck. This is the player's **'hand'**.
- Shuffle the deck of Forage cards and the deck of Trap cards. Do not place any cards in the Foraging Row yet!

### **Board Layout:**

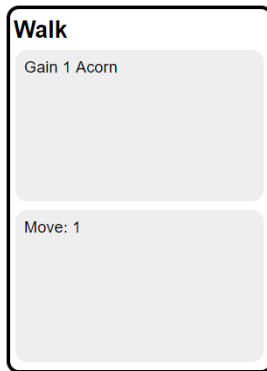
The board is divided into three lanes - **trail** (demarcated with the color brown), **brush** (demarcated with the color green), and **river** (demarcated with the color blue).

- There are Checkpoints on the board on the 25 point, 50 point, and 75 point marks. There are several things that happen at these points in the game:
  - The first player to reach the Checkpoint removes all the current cards in the Foraging Row from the game, without putting down any new cards. These cards are removed from the game and placed beside the Foraging Row. This happens only for the first player to cross a given Checkpoint, and happens separately for each Checkpoint (e.g. Player 1 crosses the first Checkpoint. This causes all the cards in the Foraging Row to be set aside. When Player 2 crosses Checkpoint 1, nothing will happen to the Forage Row. Next, Player 2 crosses Checkpoint 2, and all cards in the Forage row are set aside).
  - Players who have reached a Checkpoint can no longer be pushed backwards past the Checkpoint. For example, if a player is on the 30 spot, and a trap pushes them back 6 spaces, they can only be moved back to the 25 spot.
  - Once a player reaches a Checkpoint, they are immediately pushed one lane to the left. For example, if a player is on the river lane, they are moved to the left over to the trail lane. If a player is on the brush lane, they are moved to the river lane, etc.

### **Card Layout:**

Most cards have two actions the player can choose from. Players can only use one of these two actions per card, per turn. Depending on what lane a player is in, and what card they play, it is possible to get bonuses on top of what the card already gives. These bonuses are not required to be used, but are usually worth it. These actions can be done in any order, but one action must be completed before starting another. *For an example, see the Refresh card example below.*

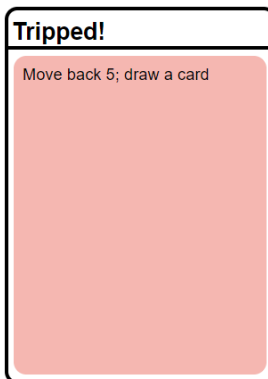
→ Players begin with a Starting Deck of cards.



For example, the player can choose to either gain one acorn, **or** move forward one space.

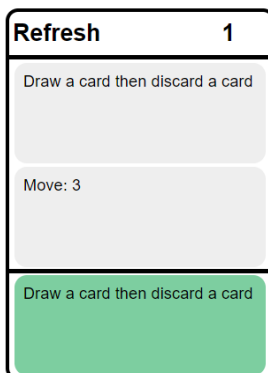
- Acorns are gathered up as a player plays cards and use abilities to gain them. They are collected over the course of a players' turn, and the player can spend them at any point during their turn to buy cards from the Forage row (explained below). Once a player ends their turn, all acorns they have left are lost.

→ **'Trap'** cards have negative effects which will enter your deck by other players putting them in your Nest Pile, or by you putting them in your own nest for a gain.



For example, the player may choose to play this card which would result in them moving back 5 spaces and then drawing a card. They could also opt to not play this card and put it in their Nest at the end of their turn.

→ **'Forage'** cards can be bought with acorns from the Forage row and have various positive effects for the player. There are the two options the player can choose from from, as well as a bonus action that is demarcated with the color of the lane the player needs to be in to be able to use that bonus action. The **'cost'** of the card demarcates how many acorns the player needs to spend to buy the card from the Forage Row during their turn, shown in the upper right-hand corner of the card.



For example, the player requires 1 acorn in order to purchase this card. When this card is played, they can either draw a card and discard a card, or move forward 3. Additionally, if they are in the brush lane, they will also have the bonus of drawing a card and then discarding a card. An example of using this card if you are in the brush lane would be drawing a card and then discarding a card, then drawing another card and then discarding another card.

## Playing the Game:

Beginning with the starting player, players will take turns in a clockwise fashion. Each turn consists of 4 steps.

1. Flip over at most 2 new cards from the Forage deck into the Forage row, up to a maximum of 6 cards.
  - a. If there happen to be no cards remaining in the Forage deck, skip this step.
2. Decide whether you would like to change lanes:
  - a. On your first move from the starting position, you may choose which lane you want to go into without any cost.
  - b. If you would like to change lanes, you must put two cards from your hand into your Nest Pile without using any of their actions. This does not count as discarding.
3. Play the cards in your hand in any order.
  - a. Actions can include:
    - i. **'Move'**: move your pawn forward the amount of spaces specified by the action. Or, if specified, move backwards.
    - ii. **'Acorns'**: the currency of the forest. If you gain enough acorns from cards during your turn, you can use these to buy Forage Cards from the Forage row. Newly purchased Forage cards get put into your Nest Pile.
    - iii. **'Draw'**: draw the specified amount of cards from your deck into your hand.
    - iv. **'Discard'**: Discarding a card is putting it from your hand into your Nest without activating any of the card's effects. You may **only** discard when instructed to do so by a card, and you **cannot** discard cards you have played in the current turn.
    - v. **'Adding Traps'**: When adding a trap to a Nest Pile, draw a Trap from the Trap deck and place it in the Nest Pile. If there are no Traps remaining in the Trap Deck, nothing happens.
  - b. Alternatively, you can also choose not to play certain cards, unless otherwise stated.
  - c. If you are in a lane that matches the bonus action color on your card, you can also play the additional bonus action as described above under **Card Layout**.
4. Once your turn is over:
  - a. All the cards, either those you played or those still in your hand, go into your Nest Pile.
  - b. Draw another hand of 4 cards from your deck for your next turn.
    - i. When you would draw and your deck is empty, shuffle the cards in your Nest Pile, and place them face down. This is your new deck. Draw the rest of the cards you need from the top.
5. The next player's turn starts.

**Win Condition:**

- The first player to cross the finish line wins the game!
  - For beginners: The finish line is on the 75 spot.
  - For advanced players: The finish line is on the 100 spot.
  - For short games: The finish line is on the 60 spot.

### **Examples of play:**

*Here is a complete example of two players during the first round of play.*

1. Both players shuffle their decks and place them face down. They both draw the top 4 cards of their decks.
2. Player 1:
  - a. Takes two cards off the top of the foraging cards pile and places them face-up onto the foraging row for a total of two cards available for purchase.
  - b. Has 3 Walk and 1 Run in their hand - they use 2 Walk to gain 2 acorns and use these acorns to buy a Hidden Stash and place the Hidden Stash face-up in their Nest Pile.
  - c. Uses the rest of their cards (1 Walk and 1 Run) to move forward 3 spots onto spot 3 of the board. They choose brush and thus move onto spot 3 of the white lane.
  - d. Ends their turn and puts all of the cards in their hand face-up into their Nest Pile. They draw 4 new cards from their remaining deck.
3. Player 2:
  - a. Takes two cards off the top of the foraging cards pile and places them face-up onto the foraging row for a total of three cards available for purchase.
  - b. Has 2 Walk and 2 Run in their hand. The player chooses to use the 6 move and move forward 6 spots into the river lane, placing their piece on spot 6 of the blue lane.
  - c. Ends their turn and puts all of the cards in their hand face-up into their Nest Pile. They draw 4 new cards from their remaining deck.
4. The next turn begins.

*Here is a complete example of two players where Player 1 crosses the 25 point checkpoint during their turn.*

1. Player 1:
  - a. Does not turn over any new cards from the top of the foraging cards pile since there are 6 cards already in the foraging row.
  - b. Is on the 24 spot and uses 2 Walk to move forward 2 spots. Since they have crossed the 25 mark, they are moved one lane over to the left and are moved from the brush lane to the river lane. Their piece is now on spot 26 in the blue lane.
  - c. Removes all 6 cards from the foraging row and removes them from the game. They do not put any new cards down in the foraging row.
  - d. Play the rest of the cards in their hand.
  - e. Ends their turn and puts all of the cards in their hand face-up into their Nest Pile. They draw 2 new cards from their remaining deck, and since their deck is now empty, shuffle all of their cards in the Nest Pile and place them face down as their new deck. They draw 2 more cards from the top of their deck for a full hand of 4 cards.
2. Player 2:
  - a. Takes two cards off the top of the foraging cards pile and places them face-up onto the foraging row for a total of two cards available for purchase.
  - b. Uses their cards to move past the 25 mark checkpoint. Since they have crossed the 25 mark, they are moved one lane over to the left and are moved from the river lane over to the trail lane. Their piece is now on spot 29 in the red lane.
  - c. Uses Two Evils to force Player 1 to put a trap into their Nest Pile. Player 1 draws the first card off of the top of the Trap Card pile and puts it face-up in their Nest Card pile.
  - d. Ends their turn and puts all of the cards in their hand face-up into their Nest Pile. They draw 4 new cards from their remaining deck.
3. The next turn begins.



**Attributions**

Background image provided by Valentin Salja from Upstash.com, available at <https://unsplash.com/photos/CLvkkjb-i3g>

**The rules must contain a paragraph which identifies a single design principle introduced in lecture and discuss how that principle is expressed in your game design. You should pick the design principle which most substantially guided your design process, and thus hopefully most clearly evident in your game.**

For the design principle, our game focused on agonizing decisions. With nearly all of the cards in our games, they presented the player with a decision. All Forage cards present a choice between a power and movement. While movement is the main goal of the game, the power on the cards often give an opportunity to gain movement based on other players actions or make efforts to prevent the other players from advancing. These choices are agonizing, as you are only able to choose one in the moment. Another aspect of the game which presents a choice is the lane-specific abilities. While there is a large cost associated with switching lanes, it may be worth it if you have enough cards in your deck which gives bonuses for the certain lane.

**The rules must also include a second paragraph describing how your game embraces the design constraints provided for that game. You may also need/want to discuss how your group chose to interpret those constraints.**

Our game embraces the thematic constraint of the picture by having it thematically take place in a forest. Our team saw the image and took inspiration from the forest scenery, and used this for the theme of the cards. For the emotional constraint, we had *regret*. We tried to make the aesthetic experience focus on this. We made our cards have a choice, where only one of the options could be selected. In our play experience, this led to people having regret once they see how the choice they picked was not the best one. Additionally, our game takes a lot of strategic thinking about whether players wanted to focus on one lane or one type of ability that they would mostly use throughout the game. We wanted players to perhaps regret if they did not create the best deck, or focused too heavily on one of these play styles and thus did not have a balanced enough deck for the game.

**Finally, the rules should include a paragraph listing any design inspirations or borrowed mechanics from other board, card, or video games.**

Our game took inspiration from *Star Realms*, *Dominion*, *Crib*, *Magic: The Gathering*. The trade row was something inspired by *Star Realms*. The deck building was inspired by *Star Realms* and *Dominion*. Some of the card effects, and the layouts were inspired by *Magic: The Gathering*, *Star Realms*, and *Dominion*. The lane system was inspired by the lanes on a *Cribbage* board, which we used as a gameboard.