

# SOVEREIGN'S CHAIN

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## BACKGROUND

*Approaching EOS, just outside of the magistrate's scan range. Good, we've got a little time before our next dust-off, let's put it to some good use.*

Humanity's reach has expanded. The Sovereign, a council tasked with affecting balance for the seven ruling star systems, now presides over most charted space and its colonies.

Gibraltar Station, a fringe outpost in the Void Horizon provides refuge for travelers seeking to earn some extra Sovereign credits or Terra coin before heading back to the more civilized territories. A popular card game amongst free-port merchants and mercenaries alike, Sovereign's Chain matches strategy, skill, and a bit of rogue luck for its players and punters.

## OBJECTIVE

To win, the player must achieve the highest score; equal to the difference between the total suit values of their card chain, once any chain reaches 7 cards long.

## CODEx

**Chain:** Each player's row of cards constructed from left to right relative to the player. Once any chain contains 7 Class cards the game ends and scoring begins.

## COMPONENTS

- Rulebook
- 13 Shield Tokens
- 21 Modifier Tokens
- 21 Suit Tokens
- 4 Reference Cards
- 15 Event Cards
- 70 Class Cards

**In Play:** The topmost card, faceup or facedown, in a chain (cards underneath another card are not considered “in play”).

**Reveal:** Flipping a card in play **faceup**. Once a card is played facedown, no one may look at the card again until it is “revealed” at game end or as directed by another card’s ability or effect. Faceup cards underneath another card and later uncovered, are **not** considered revealed.

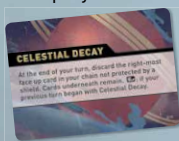
**Suit:** Refers to the type of card; denoted either by a **star** (✳) or a **planet** (♁). Some abilities or effects can change the suit of the card (use suit tokens to denote the change).

**Pool:** Refers to the Modifier and Shield tokens acquired and held by the player during the game, but are not yet in play.

## CARD TYPES

There are 2 types of cards: Class and Event.

**Class:** Class cards represent the various archetypes under your influence. They come in two suits, planets or stars, and each card contains abilities or effects that are resolved when played face up or revealed (Mercenaries allow the player to choose the suit of the card when played or revealed). Only Class cards in play can be the target of abilities or effects.



**Event:** Event cards affect all players. Only one Event card can be in play at a time and its effect remains until replaced by another event (triggered by the **E** action).



## TOKEN TYPES

Tokens are placed on cards in play to indicate changes in suit, value, or ability. Tokens can be placed on both faceup and facedown cards in a chain. Any time a card is removed from play so are all of its tokens (and returned to the supply). If a card with tokens is ever covered, its tokens remain covered as well.

**Suit:** Suit tokens are double sided and used to denote the current suit of Mercenary and other Class cards in play. Suit tokens are never held by a player for later use.



**Modifier:** Modifier Tokens are double sided and used to indicate a +1 or -1 to the score of the target card in play. Unless otherwise specified, the player placing the token selects whether the modifier is +1 or -1. There is no limit to the number of modifier tokens on a card.



**Shield:** Shield Tokens placed prevent that card from being targeted by other card's abilities or effects (including future modifier, suit, or shield tokens).



## SETUP

Place the suit, shield, and modifier tokens in the center of the play area within reach of all players. Each player then takes and places a Reference Card in front of them to their left.

Shuffle the Event cards and place them facedown in an Event Draw pile. Draw one and place it faceup as the Active Event.

Elect someone to be the dealer (a good way to decide is to select the player who traveled the farthest to reach the game table). The dealer then shuffles the Class cards and deals 5 cards facedown, one at a time, to each player, starting on their left. The remaining cards are placed facedown in a Class Draw pile within reach of all players.

### PLAYER 1's CHAIN



### Active Event



### Class Draw



### Event Draw



### PLAYER 2's CHAIN



To begin their chain, each player selects one card of their choice from their hand and plays it **facedown** in front of them (to the right of their reference card).

## GAME PLAY

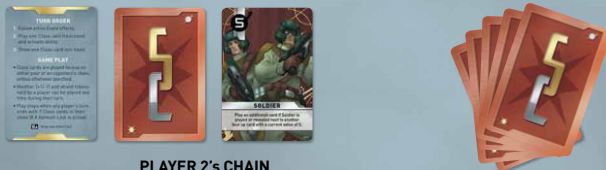
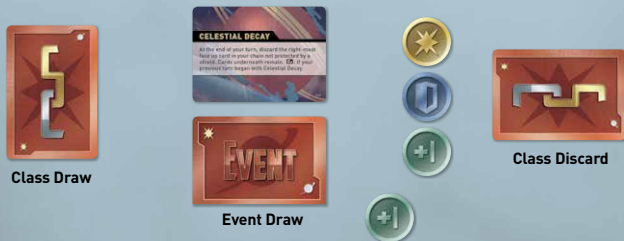
Sovereign's Chain is played in turns beginning with the player to the left of the dealer and proceeding clockwise.

On a turn, a player **must play one** Class card from their hand, resolve the ability or effect, and then **draw one** Class card into their hand. Unless otherwise specified by the active event, Class cards may be played **on either the player's or an opponent's chain**. Cards are played **faceup and adjacent right** to the last card in the target chain.

### PLAYER 1's CHAIN



### Active Event



### PLAYER 2's CHAIN

Card abilities and effects are triggered as a card is put in play **faceup** or when a facedown card is **revealed**. For faceup cards, the player who placed the card activates the ability (regardless of where it is placed). When cards are revealed the chain owner resolves the ability. Only Class cards in play can be the target of abilities or effects. All abilities or effects must be followed unless they contain the word “**may**”.

There is **no minimum or maximum hand size**.

If at any time a card is removed from a chain, the open space does not remain; all remaining cards shift immediately to the left, reforming the chain (filling in the gap).

Discarding is a very private matter. As such, discards are placed **facedown** horizontally to the side of the play area. If the draw pile becomes exhausted, reshuffle the discard pile and place them in the Class Draw area.

When an ability or effect requires a new Event card to be drawn (**E**), the new Event card immediately replaces the existing Event, with the new card's effects in play.

Shield and Modifier tokens acquired by players can be placed any time during **their turn** on any card in play not protected by a shield or another effect. Shields and modifiers can be **held** for use later, however, they are in limited supply (if ability calls for a token type that is out, no effect occurs). Any tokens held at the game's end are forfeit and returned to the supply.

## VICTORY

Play continues until **any** player's chain reaches **7** Class cards long at the end of their turn, in which case the game ends immediately. Discard all unused tokens from a player's pool. Keep your hand of cards in case there is a tie (see Sudden Death below).

**Reveal Phase:** Before Scoring chains, there is a Reveal Phase in which players take turns revealing remaining facedown cards in their chains.

Beginning with the player whose chain reached 7 first, they choose one card in their chain to reveal and activate its abilities. Then in turn order, each player (if able), continues to reveal one card in their chain. Once all facedown cards are revealed, players score their respective chains. Events have no effect during this phase and only tokens acquired during this phase may be used. **Note:** *If the first chain that reached 7 cards ends up with less than 7 cards after the Reveal Phase, the game still ends and Scoring will occur.*

**Scoring:** Scoring is determined by the difference between the total star and the total planet card values of the respective chains. Modifier tokens are scored based on the current card suit it is placed (i.e. a +1 on a planet suit card adds a +1 to the overall planet score). The player with the highest score wins the game (and galactic bragging privileges therein).

For multiple games, the dealer role shifts to the player on the left and the game is reset.

### EXAMPLE

At the end of the reveal phase, player one had a chain of 6 cards which contain 2 star cards totaling 10, and 4 planet cards totaling 16, bringing their final score to 16 ( $26 - 10 = 16$ ).



### SUDDEN DEATH

In the event two or more players have the same winning score, a competition to the death occurs (figuratively of course).

In sudden death, players do not draw new cards. Instead, each tying player simultaneously plays a card on their **own chain** from their remaining hand. Players follow the abilities of the card and current event then re-score their chain.

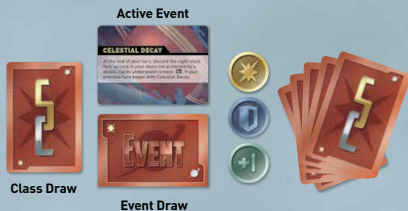
Play continues until after any turn, the tie is broken or a player no longer has any remaining cards in their hand (at which point they lose the game).

## FAIR WINDS VARIANT

To introduce new players, or for a more straightforward strategy game, you can opt to play without Event cards. For this variant, ignore Class abilities which call for drawing a new Event card (all other abilities apply).

### SOLITAIRE PLAY

Because sometimes we all need a little alone time in our gravsuit...In solitaire, the goal is to create a single chain of 7 cards, all of the same suit, before there are no more plays to make from your hand.



To begin, shuffle the Event cards and place them face down in an Event Draw pile.



Draw one and place it faceup as the Active Event. Shuffle the **Class** cards and place 7 cards **faceup** next to one another to form the chain, ignoring the initial card abilities or effects. **Draw 5 cards** into your hand.

Mercenaries placed during setup do not select a suit, and thus do not count as either star or planet (unless changed later by another card's ability or effect).

Each turn you must **play one** Class card from your hand **faceup** on top of an existing card in play, and then **draw one** Class card. To play a card its value must be exactly one higher than the current value of the card it is covering, including modifier tokens (i.e. a 3 is played to cover an existing 2, etc.). As cards are played resolve the ability or effect.

If at any time one of the initial cards is removed from the chain, the open space remains. If a card ability or effect allows you to play a facedown card, it can be placed on top of any card. Any card value can be played on top of a facedown card or an empty space in the chain.

Play continues until all cards in the chain are either the same suit (win) or there are no more plays to make (loss and shame, but you are playing solo, so who would know?).



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**If I play a card that allows me to play another, do I have to play it on the same chain?** – No, you may play extra cards on any chain (including your own) as long as the target chain does not exceed 7 cards.

**If a card removes another card that is in play, does it also remove all other cards and tokens underneath?** – No, only the topmost card and its tokens are removed.

**If a card was originally played faceup, later turned facedown, is the ability triggered again when revealed?** – Yes, any time a card is played faceup or revealed its ability activates.

**If I place a shield token on a card that already has a suit or modifier token on it, are the current tokens removed?** – No, the current tokens remain. However, the shield prevents placing future tokens (including modifier, suit, and additional shield tokens).

**What happens if a Runner is revealed at the end of the game?** – If a Runner is revealed at the end of the game, the chain owner would play another card facedown underneath and then immediately reveal it.

**If I have an Acolyte cover a Runner who is covering another card, can I reveal the bottom card at the end of the game?** – No, only the top card is in play, thus the Acolyte (who can cover any faceup card in play) is negating the Runner underneath from revealing their facedown card.

**If the Hostile Orbit event is active, am I allowed to look at the topmost discard pile card?** – No, if you elect to use a discard card for the event, you must do so without looking at the card until it is flipped.

**If a Class card instructs me to draw a new event, do I follow the current or new event?** – Prior to playing the Class card you must follow the current event. Once a Class card is played with (E) you must now follow the new event, if able (as you are still in the middle of your turn).

**If an event with the text “if your previous turn began with...” and it is on me to draw a new event, do I still follow the current event prior to drawing the new event?** – No, you immediately draw the new event and follow its instructions only.

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