

GobCon

The Goblin's Lair card game

Introduction

GobCon is a non-collectible card game for 2-6 players (or more, if you like), requiring about 15-20 minutes to complete a game.

In GobCon, players represent gamers attending to GobCon, the convention organized by The Goblin's Lair, trying to draw attention on themselves in order to become members of the Lair. During the game, players can perform several actions, like using their friendship with members of the Lair, as well as buying noticeable items, winning the games and, of course, playing tricks on opponents in order to draw attention and improve their chances to become regular members.

During the game, players are going to gain (or lose) prestige points, named **Goblin Points** (simply **GP** from now on). The first player reaching a specified amount of GPs is usually the winner (see also "Game End and Victory").

Game Components

- 117 playing cards, in four types/colors: Friends (green), Games (yellow), Items (blue), Specials (red);
- 2 special six-sided Goblin Dice, printed with goblin faces, used to determine the outcome of Games (see "Goblin Dice", below);
- these rules.

In order to play GobCon, you also need some spare counters (coins, beans, or whatever you like), used to keep track of GPs gained or lost during the game.

Game Setup

Choose who's going to play first in any way you like. Then, shuffle the deck and deal 5 cards to each player, starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise around the table. The rest of the deck becomes the draw pile, place it near the center of the table, so that anyone can easily reach the cards during the game.

Keep dice and counters on the table too: you'll need them during the game, so choose a convenient place for these components.

Now, the first player takes his turn and performs his actions (see next paragraph "The Game Turn"), then, each player takes his turn, in clockwise order. The game proceeds in the same way until a winner is announced (see "Game End and Victory", below).

The Game Turn

During his turn, the active player has to follow these three steps, in this order:

• Draw cards

The player must draw cards from the deck until he has 5 cards back in his hand. If the deck is depleted, shuffle the discard pile to start a new draw pile.

If the active player has five or more cards in his hand at this time, he does not draw from the deck, otherwise he must do so. A player can't forfeit drawing cards if he has less than five cards in his hand.

• Playing cards

The active player can play up to one card for each type (colour), in any order, with the only exception of Specials (red cards): he can play more than a single Special at any time during his turn (some Specials can also be played during an opponent's turn).

A player is never required to play cards in this step, he could also play no cards at all; if he chooses to play cards, however, he can only play one Friend and/or one Item and/or one Game and/or some Specials, in any order.

Details about playing different types of cards and their effects are described later.

• Discard

At the end of his turn, if the active player has more than 5 cards in his hand, he has to discard at least to that limit.

Anyway, the player can always discard some or all his cards (even if he has less than five cards in hand or discarding under that limit), in order to draw more cards at the start of his next turn.

Game End and Victory

Usually, GobCon is played with a **20 GPs** goal. As soon a player reaches this amount of GPs, the game ends immediately and he is the winner.

If you like a longer game, you can increase that limit to 30 or more GPs.





You can also play GobCon with a fixed time limit, in this case, players have to agree on a specified playing time before the game starts. After this time, complete the current turn and the game ends: the player with more GPs is the winner.

Optional rule. The game may also end as soon as the deck is depleted, instead of shuffling it again. In this case, when the last card of the deck is drawn, the game immediately ends and the player with more GPs is the winner.

The Goblin Dice

GobCon requires you to use these special six-sided dice, featuring the faces of four goblins: the Goblin King (1 side), the Green Goblin (2 sides), the Black Goblin (2 sides) and the Darth Goblin (1 side).

The Goblin Dice are usually used, during the game, to determine the outcome of Games (yellow cards, see later), with these meanings:

Goblin Dice results	
	Goblin King: indicates the best player in the game, the absolute winner.
	Green Goblin: are good players, always competitive until the very last turn.
	Black Goblin: poor or unexperienced players, not competitive in the game.
	Darth Goblin: indicates the worst player in the game, a complete loser.

Using standard six-sided dice. If you can't get our special Goblin Dice, you can always glue these goblin faces on a standard six-sided dice or even use your favourite dice, considering that:

- the Goblin King corresponds to the single "6" side;
- the Green Goblins corresponds to both the "4" and "5" sides;
- the Black Goblins corresponds to both the "2" and "3" sides;
- the Darth Goblin corresponds to the single "1" side.

Dice roll bonuses and maluses. Some cards could give you bonuses or maluses to dice rolls. Since GobCon does not use standard dice with numeric values, a one-point bonus or malus indicates that the dice result is respectively improved (next better result) or worsened (previous worse result) by one step.








As an example, if you roll a Green Goblin, a one-point bonus will change it into a Goblin King, while a one-point malus will change it into a Black Goblin.

Note: if you're using standard six-sided dice instead of Goblin Dice, please be careful and don't simply add or subtract the bonus or malus to the dice result, since it's not the same thing at all!






Card Icons

To make the game easier, GobCon uses icons that you'll find very useful to remember how and when each card has to be played. The following tables list any detail you should be familiar with about GobCon card icons.



Rounded Icons. Cards may belong to a specific category, represented by black rounded icons. When these icons are colour bordered, however, they represent bonuses (green border), maluses (red border) or prohibitions (red border and crossed):

Category, Bonus, Malus and Prohibition icons	
	3D Category: indicates Game and Item cards referring to those games using models, miniatures, terrain elements, etc...
	Board Category: indicates Game and Item cards referring to board, family and society games using maps, hexes, counters...
	Card Category: indicates Game and Item cards referring to collectible and not collectible card games.
	RPG Category: indicates Game and Item cards referring to roleplaying, committee, acting games and the like...
	Bonus: green bordered icons indicating Special and Friend cards giving bonuses to Game and Item cards of that category.
	Malus: red bordered icons indicating Special and Friend cards giving maluses to Game and Item cards of that category.
	Prohibitions: red bordered and crossed icons indicating Special cards prohibiting a player to participate in Games and to buy Items of that category.

Square Icons. These icons show you how, when and how many cards can be played and if the card stays in play or is discarded after use:

Cards playing mode	
	Discard: these cards have to be discarded immediately after use.
	Keep: these cards remain in play in front of you (or an opponent) after use.
	Your turn: you can play these cards only during your turn.
	Any time: you can play these cards at any time, even during an opponent's turn.
	Single play: you can play only one card of this kind (colour) each turn.
	Multiple play: you can play one or more cards of this kind (colour) each turn.

Diamond Icons. Finally, these icons represent Goblin Points (GPs) gained or lost because of cards effects during the game:

Goblin Points icons	
	Positive GPs: each icon of this type adds 1 GP to the player's total.
	Negative GPs: for each icon of this type 1 GP is subtracted from the player's total.

FRIENDS (Green Cards)

A player can only play one single Friend card during his turn, placing it on the table in front of him. Therefore, Friend cards are not discarded and remain in play after use.

Friend cards enable a player to take advantage of his friendship with an important member of the Lair, gaining GPs as well as a special ability usable during the game.

Each member of The Goblin's Lair only sponsor one candidate, so every player can only have a single Friend card in play in front of him at any time; however, a player already having a Friend card in play can discard it at any time during his turn, in order to play a new one he has in hand or hoping to draw a new one in the future.

All Friend cards are worth a variable amount of GPs that is immediately added to the player's total as soon as the card is put in play; furthermore, each Friend card grants the player a special ability that may be continuous or usable as described on the card itself. Every time an ability seem to be in contrast with these rules, the text on the card always takes precedence.

Logorrea-Man. This is a special Friend card: a player must play it as soon as he draws it from the deck, even if he has to discard a Friend card already in play (no matter if the discarded Friend has a higher GPs value, sorry!). Even though Logorrea-Man is worth 1GP like many other Friend cards, his special effect is continuous and harms the player, instead of giving him an advantage!

As long as the player has this card in play, he can't play other Friend cards and must discard an Item card in play at the beginning of his turns. As soon as the player has no more Item cards in play to discard, he must give Logorrea-Man to an opponent (his choice), provided this player has Items in play; the new owner of this annoying friend will suffer the same effects from now on (this is the only case a player puts in play a Friend card during an opponent's turn).

Logorrea-Man is immediately discarded as soon as all players have no more Item cards in play, or using some Specials (red cards).

ITEMS (Blue Cards)

A player can only play one single Item card during his turn, placing it on the table in front of him. Therefore, Item cards are not discarded and remain in play after use.

Item cards represent noticeable purchases during the convention: new games, expansion sets and other useful accessories for gamers. Together with Game cards, Items are the main way to gain GPs in GobCon.

Some Item cards belong to a specific category (the rounded category icon is printed on these cards), therefore their GPs value could be modified by Specials giving bonuses and maluses to that category; in the same way, a player could not be able to play Items of this kind because of a Special prohibiting that category.

If an Item card has no category icon printed on it, then its GPs value can't be changed by any means, and players can always play it (there is no Special prohibiting Item cards not belonging to a category).

GAMES (Yellow Cards)

A player can only play one single Game card during his turn. Unlike Friend and Item cards, Game cards are always discarded after resolution (see below).

These cards represent the various games played at the convention. Together with Item cards, Games are the main way to gain GPs in GobCon.

Every Game card belongs to one specific category (the rounded category icon is printed on each yellow card), so all Special cards giving bonuses, maluses or prohibitions can always affect the outcome of a Game card, as well as certain special abilities of some Friend cards.

Game cards does not report a fixed GPs value like Item cards, since everyone can participate in a Game and gain (or lose) a variable amount of GP (depending on resolution, see below), represented by counters in this case.

Playing a Game card

Usually, all players can participate in a game (unless someone is prevented doing so by a prohibition Special). When a Game card is played, everyone has to declare if he's going to participate or not; the active player (the one who played the card) always participate in the Game he has just played. After all players have declared their intentions, the Game card is resolved.

Resolving Game cards

Starting from the active player (the one who played the Game card) and proceeding clockwise, players that declared to participate in the game roll one die and check their results on the score table printed on the Game card itself. Depending on the Game card, the chances of gaining or losing GPs will be different, as well as the chance of keeping unchanged their total.

During a Game card resolution, only one Goblin King result is possible: other results of this type after the first one rolled are treated as Green Goblin (there is only one winner).

Furthermore, if the active player rolls a Darth Goblin result, this is treated as Black Goblin; he was the one who proposed the game, after all ...

Keeping track of GPs

When a player gains GPs with a Game card, he takes as many counters from the reserve and adds them to his personal score pile; in the same way, if the player lost GPs in the game, he removes counters from his pile and discards them back to the reserve. If a losing player hasn't enough counters to remove, he only discards those left, dropping remainders. A player's Score can't be less than zero because of Game cards, nor these cards can change in any way GPs coming from Items, Friends and Specials.

A player's total score is always the sum of the counters in his personal pile, plus the value of any Item, Friend and Special cards he has in play.

SPECIALI (Carte Rosse)

Special cards form the main part of the playing deck, are the only cards that a player can sometimes use during an opponent's turn, and can remain in play or be discarded after use (depending on printed square icons). Unlike Friend, Item and Game cards, a player can use as many Specials he likes during the same turn..

These cards represent events happening at GobCon, causing many different effects described in detail on the cards themselves. Every time a description seems to be in contrast with these rules, the text on the cards takes precedence.

Note: no more cards or special abilities can be used before a Special card has been completely resolved: effects must be applied before anything else. The only exception are Special cards whose effect is cancelling an action (see below).

Bonuses and Maluses. Some Specials give bonuses or maluses to dice rolls: in these cases remember how these have to be applied, especially if you're using standard six-sided dice (see "The Goblin Dice"). All bonuses and maluses coming from different Special and/or Friend cards are cumulative. However, no more than a single Goblin King result is possible during Game resolutions (unless you use "Aex Equo").

For each of the four categories there is one bonus card and the opposite malus card (both affecting dice rolls and Item cards value). If both these cards are played on the same player, these cancel each other and both are discarded immediately.

Prohibitions. When a player has a card of this type in play, he can't play, participate in Games nor buy Items belonging to that category. If he already has in play Items of that kind when the card is played against him, he's not forced to discard them, but can't play more Items belonging to that category until he's able to remove the Prohibition.

Special cards with a GPs value. Some Specials are worth a positive or negative number of GPs: their only effect is to increase or decrease the total score of the player and remain in play just like Item cards (treat them as red Item cards).

Special cards with a negative GPs value remain in play even if the player has no counters nor Friend and Item cards, and decrease his running total. This is the only case a players' total score may be less than zero.

Specials with cancelling effects. Some special cards can cancel an action just performed by an opponent: in these cases that action never takes place and does not cause any effect, just like the corresponding card or ability were never used.



GobCon, the Goblin's Lair card game, created and realized by The Goblin (the_goblin@goblins.net).

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Author's note. For this game design and creation I used: many hours of mind time, several KW of electric power consumed by my PC, some toners, ink cartridges and paper for test prints, lots of Gin Tonic, Coca Cola and beer, chips, salted peanuts and... a whole dose of patience during hours of playtesting sessions. If you don't like this home-produced free game, it's not my problem, I enjoyed creating GobCon!

Thanks

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