IDC Card Game Instructions

The Iron Druid Chronicles Card Game (IDC) is a dueling game played betwixt two players. To win, slay your opponent’s god. And you probably shouldn’t let your little kids read this.

Please note that all art is temporary and not meant to be final in any way. It’s been slapped together for funsies while we’re in playtesting mode and will definitely be replaced once we get to the point of making real cards. So if you were hoping your favorite character would appear hotter/more naked than what you see right now, hold on to that dream, okay? It could still happen.

Each player builds a deck of 24 cards from the following classes:

1 god card

1 badass card

2 rogue cards (either two different rogues, or two copies of the same rogue)

12 combatant cards (no more than four of any one card)

8 additional cards, made up of any combination of visitations, wild cards, and magic items. No more than 4 copies of any card; some items (like Fragarach) are marked unique, and you can only have one copy in your deck. Also, you cannot have more than 1 copy of any wild card in your deck—you can have all four wild cards, just not copies.

Roll dice to see who goes first, unless this is the first time you’ve played this opponent. In that case, whoever finished reading HOUNDED first gets to go first. You should probably have a bunch of dice. You get extra awesome turbo nerd points if your dice are housed in a purple Crown Royal bag, but no distinct advantage in the game.

Set your god card on the table, face up in front of you, centered but near your belleh. Set your shuffled deck of 23 remaining cards on the right. Draw five to begin.

Player one begins by playing a card face up “above” the god card, closer to the center of the table. If it’s a visitation, follow the directions on the card. Magic Item cards cannot be played on round 1. If it’s a badass, combatant, wild card, or rogue, it cannot attack or cast spells on the turn it’s played. Gods do not ever attack. They use minions. Gods can, however, cast their own spells on their first turn. Player 1’s turn is called a turn; after player 2 has his turn, you’ve had a round.

Each player’s god generates 4 magic per round, beginning at the start of a player’s turn. They’re just drawing magic from the earth and distributing it, see. Magic can be used to cast spells listed on cards that have a cost. Magic can be used for any spell during your turn, but only for healing and buffs during your opponent’s turn. You get 4 magic per round and that’s it, unless card mechanics permit more. A combatant may use 3 magic, for example, while on offense during your turn, and then a god may use 1 for healing while on defense during your opponent’s turn. After that, you can’t cast any more spells that round, unless the you somehow generate more magic through card mechanics or use a spell that costs zero magic. You might wish to have a die set aside to specifically keep track of your magic each round. If you already have a four-sided die at the time you read this, well…you are quite the gamer!

Skills are abilities that can be triggered once per turn or as described on the cards, without magical cost. Skills cannot be used on the turn a card is played.

When attacking, you attack the opposing player’s god with your minions; the god is always the target. (A minion is any badass, rogue, combatant, or wild card.) Your opponent assigns blockers as s/he wishes. However, the god will never block while there is a minion to take the damage—that’s just how the Tuatha De Danann roll. Their minions are at risk first, even if the danger is slight. Say player 1 attacks player 2 with two 3/3 minions. Any god could easily dispatch them both. However, if there is a 1/2 minion on the table for player 2, s/he MUST block with that minion, leaving the god to face only one 3/3 minion.

Unlike other games, in IDC damage is lasting beyond the turn it occurs and must be healed. If Leif Helgarson takes six damage, he’ll continue the game with only 2 health until he is healed or he dies. This is why you’ll want a sexy velvet bag full of dice—to keep track of health.

Many minions have specified weapons at the bottom of the card and some also have specified immunities. If an attacker with an iron weapon is blocked by a defender with immunity to iron, the defender takes no damage. Immunities also protect minions from certain types of spells. If a god or minion has no specified weapon, then there is no immunity to the damage they can deal.

Let’s walk through a turn together, shall we? Let’s start by listing the phases of a turn.

1. GO, DAMMIT, IT’S YOUR TURN!

2. Draw a card and play one.

3. First Spell Phase

4. Attack/Block Phase

5. Second Spell Phase

6. Damage Assigned

7. Third Spell Phase

8. Damage Resolved

9. Bury the Dead, Play Taps

Now let’s break it down.

1. This is usually shouted at you by your opponent. This causes your god to draw magic from the earth. Remember, it’s 4 magic per round. Unused magic from previous rounds doesn’t carry over. You should set your magic die to read 4.
2. Draw a card from your deck and play one from your hand. You must play a card each turn before you cast any spells or do anything else. If your card is a visitation or a magic item, follow the directions on the card. If it’s a minion, you can’t use any of its spells or skills this turn, but it can block on your opponent’s turn and use any healing skills.
3. During the first spell phase, you can cast offensive spells against your opponent. You can also cast buff spells and use skills of any card that you didn’t just play in phase 2. If your offensive spells do damage, your opponent must track the damage with dice or some other method. Your opponent can also use healing buffs or skills from any eligible card in response.
4. Declare which of your minions will attack your opponent’s god. Your opponent will then declare blockers. Each attacker must be blocked if possible. If there are enough blockers available, you can double or triple block an attacker. However, the attacker will get to determine how his/her/its damage is distributed among the blockers.
5. During the second spell phase, you should get clever. It’s a great time to buff and debuff your minions before damage is assigned. You can also cast spells if you have the magic available, and skills can be used. Let’s take a look at Granuaile’s FISH n’ CHIPS n’ a PINT skill. It can be used during any spell phase, but only once per round. So you can buff your attackers here after you see how they’re going to be blocked, or…you could wait until next turn, when your opponent is attacking, and then you can buff one of your blockers.
6. After all the buffin’ and spells, we assign damage and see who’s in danger o’ dying. It’s possible for minions & gods to take so much damage they have negative health, by the way. How? Well, think of it like this: it’s the difference between Mercutio being stabbed by Tybalt yet still making a nice speech before he dies and getting obliterated by a grenade exploding in your belly button. It ensures that if you put enough effort into killing someone, they can’t save themselves with a wee +1 healing spell because they can’t go below zero. They’re gonna need a whole lot more healing. Maybe even SEXUAL HEALING from the Morrigan. Also note: If your minion is dealt lethal damage from the long reach of Fir Bolgs, your minion never delivers its damage back to the Fir Bolg, even if your god or some kind of buff saves your life in phase 7.
7. Last chance for healing before your dudes die! SAVE THEM! This is the phase where healing skills like those of Atticus and Leif would normally activate. Gods can swoop in, if they have the magic available, for last-second healing.
8. Damage resolves! Please note that if the widow MacDonagh is equipped with Moralltach and she stings your minion or your god for one, the resolution is that your minion or god dies. Wanna have fun? Play the Virgin Mary, then equip the widow with Ooooh, Shiny! and Moralltach. Heh!
9. Anybody who’s dead goes into your discard pile, which should be next to your deck. Everything goes into your discard pile, by the way, after it dies or is used, unless the card mechanics specifically say to remove it from the game.

So there you go. Have fun building decks and going after each other’s gods!

If you get to the end of your deck and you still haven’t killed your opponent’s god, flip over your discard pile, reshuffle, and continue from there.

SOME OBSERVATIONS:

Demon and Sea Serpent Decks can get going incredibly fast but can be taken out with various spells. If you can get the bacchants’ ability to go off with some attackers lined up, it’s a game winner. If you ever kill Oberon, how will you live with the guilt? Werewolves are great against magic attacks and heal well except for the whole silver thing. If you run vampires and your opponent doesn’t have wood or fire to counter them, you’ll have difficulties losing. Also, I kinda put some jokes in here. The Fir Bolgs are immune to deodorant, but that doesn’t mean that someone is using deodorant as a weapon.

Gods: Brighid, Morrigan, Flidais, Manannan Mac Lir

Badasses: Atticus, Leif, Laksha, Malina

Rogues: Oberon, Coyote, the widow MacDonagh, Granuaile

Wild Cards: Fagles, Hal Hauk, Fifi, Basasael

Visitations: Hospital, Bookshop, Holy, Diabolic, Atmospheric, Neighborly, Ghoulish

Combatants: Witches, Kabbalists, Bacchants, Werewolves, Faeries, Demons, Vampires, Giants

Magic Items: Magic Sausage, Fragarach, Moralltach, Laksha’s Necklace

Want to thank you twice: once for reading my books, and another time for giving this game a try. I hope it’s fun, and I appreciate any tips you may have to make it better. Remember this is covering only the first two books. We’ll add characters and goodies from HAMMERED later.

May harmony find you,

Kevin