

# BRAZE

A DURAK GAME FOR 3 TO 5 PLAYERS

*Well, my friend, so be it. If you want to catch the blazing Firebird for its magical feathers, I will not hold you back. But remember, these woods are full of dark secrets, and people say that this bird may bring both fortune and misery. Be careful, or no one will ever find you in the vastness of the forest. Farewell then, and may you come back to tell your story...*

## GAME COMPONENTS

### 60 Playing cards

3 suits (red, yellow, blue),  
each with 2x value 1 to 9  
and 2x Firebird card



### 15 Betting cards

3 cards each (0, 1, 1)  
in 5 player colors



### 8 Feather cards

4 cards for 1<sup>st</sup> round (back ♠) and  
4 cards for 2<sup>nd</sup> round (back ♠)



# SETUP

1. Each player takes 3 Betting cards in one player color and places them facedown in front of them. Put any remaining Betting cards back in the box.
2. Depending on the number of players, prepare 2 facedown stacks of Feather cards with values decreasing from bottom to top as follows:

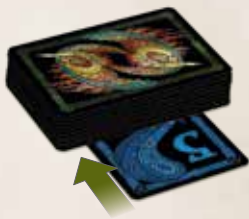
Players	Stack for 1 <sup>st</sup> round (A)	Stack for 2 <sup>nd</sup> round (B)
3	2 < 1	3 < 2
4	3 < 2 < 1	4 < 3 < 2
5	4 < 3 < 2 < 1	5 < 4 < 3 < 2

Set the 2 Feather card stacks aside. Put any remaining Feather cards back in the box.

3. Shuffle all Playing cards and deal 5 cards to each player. This will make up a player's hand.

**Important:** Before dealing cards in a 3-player game, return all Playing cards with value 1 to the box.

4. Split the remaining Playing cards into 2 facedown decks of about the same size. Place one of them in the middle of the playing area as the draw deck for the 1<sup>st</sup> round. Set the other deck aside next to the Feather card stacks. It will be used for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.
5. Flip the top card of the draw deck and place it faceup under the deck, rotated 90 degrees. This card determines the trump suit for the 1<sup>st</sup> round.





## INTRODUCTION

**Blaze** is a card game for 3 to 5 players. It is based on the Russian classic *Durak*, which is played by millions of people worldwide. *Durak* is all about not being the loser. **Blaze** builds upon the unique gameplay of *Durak*, but is about winning – and being the last player with cards in hand does not necessarily mean losing the game.

## GAMEPLAY

**Blaze** is played over the course of 2 rounds. Each round has 2 phases.

**1<sup>st</sup> Phase:** Players try to improve their hand cards and avoid adding more cards to their hand.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Phase:** Players try to get rid of their hand cards as soon as possible to win valuable Feather cards.

## ~ THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE ~

In the 1<sup>st</sup> round, the youngest player begins by starting the first **challenge**.

### A CHALLENGE

#### STARTING THE CHALLENGE

You become the active player and have to challenge the player to your left. To do so, play **any card** from your hand faceup in front of them.

You can add more cards of the same value in any suit combination.



**Tip:** Challenging is not about winning, but all about getting rid of weak cards!

#### REJECTING CARDS

The player to your left becomes the target player and must reject each challenge card or pass (see p. 7). To reject a card:

- ~ play a card of the **same suit** with the **same or a higher value** or
- ~ play **any** card of the **trump** suit.



**Important:** *If the challenge card is a trump, in order to reject it you must play a trump card with the same or a higher value.*

Each rejection card is placed faceup opposite their corresponding challenge card. Rearrangement is not allowed afterwards.

**Tip:** Try to limit the active player's options by using as few new card values as possible to reject!

## EXTENDING THE CHALLENGE

The active player can extend the challenge anytime by playing more challenge cards. To do so, only cards of **values already played** before (either as challenge or rejection cards) may be played.



## SUPPORTING

The player to the left of the target player becomes the supporter of the active player and may **extend the challenge** anytime following the same rules.



**Tip:** As a supporter you might get rid of some weak cards.  
No reason not to “help out”!

## ADDITIONAL RULES

- 1. Challenge limit:** The active player and the supporter may never play more than 5 challenge cards total.
- 2. Firebird cards:** Their value varies depending on whether they are played as **challenge cards** (value 10) or **rejection cards** (value 0).



**Important:** You may reject a non-trump card with a Firebird card of the trump suit.



## RESOLVING A CHALLENGE

The challenge ends if the **target player** has either **rejected all cards** or **has passed**.

### A. TARGET PLAYER HAS REJECTED ALL CARDS

If neither the active player nor the supporter can or want to further extend the challenge, place **all** cards played in this challenge on a faceup discard pile next to the draw deck.

Then, beginning with the active player and in clockwise order, all players involved in the challenge who have less than 5 cards draw back up to a hand size of 5 from the draw deck.

***Important:** When drawing cards, each player draws all their cards before the next player gets to draw.*

The target player is the next in turn and becomes the new active player.

**Tip:** Do not waste too many strong cards to reject. If you succeed, they are gone!



***Example:** Blue is trump, so the blue 2 beats the red 4. The active player and the supporter have no more 2s or 4s and are not willing to play a 9 to extend the challenge. All challenge cards have been rejected. Discard all cards.*

## B. TARGET PLAYER HAS PASSED

The target player may pass at any time, even without playing any rejection cards. Once they have passed:

- ∞ the active player and the supporter may still play challenge cards.
- ∞ the target player may not reject any more cards.
- ∞ the target player must take **all** cards of this challenge in hand.

***Important:** This includes all rejection cards and all challenge cards played by the active player and the supporter.*

Then, all players involved in the challenge draw back up to a hand size of 5 (see p. 6).

A target player who has passed must **skip their turn** and the supporter becomes the next active player (no matter if they played any cards).

**Tip:** Taking cards is not so bad, if you get mostly cards of the same value. Use them when challenging others later!

***Example:** The target player is not willing to play more cards. They pass and take all cards in hand, hoping to get rid of them in later turns.*



## END OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase ends immediately when the draw deck is depleted.

***Note:** You may count how many cards are left in the deck.*

The faceup trump card is the last card to be drawn. Some players may have less than 5 cards when the phase ends.

## THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE

There is no draw deck. Place the Feather card stack for the 1<sup>st</sup> round (back **A**) in the middle of the playing area. Flip it faceup so that the highest value Feather card is on top. Players attempt to get rid of all cards in hand as soon as possible to win the most valuable Feather card still available.



**Tip:** Try not to have many cards in hand towards the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase. Ideally, you want to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase with 5 cards or less!

### PLACING BETS

Before continuing the game, each player bets on who they think will be the last to still have cards in hand and will thus lose the round. All players simultaneously place **one** of their Betting cards facedown in front of the player they have chosen.

You may not bet on yourself. If you think you will lose the round, place your Betting card with value 0 in front of another player.

### COURSE OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE

After placing the bets, the game continues with the next player in turn order as determined by the last challenge of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase. The same rules as in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase apply, with the following changes:

- Players no longer draw cards at the end of a challenge, but you still have to take all cards played in hand when passing.
- If the target player has less than 5 cards in hand at the beginning of a challenge, the challenge limit is equal to the number of their cards in hand.

**Important:** *The trump suit remains the same as in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase.*



## WINNING A FEATHER CARD

After resolving a challenge, players who have no more cards in hand take a Feather card from the stack. In clockwise order, starting with the active player, each such player takes the topmost card and places it next to them, creating their facedown scoring stack. These players will no longer take part in the round and are not considered in the order of play.

**Important:** *Be aware that once a player is out of the round, the remaining players may have new neighbors.*

In the rare case that a player has no cards right at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, they immediately take the topmost Feather card after placing their bet and are out of the round.

## END OF A ROUND

The round ends immediately after the last Feather card has been awarded. The player who has not received a Feather card loses this round.

Reveal all Betting cards played this round.

- ☞ If you have **not** lost the round, take any Betting cards that other players placed in front of you and add them to your scoring stack.
- ☞ If you have lost the round, each player who placed a Betting card in front of you, takes it and adds it to their scoring stack.

**Important:** *Betting cards with value 0 are always returned to their owners. They may use them again in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.*



## THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> round the same rules apply as for the 1<sup>st</sup> round. Before continuing, prepare the 2<sup>nd</sup> round as follows.

1. Collect **all** Playing cards used in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and shuffle them. Deal 5 cards to each player. Put the remaining cards back into the box.
2. Place the draw deck, that was previously set aside for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round in the middle of the playing area.
3. Flip the top card of the draw deck and place it faceup under the deck, rotated 90 degrees. This card determines the trump suit for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.



The loser of the 1<sup>st</sup> round becomes the start player of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, use the Feather card stack that was set aside for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round (back **B**).



## END OF THE GAME

The game ends after resolving the bets of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. For their final score, players sum up the values of the Feather and Betting cards on their scoring stacks. The player with the highest score wins.

**Important:** Ignore any of your leftover Betting cards that are not part of your scoring stack.

In case of a tie, the tied player who won the highest Feather card in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round wins.

## TIMING

**Blaze** is a fast back and forth between the active player, the target player, and the supporter. The following rules apply regarding the timing of play:

1. Whenever there are unrejected cards, the target player must decide to reject them or pass. The active player and supporter do not need to play cards until the target player has made their decision – but they could.
2. If both the active player and the supporter want to extend a challenge and this would result in the challenge limit to be exceeded, the active player has priority. If the supporter has played too fast, the active player may ask the supporter to take back as many cards so that they can play the cards they were about to play. However, such contradiction must be made immediately after the cards are played. Generally, the active player and supporter are encouraged to talk about how many cards they want to play and who contributes what.

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# CHALLENGE CHART

*Active  
Player*

1<sup>st</sup>



*Active  
Player*



*+*  
*Supporter*



*Target  
Player*

**Challenge cards:**  
already played value  
of any suit



**Rejection cards:**  
same or higher value of  
the same suit as opposite  
card **OR** trump



Firebird card value: 10



Firebird card value: 0

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