# THE HORDE OF UPWIND: THE CARD GAME

"La Horde du Contrevent" is a Poetic Fantasy novel written in 2006 by Alain Damasio, a French author.

The singular universe of the book made me want to extend the experience by adding game mechanics for solo play. A glossary of terms from the novel is available at the end of the document.

#### **Material required**

- Two decks of 54 cards (Poker type, without Jokers). One is the player's deck, separated into two piles called "Wit" (head of your Horde) and "Pack" (other members of the group), the other deck represents adversity with piles called "Breezes" (Winds) and "Encounters" (Enemies).

- Print the playing area (two A4 sheets).

This grid of 4 lines on 4 columns makes it easy to place cards; the "Aval zone" (Downstream) is near the player.

#### Objective

Bring the Horde to the end of its journey, in which four characters will fight against violent winds and formidable opponents. For that they must position themselves correctly according to the type of wind they face and use their skills intelligently to defeat enemies.

Deck

Deck

W

ENCOUNTERS Deck.

BREEZES Deck

our WIT Deck.

Your PACK Deck

Field for movements. (16 squares)

You win the game when the Breezes Deck is exhausted. You lose the game if your Pack Deck is exhausted.

#### Setup

Separate cards from the first deck into two piles: figures and aces on one side, cards from 2 to 10 on the other. First group is your "Wit" Deck (Characters: Jacks, Queens, Kings & Aces), second group is your "Pack" Deck (Powers: all other cards of values 2 to 10).

Separate the cards from the second deck in the same way. First group is the opponent's "Encounters" Deck (Enemies: Jacks, Queens, Kings & Aces), second group is the opponent's "Breezes" Deck (Winds, cards 2 to 10).



#### Horde Decks (Player) WIT (16 cards):

Your Characters, with the roles of Tracer (Kings), Combatant (Queens), Winger (Jacks) and Fire-linker (Aces).

Your characters are part of the Horde, the group facing danger by moving to counter the wind. A complete group includes the four unique roles, each with its own specific characteristics. Cards from the "Wit" remain in play, either in the Aval or on the field, as long as an event does not remove them from the game.

PACK (36 cards): Powers, cards of value 2 to 10. The second component of the Horde, the Pack represents the other members of the group called Powers. Played from the

hand, the Powers temporarily help the group in the field, in its trace to the Upstream.

Pack cards are played from the player's hand and discarded once their effect is used.

# **Adversity Decks**

#### ENCOUNTERS (16 cards):

A. B. C. D : Encounter Cards.

(discards at end of row)

1, 2, 3, 4 : Breeze Cards

Down

Zone

(Aval)

Deck.

Discards

(discards at bottom of column

Arrival of characters from Wit

Enemies (Kings, Queens, Jacks) and Aces (no effect). The Chase (Jack) wounds characters in play, Véramorphe (Queen) discards cards of your Pack Deck, Corroyeur (King) destroys characters.

An Encounter is placed face down on its line, above the field gird. It is revealed when a character is present in the same column and affects it directly.

Encounter cards move one square horizontally to the right, each turn.

BREEZES (36 cards):

Wind breezes, cards of value 2 to 10, represent the wind force your Horde must face.

A Breeze is placed face-up in its column, to the left of the field gird, or revealed on the Breezes Deck when it is the Up-card. The Up-card determines the type of formation your group should adopt.

Breeze cards move one square vertically downwards, each turn.



# Roles of characters ("Wit")

The group of four characters in play represents the head of the Horde. It consists of four roles: The Tracer, the Combatant, the Winger and the Fire-linker.



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Characters movement Each role moves differently in the field. Only one character can occupy a square.

Tracer (T), Combatant (C) and Winger (W) may move one or two squares, at the player's option. The Fire-linker (F) can only move one square.

Only the Winger can pass through an occupied square and continue moving, the other roles cannot move through an occupied square. Formation (roles' position)

The field is composed of four lines, numbered from 1 to 4, and four columns from A to D. Formation is the position of the 4 roles in the field. Depending on the type of Wind it is facing (modified each turn by the Up-card), the group must place itself in a certain configuration or else risk losing cards from Pack Deck at the end of turn. On the other hand, a compliant formation causes Breezes cards to be discarded.

Group's formation is symbolized by the Up-card's Suit: Cone (Heart card), Diamond (Diamond card), Drop (Club card) or Delta (Spade card). For each formation a role can be placed on one of the two indicated squares, at player's choice.



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# Role of Characters and group's position (Formation)

# Heart Up-Card = Cone Formation



# Game turn (detail)

# Phase 1 – Wind & Encounter reinforcements

1.1 Shift Breeze cards by one square downwards: Breeze card on slot 4 is discarded and the first card on Breezes Deck goes, face-up, to slot 1. *If Breezes Deck and its column are empty, you win the game!* 

1.2 Activate the first card on Breezes Deck: it is the Up-card for this Turn. *If Breezes Deck is empty when revealing Up-card, use the closest card to Aval zone as Up-card.* 

1.3 Shift Encounter cards by one square to the right: Encounter card on slot D is discarded and the first card on Encounters Deck goes, <u>face down</u>, to slot A. *If Encounters Deck is empty when you must draw a card, shuffle the discard pile to make up a new Encounters Deck.* 

## Phase 2 - Pack & Wit reinforcements

2.1 Draw cards from your Pack Deck until you have four cards in your hand. If you cannot draw at least one card at this step, you lose the game!

2.2 If you have less than four cards in your Aval zone, place cards of your Wit Deck in the Aval zone, face-up, until you have four cards. If Wit Deck is empty when you must draw a card, you simply skip this part. You can no longer add new characters in Aval zone until the end of the game.

#### Phase 3 - Movements & Actions of the Horde

3.1 Enter: Place any character from your Aval Zone on the field, into a free space on line 4. *You cannot have several characters of the same role in the field at the same time.* 

3.2 Movement: Move an uninjured character in play on the field. Each character may only move once. *Each character must respect his movement restrictions.* 

3.3 You can perform the following actions in any order and as many times as you wish, as long as role is on field and you can pay the costs. *Actions' costs require spending "Power" cards in hand. Unspent points are lost at the end of the phase.* 

- Rest (Fire-linker in play): Spend 1 Power point to heal a wounded character in play (*its card is straightened*).
- Help (Winger in play): Spend 2 Power points to draw the first two cards of your Pack Deck. Keep one card in your hand and put the other one back on your Pack Deck.
- Provocation (Tracer in play): Spend 3 Power points to move an uninjured character on the field, respecting his movement restrictions.
- Attack (Combatant in play): Spend 4 Power points to destroy an <u>active</u> "Encounter" in play. Replace it immediately with the first card of Encounters Deck, face down.

#### Phase 4 - Encounters

4.1 For each column occupied by at least one of your characters, activate corresponding Encounter card.

4.2 Process each Active Encounter as follows, starting with column A and then the next ones.

- No encounter (Ace): No effect!
- The Chase (Jack): Wounds characters in the same column (their card is tilted at 90°), except Winger. If a character is already wounded when hit by The Chase, it is destroyed.
- Véramorphe (Queen): For each character in the same column, except for Combatant, discard 1 card from your Pack Deck. *Reminder: If you cannot discard a card, you lose the game!*
- Corroyeur (King): For each character in the same column, except for Tracer, destroy an identical role character in the Aval Zone. If you do not have a character with the same role in Aval Zone, destroy in-game character.

#### Phase 5 - Counterwind

5.1 For each line occupied by at least one character, beginning with row 1 and then the next ones, perform the following actions in order.

- Calculation of Wind Strength: It is equal to the value of the Breeze card on the row.
- Powers: Spend X Power points to increase by X the Resistance of the characters present on the row. Note: Basic Resistance depends on character's role: Tracer = 4, Combatant = 3, Winger = 2, Fire-linker = 1.
- Wind Resistance Calculation: Compare the value of the Breeze card on the row with the Total Resistance (Base + Powers) of each character.
- If Wind Strength is strictly superior to Resistance, character is wounded and retreats one square back toward Aval zone (remaining in the same column).
   If this square is occupied, occupant also moves one square back but is not wounded.
   Malus: If Wind Strength is greater by 4 or more, character is destroyed immediately instead of wounded and does not retreat.
- ✓ If Wind Strength is equal to Resistance, character does not move.
- ✓ If Wind Strength is strictly inferior to Resistance, character may immediately make a movement if he/she is not wounded. Bonus: If Wind Strength is lower by 4 or more, "Support" effect is added and triggered (once per line, not per character). Support: Until the end of phase, next Power card played is doubled in value.

#### Phase 6 – End of Turn

6.1 Check the formation of your group against the current Up-card:

- ✓ Compliant formation: discard the 4 Wind cards currently in their column and replace them from Breezes Deck with 3 cards in slots 3, 2 and 1.
- ✓ Non-compliant formation: discard 4 cards from your Pack Deck. *Reminder: If you cannot discard a card, you lose the game!*

6.2 If you have more than four characters in Aval zone, discard enough to reach four cards. You may then discard as many cards as you wish from your Aval Zone.

# Roles of the enemies (Encounters)

The Enemies (Kings, Queens, Jacks) represent dangers of the world of the horde.



#### The Chase (Combat)

The Jack hurts your characters in the field present in his column, only your Combatant resists him.



#### Véramorphe (Reveal)

The Queen discards cards of your Pack Deck (1 card per character present in her column), only your Winger escapes her.



#### The Corroyeur (Absorb)

The King destroys your characters in the Aval zone (1 card per character present in his column), only your Tracer is immune.



# No encounter

The Ace has no effect, it gives your group a brief relief.

An Encounter card is placed face down in the specific positions of its line above the field gird. It is revealed when a character is present in the same column and affects it directly.

The Encounters move one square horizontally to the right, each turn.

## Wounded and rested

When a character is wounded, he can no longer move but still suffers the effects of Winds and Encounters. The character's card is tilted 90°. Only the Fire-linker's "Rest" action or going back to Aval zone can heal a wounded character, its card is then straightened (uninjured).

A wounded character counts for the compliance of your group's formation, if properly placed.

The Fire-linker can heal herself!

#### **Spending Power**

A player spends Power by playing his cards in hand, drawn from Pack Deck. Card's value must be spent before the end of the current phase, after which it is lost. Once its value has been spent, the Power Card goes to its owner's discard. It is possible to accumulate several Power cards together, total Power can be used for several effects or actions, until the end of the current phase.

#### **Movements (prohibitions)**

The Tracer and the Winger move in a straight line. They cannot change direction once their movement has begun.



#### Preparing a game

- Put the field on your game table (two printed sheets of Game Area).

- Shuffle your PACK Deck and place it on your right, behind the field gird and the Aval zone (see illustration page 2).

- Take 4 different roles in your WIT Deck (Fire-linker, Winger, Combatant and Tracer) and place them in Aval zone. Then shuffle your WIT Deck and place it to the left of the PACK Deck, leaving a space for discards.

- Adverse Decks: ENCOUNTERS Deck is shuffled then placed in the top left corner of the field gird. BREEZES Deck is shuffled then placed in the bottom left corner of Encounters Deck.

- Place first three cards of Encounters Deck, face down, in slots C then B then A.

- Place first three cards of Breezes Deck, face up, in slots 3 then 2 then 1.

You can then start the first turn.



#### Concepts and game terms

#### Activate a card

Said of a card that you must put face up. Ignore if card is already face up.

## **Empty Decks**

An empty Deck can cause the end of the game when there is no card left. Effects vary according to which Deck.

- Pack: You have lost the game if you cannot draw at least one card when you have to draw one or more cards from this Deck.

- Wit: You can continue the game as long as you have characters in play (in the field or the Aval zone). An empty Wit Deck simply prevents you from getting new characters. If all your characters are destroyed, game is lost.

Breezes: You won the game when this Deck is empty AND no more Breeze cards are in play. As long as there's at least one Breeze in the column, you can't add new cards but continue to shift Breezes down until all are discarded.
Encounters: Shuffle the discard pile to recreate this Deck.

## Field (Downstream & Upstream) and Breezes management

The field is a grid of 4 lines on 4 columns where the characters of the group move. At the bottom of the grid is the Aval zone, the downstream area, where your new characters are put in play from the Wit Deck. It is also the place where your characters in the field are coming back to, after a game or card effect. A wounded character returning to Aval is automatically healed.

If, during the Counterwind phase, a character moves toward the Aval (a line down), then he or she will have to suffer the Wind effects of the line below. On the other hand, if a character moves toward the Upstream (a line up), there is no Breeze effect from this line because it already has been processed.

# **Up-card (Winds)**

Card revealed on the Breezes Deck, placed face-up to determine your group formation required for the current turn. The Up-card on the Deck is not considered to be "in play".

## Cards' Suit

The Suit is the type of the card: Heart, Diamond, Clubs or Spade.

## **Destroy and discard cards**

A "destroyed" or discarded card is placed face-up in the discard pile corresponding to its type. Cards from Pack Deck go to the Pack's discard pile, cards from Breezes Deck go to Breezes discard pile, etc.

## Examples of rule resolutions

Power points management (Phase 3 - Movements & Actions)
(a) You must spend 1 Power for the "Rest" action and 3 Powers for "Provocation". Your card in hand of lowest value is a 5. By playing this card you are wasting 1 Power Point, unused.

(b) To use the actions of two Characters you need 5 Power points. Your cards in hand are 2, 3, 6 and 8. You can play either two cards (2 and 3) or one card (6). In the first case you play 2 cards without wasting Power. In the second case you play a single card but waste 1 Power point.

Counterwind phase: calculations of Wind Strength and Resistance
(a) Wind Strength: 6. Basic resistance of Winger: 2. Power card played: 7.
Total resistance 2+7=9 vs Wind Strength 6, victory of 3.
Winger wins and can make a move.

(b) Wind Strength: 6. Basic resistance of Winger: 2. Power played: none. Total resistance 2 vs Wind Strength 6, failure of 4. The Winger loses, he is injured (card is tilted) and moves back one square.

(c) Wind Strength: 8. (2 characters on the row) Basic resistance of Combatant: 3. Basic resistance of Fire-linker (wounded): 1. 2 Power cards played: 2 + 3 = 5. Total resistance of Combatant: 3+5 = 8. Total resistance of Fire-linker: 1+5 = 6. Combatant result: Draw (8 vs. 8). She's not moving. Fire-linker result: Failure of 2 (6-8). She's already wounded, so she's destroyed.



## Game Turn (summary)

Phase 1 - Wind & Encounter reinforcements

- Shift Breeze cards down and add a card from Breezes Deck.
- Activate the card on Breezes Deck: Up-card.
- Shift Encounters cards to the right and add a card face down from Encounters Deck.

Phase 2 - Pack & Wit reinforcements

- Draw cards from your Pack Deck until you have 4 cards in hand.
- Place cards of your Wit Deck in Aval zone, face-up, until you have 4 cards

Phase 3 - Movements & Actions of the Horde

- Entering field from the Aval zone.

- Movement on field.

- Actions (Power cost): Rest (Fire-linker heals, 1), Help (Winger draws, 2), Provocation (Tracer moves, 3), Attack (Combatant destroys active, 4).

#### Phase 4 - Encounters

- Activate Encounters cards if a character is in their column.
- Process each Active Encounter, per character in the column:

No encounter (Ace): No effect!

The chase (Jack): Wounds, except Winger. If already wounded, destroyed. Véramorphe (Queen): Discards card from Pack Deck, except Combatant. Corroyeur (King): Destroys in Aval zone (or else in field), except Tracer.

#### Phase 5 - Counterwind

- For each line occupied by at least one character:

Calculation of Wind Strength (value of Breeze card).

Calculation of Resistance: Base (F 1, W 2, C 3, T 4) + spent Powers.

Compare Wind Strength to Resistance for each character.

Wind Strength > Resistance: Character is wounded and retreats one square. Malus: If Wind is 4 or more above, character is destroyed.

Wind Strength = Resistance: Character does not move.

Wind Strength < Resistance: May move character if uninjured. Bonus: If Wind is lower by 4 or more, "Support" effect (once per line). \* Support: Next Power played = Value doubled.

## Phase 6 – End of Turn

- Check compliance of group formation with current Up-card then discards. - Discard to max 4 cards in Aval zone and then unwanted cards if needed.

## Competition mode (2 players)

Players play side-by-side, each with their own deck of 52 cards. The opposing deck is unique. The goal is to get as many members of your Horde to survive. At the end of the game, each player counts his/her undefeated characters, in game and in Wit Deck.

Encounters row covers 8 slots: from A to H. Discards pile for Encounters is located at the end of this row, after last player's grid. The Wind column is common to all players, with the players' grids side by side. It is located to the left of the first player's grid. Each line extends across all grids.

## Modification of rules for a Game Turn in Competition mode

Phase 1: Reveal one Up-card per player. First card activated for Up-card goes to the left of the gird of left-most player, then the second card activated for Up-card goes to the left of the gird of next player.

Phase 2: Players play at the same time.

Phases 3 & 4: The player whose Up-card has the highest value does both phases first, followed by second player. In case of a tie, left-most player goes first. *Important: "Attack" action can be used on ALL Encounters row, even the ones not above your gird!* 

Phase 5: Deal with each row one after the other, left-most player with characters on the line has priority.

Phase 6: A compliant formation does not discard 4 Breeze cards. Instead, move Breeze cards by two squares downwards. Also add this step after Phase 6: Take all Up-cards used this turn and shuffle them back, face down, in Breezes Deck. Do the same for all Encounter cards in play, shuffled back face down in Encounters Deck.



#### Glossary and mythology of "La Horde du Contrevent"

The story: Twenty-three persons, forming the 34th Horde of Upwind, confront a world ravaged by winds. Their goal, like that of the generations that preceded them, is to ascend in front of the powerful breeze up to the extreme-upstream to find its source.

Trained since childhood, members of the Pack have defined roles for the group to be autonomous and survive. The Tracer, with the help of Pillars and Wingers, takes in the violent gusts and organizes the formation of the group, the Geomaster and Aeromaster observe and analyze the environment and wind types, the Poacher, the Picker and the Birders-Hunters take care of finding food, the Fire-linker is in charge of generating campfires while the Healer and the Troubadour heal physical and psychic wounds, the Scribe notes the adventures in his Counter Notebook as testimony, the Combatant protects the Horde from potential threats.

Other roles make up a Horde, such as the Scout or the Hooks (transport of equipment), some more esoteric such as the Prince or the Flagship. As we progress towards the Upstream, the "trace", we discover sheltered villages, nomadic "Fréoles" people living on flying ships, supernatural phenomena called Chrones that can absorb or reveal the Wit, the deep nature of a being or thing, and a mysterious organization called The Chase that fights Hordes.

Roles and Names of characters of the 34th Horde: Golgoth  $\Omega$  (Tracer), Pietro della Rocca  $\pi$  (Prince), Sov Strochnis ) (Scribe), Caracole ¿´ (Troubadour), Erg Machaon  $\Delta$  (Combatant-protector), Talweg Arcippé ¬ (Geomaster), Firost de Toroge > (Pillar), L'Autoursier ^ & Le Fauconnier \*• (Birders-Hunters), Steppe Phorehys ´, (Flagship), Arval Redhamaj )- ( (Scout), Horst & Karst Dubka  $\infty$  (Wingers), Oroshi Melicerte x (Aeromaster), Alme Capys (.) (Healer), Aoi Nam <> (Picker & Sourcerer), Larco Scarsa Ĵ (Sky Poacher), Léarch  $\Diamond$  (Metal Craftsman), Callirhoé Déicoon ~ (Fire-linker), Boscavo Silamphre  $\partial$  (Wood Craftsman), Coriolis  $\approx$ , Sveziest  $\sqrt{}$  et Barbak ]] (Hooks).

The Horde: "*We left Aberlaas, extreme downstream, twenty-seven years ago now. We were 11 years old. And we never looked back.*"

The Pack: "*I attached great importance to presentations. It was often the only clear image that we would leave to people, the group and the Pack, the Block; our different formations for Counter, depending on wind type, the description of the functions of each one, where the Troubadour added tons of it.*"

Formations: "*Now you're gonna have to limp group to the cleat and take cover. Diamond shape in spades. Shoulder to shoulder, in the glue! Behind, Pack, you back up the guy who shelters you. Like you're a fucking girder!*"

Wind patterns: Depending on the place and season, wind have various labels, linked to its strength. Zéfirine, Slamino, Stèche, Choon, Crivetz, Furvent...

The Wit: "*The Wit is the most strictly individual power of each one. It's* néphèsh, *that vital wind that circulates in us, that makes us who we are. Nothing can interfere. It's pure, unbreakable and self-propelled.*"

Véramorphe: Below, in a bed of pebbles stretching upstream, an ochre cocoon, the volume of a small airship, drifting. Its shape, its matt and deep luminescence, its way of sliding slowly at ground level, the glyphs that line the gangue, leave no doubt about the nature of the phenomenon: it is indeed a Chrone. "*The Véramorphe has a unique power: it gives to beings and objects that it envelopes the true form of what they are.*"

Corroyeur: "*He must constantly absorb Wit to reaccelerate his wormholes, to give them back the speed of fulgur that centres him. It is constantly at risk of dispersion.* 

- Are we dealing with a Chrone, master? What kind?

- Very special Chrone, if you want aeromaster, autochrone!"

The Chase: "There has never been any formal proof that the Chase exist. Sov has told me hundreds of times, no Counter notebook talks about hordes that would have been pursued and destroyed. (...)

- We've never recovered Counter notebooks from hordes that have been eliminated."



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Role	Breeze Resistance	Movement (Directions)	Action (Power Cost)	Immunity	
Tracer (King)	4	2 squares (Horiz/Vertic)	Provocation (3)	Corroyeur (King)	
Combatant (Queen)	3	2 squares (H/V/Diagonal)	Attack (4)	The Chase (Queen)	
Winger (Jack)	2	2 squares (Diagonal, through occupied)	Help (2)	Véramorphe (Jack)	
Fire-linker (Ace)	1	1 square (H/V/D)	Rest (1)	None!	

#### Version 2.4

- Modified "Preparing a game": Added *"Take 4 different roles in your WIT Deck (Fire-linker, Winger, Combatant and Tracer) and place them in Aval zone"*.

- Modified Phase 3 of a game's turn: There are now 3 steps and Action "Provocation" is changed to *"Spend 3 Power points to move an uninjured character on the field, respecting his movement restrictions"*.

- Modified Phase 6 of a game's turn: Step 2 is reversed.

- Modified "Competition Mode": Removed "4 players mode".

- Added illustration page 12.

#### Version 2.3:

- Added illustrations pages 2, 4, 8 & 10.

#### Version 2.2:

- Added various summary schemas to rule book.
- Spelling corrections.
- Added to GameBoardGeek 2018 Solo PnP Contest.

#### Version 2.1:

- Rules update after testing.

Version 2.0: First publication online.

- Rules update after testing.