

# Power & Weakness



*England in the 5th century; a time of great changes and the start of a new era. The Romans have abandoned England and the Saxons are conquering the island. Christianity is still weak and struggles against the old Celtic religion. 'Power and Weakness' takes place in this time of uncertainty.*

*The players try to increase their influence and gain power in the provinces so as to finally win control over England. They use both conventional fighting and also magic. Knights and magicians in their service are sent to the provinces to overthrow their opponents.*

*Naturally, the methods of magicians and knights are very different: whilst the knights turn to their swords and must slog overland from province to province, the magicians are not subject to the laws of time and space. They use their secret magical places and thus appear by surprise in a region which the opponent believes to be already secured for himself. And so the struggle surges to and fro until one side attains power.*

*The challenge in 'Power & Weakness' is to keep abreast of the two very different stages of play: Magic and Sword, each with its own rules and specific tactics.*

*Each player must decide whether to concentrate on the military or the magical field - or to try to be equally good in both - in order to attain power and gloat over the weakness of the opponent.*

## OVERVIEW

'Power and Weakness' is played in 'cycles'. There is a Sword cycle and a Magic cycle, each having slightly different rules. The length of a cycle will vary. During a cycle the players take turns alternately – until the end of the cycle, when at least one player will receive a victory point. After the end of each cycle you check whether one of the players has fulfilled the victory conditions. If neither player has won, the next cycle begins.

## CONTENTS

The board shows England, Wales and southern Scotland divided into 15 regions. Next to the map there is a victory point score track, a sand-timer (to show the length of the cycle) and two spaces to show which is the current cycle.



magicians



knights

**64 orange and white wooden pieces.** Each player has one of the colours. There are two different types of pieces; 16 of each type for each player. The cubes are knights and the discs are magicians.

Eight **grey wooden cubes** for the sand-timer to indicate the length of a cycle. One **grey wood cube** is used to indicate the actual cycle (Magic or Sword).

**Action tiles** (square cardboard pieces) that allow different actions to be carried out.



action tiles

**Region markers** (round cardboard pieces). A round marker is placed in each region of the map to show the type of magical place in that region.

There are castles (yellow), armour (red), tents (blue) and keys (green).



region markers

**Victory point markers.** Each player has a victory point marker – a pawn.



**Time tokens.** These indicate how long a cycle will last.

time token

## DEFINITIONS

### Cycle

There are two different cycles in 'Power and Weakness': a **Magic cycle** and a **Sword cycle**. In the Magic cycle, the magicians struggle to attain power in the regions. In the Sword cycle, the knights battle each other. The two cycles continually alternate; after a Magic cycle there is a Sword cycle and then another Magic cycle, etc. In the two cycles there are different active pieces and different **neighbouring rules**.

### **Neighbouring**

Neighbouring rules are the core of 'Power and Weakness'. Different neighbouring rules apply in the two cycles. During the **Sword cycle** two regions are neighbouring when they **share a common border** – regardless of which region marker is there - since the soldiers go overland on foot. In the **Magic cycle**, neighbouring regions are those which have the **same type of region marker** in them - since the magicians' powers enable them to pass over any borders and obstacles.

### **Active pieces**

Different pieces are 'active' in the two cycles. During a **Sword cycle**, all the **knights** are active (the cubes) and during a **Magic cycle** all the **magicians** are active (the discs).

### **Passive pieces**

Passive pieces are the pieces which are not active – that is, magicians during a Sword cycle and knights during a Magic cycle.

### **Active region**

An active region is one where there are **more active pieces than passive pieces**. If the number of pieces is equal then it does not count as active (this is important in determining the victory points and who starts the cycle).

### **Reserves**

The pieces which a player can use during his turn are his reserves. They are kept in front of him. New supplies and recruits are taken from the stock and go into the reserves.

### **Stock**

Pieces not in reserves or on the board belong in the stock. The players take new supplies and recruits from the stock. Battle losses and auction payments go back into the stock.

## **PREPARATION**

Place a **randomly drawn region marker** (the round markers) in each of the regions. The remaining markers are placed to one side. Each player takes **three of his magicians** (discs) and **three of his knights** (cubes), giving him a total of six pieces in his reserves.



Mix the action tiles face down. Randomly draw **seven action tiles** and place them face-up next to the board. The game begins with a **Magic cycle**. Place a **grey cube** on the space on the board indicating the Magic cycle. Place **four grey cubes** on the sand-timer.



The victory point markers are placed on the zero space of the score track on the board.

## TURN SEQUENCE

### *New supplies*

Both players take **two active pieces**.

### *Length of cycle*


Turn over a **time token** and place the corresponding number of **grey cubes on the sand-timer**. Turn over **action tiles** equal to the number on the time token **plus three**.

### *Start player's turn*

The start player of a cycle is the player who currently has less victory points. If there is a tie, it is the player who controls fewer active regions. If still tied, the start player is selected randomly.

The start player carries out **two actions** from a **choice of four** possible actions (if tied on victory points the start player only has one action for his first turn):

#### TAKE AN ACTION TILE

Take **one** of the face-up action tiles. If it is a tile with a lightning bolt  the action is carried out immediately and a cube is removed from the sand-timer.

#### PLACE A PIECE

Place **one active** piece from your reserves into an empty region or a region you control.

#### RECRUIT

Take **two** (**three** the first time) passive pieces. *Remove a cube from the sand-timer.*

#### USE ACTION TILES

Play one or more of your action tiles. *Remove a cube from the sand-timer for each action tile you use.*

### *Second player's turn*

Carry out two actions

### *Start player's next turn*

Carry out two actions  
*and so on.*

## END OF A CYCLE

The cycle ends **as soon as** the last grey cube has been removed from the sand-timer - this can be (and usually is) in the middle of a player's turn. The action just begun will still be completed.

The player who controls **more active regions** gets **one victory point**. With a tie both players get a victory point.

If a player now has **twelve** points (**victory points plus number of active regions controlled**) he has won; otherwise the next cycle begins.

### NEW SUPPLIES

At the start of a cycle, each player takes **two active pieces** from the stock and places them in his reserves. Reminder: in a Magic cycle the discs are active and in a Sword cycle the cubes are active. A player only ever has a maximum of 16 active pieces, so if 15 or 16 of these pieces are already on the board or in his reserves, his new supplies will only be one piece or none at all. New supplies are only obtained at the start of the **cycle**, **not** at the start of a player's turn.



Since the first cycle of the game is a Magic cycle, the players take two discs and so each player then has five discs (active) and three cubes (passive).

### REVEAL TIME TOKEN

At the start of each cycle, a time token is turned over. Place grey cubes on to the sand-timer equal to the number on the token (three to eight).

*Note: In the first cycle do not turn a time token over and simply place four cubes on the sand-timer.*

### TURN OVER ACTION TILES

At the start of each cycle, firstly discard any untaken action tiles from the previous cycle. Then turn over action tiles equal to the number on the time token **plus three**. If for instance a time token with a seven is turned over, then ten action tiles will be turned over. These action tiles are placed face-up next to the board.

If there are no tiles left to turn over, shuffle the discards to use.

*Note: Seven tiles are turned over in the first cycle (no time token is turned over in the first cycle).*

### PLAYER'S TURN

During a cycle, the players take turns alternately. The start player is the player who currently has less victory points. If both players have the same number of victory points, the start player is the one who controls fewer active regions. If both control the same number then the start player is chosen randomly (as is done at the start of the game).

The players usually have **two actions** in their turn. However, if the players have tied on victory points, the start player only has one action for his first turn (like at the start of the game). You carry out one or two actions from the four which are possible (**A** to **D**). The actions can be carried out in any order; one action can also be carried out twice.

*Example: Orange and White both have two victory points, but White controls four active regions and Orange controls only two. Orange starts the cycle but only has one action. On his subsequent turns in this cycle he has two actions as normal.*

### A. Take an action tile

As an action you can take one of the action tiles from those face-up on offer and put it in your reserves. Most of the action tiles are first placed in the reserves and used later (*D. Use action tiles*) but some action tiles are used *immediately*. These are indicated by having a lightning bolt ⚡ on them. If a player gets one of these tiles, its action is carried out immediately and it is then discarded. The player can then take his second action if that had been his first. When a tile with a lightning bolt is chosen, a cube is *always* removed from the sand-timer. If this is the last cube on the sand-timer, the cycle has ended, though the action for this tile will still be carried out.

There are three different *action tiles with a lightning bolt* ⚡  
These tiles are **auctioned**:

both players simultaneously and secretly bid a number of **active** pieces from their reserves. The player who has made the higher bid, places these pieces back into the stock, takes the tile and immediately carries out its action. The other player puts his pieces back into his reserves.

If both players have bid the same number of active pieces, neither player gets the tile. The tile is discarded, but a cube is still taken from the sand-timer. This still counts as one of the actions for the player. When this happens, both players keep the pieces they used for bidding.



**Victory point:** A victory point is immediately auctioned. The winner gets one victory point and advances his victory point marker one space.



**Rebellion:** The tile is auctioned. The winner can immediately remove up to **two** of his opponent's pieces (both active and passive) from one region (they go back to the stock).



**Change a region marker:** The tile is auctioned. The winner can remove a region marker from the map and replace it with a different one - if still available. The player chooses the type. The region in which the marker is changed can be a region controlled by the opponent.

### B. Place a piece

If a player chooses to place a piece, he places **one active piece** from his reserves into a region. The **region** may either be **empty or controlled** by the player but with **no more than three of his pieces** (active and passive) already in it. A region is controlled when it contains at least one of the player's pieces. It does not matter whether the pieces in the region are active or passive, but the piece placed can only be an active piece from the player's reserves. You cannot place a piece into a region in which you already have more than three pieces.

### C. Recruit

If a player chooses to recruit, he takes **two** or **three passive pieces** from the stock and puts them in his reserves. In addition, **one grey cube** is removed from the sand-timer! If this is the last cube on the sand-timer, then the cycle has ended. If there are not enough passive pieces in the stock (*you only have 16 active and 16 passive pieces!*) the player takes fewer pieces or even none at all. If a player has no passive pieces in the stock, he can still choose this action in order just to take a cube from the sand-timer (like passing). **The first player** to choose this action in each cycle takes **three** passive pieces. Thereafter, each time this action is chosen in the cycle, only two passive pieces are taken.

*Note: When you recruit you take passive pieces, which are less important in the current cycle. To recruit is therefore really in preparation for the next cycle.*

### D. Use action tiles

If a player chooses to use action tiles, he can play any number of his action tiles. In this way, several different actions can be carried out. Each action tile used is then discarded and also, **for each action tile used, one grey cube is removed from the sand-timer**. If the last cube is removed from the sand-timer, then the cycle has ended, though the action for that tile is still completed.

The player chooses one of his action tiles from his reserves and carries out the action. He can then choose another one of his action tiles from his reserves – until he does not wish to use any more or no more cubes are left on the sand-timer or he runs out of action tiles. You can therefore wait until the end of one action before deciding whether you want to use another tile and which one it will be.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE TILES:

**Influence tiles:** Action tiles with the same symbols as the Region markers.



These are the most important and frequent tiles - they enable the player to carry out an **action in a region** which has a **matching region marker**. Accordingly, there are four types of influence tile: Castle (yellow), Armour (red), Tent (blue) and Keys (green). They can be used in either cycle. Influence tiles can be used in two different ways: to **REINFORCE** or for a **TAKEOVER**.



ways: to **REINFORCE** or for a **TAKEOVER**.



**REINFORCE:** The player places an active piece from his reserves (not the stock) into either an **empty region** or a **region that he controls** (even if it only has passive pieces in it). The region must have the **same symbol** on its region marker. The number of pieces already in the region does not matter.



**Note about reinforcing:** *This action seems similar to Action B: 'Place a piece', but by reinforcing you can place several active pieces if you have several suitable tiles - and there are enough grey cubes on the sand-timer and pieces in your reserves. You can also place into a region in which you already have more than three pieces.*

**TAKEOVER:** The player can take over an opposing region which has the **same symbol on its region marker and** in which the player can **achieve a majority**. A player has a majority when he has **more active pieces in neighbouring regions** than the defender's pieces (active and passive) in the region **plus his active pieces in neighbouring regions**.

*This sounds complicated but is actually quite simple. Two things need to be remembered: all the active pieces in neighbouring regions are added but according to the cycle different neighbouring rules apply. In a Sword cycle only regions with a common border are neighbouring, whilst in a Magic cycle only regions with the same region marker are neighbouring. Secondly, the active pieces depend upon the cycle. In a Sword cycle only the cubes (knights) are active, whilst in a Magic cycle only the discs (magicians) are active.*

The procedure: The attacker chooses a region, plays the appropriate influence tile and counts all his **active pieces in neighbouring regions**. From this he deducts the total number of defender's pieces (both **active and passive**) in the region as well as all the defender's **active pieces in neighbouring regions**. If the result is positive (**one or more**) the player can make a successful takeover. The defender's pieces must leave the region - he can withdraw **one** piece to a **neighbouring region** which is either empty or occupied by his own pieces.

**Note:** the neighbouring rule again depends on the cycle.

The other losing pieces go back in the stock. If the one piece cannot withdraw it also goes in the stock. The attacker can then place **one** (and only one) active piece from his reserves (not the stock) into the empty region. If he does not want to, or cannot, place an active piece, the region remains empty.



**Example:** In a Sword cycle, Orange could take over region D if he plays a yellow Castle influence tile. White's single piece in region D can withdraw to region B or C.

Orange would be unable to take over region B: Orange has 4 neighbouring active pieces, the defender has 2 pieces in the region + 1 active piece in region D and another in region C, makes also 4.

In a Magic cycle, White could take over region F if he plays a red Armour influence tile. He has 2 active pieces in region C, which neighbours region F in a Magic cycle (same region markers). The orange piece cannot withdraw as Orange does not control a neighbouring region (i.e. a region with Armour). White would be unable to take over regions A or G.



**Extra numbers:** By playing an 'Extra numbers' tile, the player has an additional +1 for the rest of that cycle when calculating the score during a takeover (both in attack and defence) in regions with the same symbol.



**Example:** referring to the previous picture. In a Magic cycle, Orange can attempt to take over region B. He plays a blue Tent influence tile and an Extra numbers +1(Tent) tile (and removes two cubes from the sand-timer). He now has two active pieces (magicians) in regions A and G as well as +1 from the Extra numbers tile, giving a total of three.

Extra numbers tiles can also be used for **recruitment** (see below).



**Movement:** A player can use this in order to rearrange his own pieces in two neighbouring regions. The neighbouring rules again depend upon the cycle. You can only rearrange your own pieces but you can move both active and passive pieces. You can rearrange all or only some of the pieces in the two regions. You can leave one of the regions empty.

**Example:** referring to the previous picture. During a Sword cycle, White plays a Movement tile and moves his two magicians from region C to D and his knight from D to C.

Movement tiles can also be used for **recruitment** (see below).



**Sea movement:** A player can use this to move some or all of his own pieces from one coastal region to another (empty or containing his own pieces). The regions do not need to be neighbouring and it does not matter which region markers are in the regions. Movement is in one direction only (unlike the Movement tile, in which movement in both directions is allowed). The region can be emptied.

**Example:** Orange plays a Sea movement tile and moves a knight from region A to region F.

Sea movement tiles can also be used for **recruitment** (see below).


**Note:** Movement and Sea movement tiles are the only ways to move pieces on the board (apart from withdrawing after being taken over). Unlike many games, 'Power and Weakness' does not use movement as a basic action.



**Merlin:** A player can use this as any Influence tile (Castle - yellow, Armour - red, Tent - blue or Keys - green) or for **recruitment** (see below).



**Snake:** A player can use this during the other player's turn in order to prevent the effects of an action tile. The opponent's tile is discarded without effect, though a cube is still removed from the sand-timer. A Snake can only be played if there is still at least one further cube on the sand-timer since a cube also needs to be



removed for playing the Snake. This is the only tile which can be played when it is not your turn.

A Snake tile can also be used during a player's own turn for **recruitment** (see below).

**Recruitment:** Some action tiles (Snake, Merlin, Movement, Sea movement and Extra numbers) can also be used for recruitment instead of their normal action. The tiles show what you can recruit with them. These recruits come from the stock and are put into your reserves. A grey cube is removed from the sand-timer as usual. With the Merlin and Snake tiles you can choose whether to recruit two knights **or** two magicians.

*Example: Orange plays a Sea movement tile for recruitment and takes one active and one passive piece from the stock.*

#### **END OF A CYCLE AND END OF THE GAME**

As soon as all the grey cubes have been removed from the sand-timer, the cycle has ended. You now count the number of active regions which each player controls. The player who controls **more active regions** receives **one victory point**. If both players control the same number of active regions, then both receive a victory point.

An **active region** is a region in which there are **more active than passive pieces**.

You must now check whether one of the players has won:

A player wins when he reaches **twelve** (or more) points - **each victory point** is worth one point **and** each **active controlled region** is worth one point. If he controls enough active regions, it is possible for a player to win even when he has less victory points than his opponent.

If neither player has won, the next cycle begins. After a Magic cycle there is a Sword cycle, then another Magic cycle, etc. The cycles begin with New supplies.

## DETAILED EXAMPLE

**Sword cycle:** A time token with a '4' is turned over, four cubes are put on the sand-timer and seven (4 plus 3) action tiles are turned over. Both players take new supplies of two knights from the stock and put them in their reserves.



Orange starts the cycle (since he has only two victory points compared to White who has three). Orange has two actions. Firstly, he chooses one of the seven face-up action tiles, and secondly, he places a knight from his reserves into region H.

White chooses Action C 'Recruit' as his first action and takes three passive pieces (i.e. magicians). He gets three because this is the first time this action has been chosen in this cycle. He removes a grey cube from the sand-timer. For his second action, White places a knight in region B.

It is now Orange's turn again and he places a knight in region H and then chooses Action D 'Use action tiles'. He first plays a 'Castle' (yellow) influence tile in order to take over region D (and removes a cube from the sand-timer). White withdraws his one piece to region C. Orange can then place a knight from his reserves into region D. Orange then plays a Movement action tile and moves three pieces from region E to region

D (and again he removes a cube, the penultimate one, from the sand-timer). Finally he plays an 'Armour' (red) influence tile in order to take over region C (6:5) (and removes the final sand-timer cube). White can withdraw one piece to region B but the others go back to the stock. Orange can then place a knight from his reserves into region C. The cycle has now ended and the player who controls more active regions (Orange) receives one victory point.

The next cycle is a Magic cycle which White starts - both have the same number of victory points but White has less active regions - though he only has one action.

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