

# RUTHLESS

THE FASTEST RULES IN THE WEST



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INSPIRED BY A TOWN CALLED MALICE

## SEQUENCE OF PLAY

At the beginning of a turn, each player is dealt five cards from a standard poker card deck. Choose one card at the beginning of a turn and place it face down on the table. The cards are turned over and revealed simultaneously.

The highest card goes first, allowing that player to take actions with all of their models. Other players activate in sequence, ending with the lowest card. Ties are decided by suit: *Spades, Hearts, Diamonds*, and lastly, *Clubs*.

The turn ends when all models on the table have taken two actions. If a "3" was played for initiative, that player may choose to discard any number of cards remaining in his hand at the end of the turn. Players end the turn by each replenishing their hand back up to five cards.

In addition to determining initiative, cards can also be played throughout the turn to resolve Snap Shots, Get Your Courage Up, and brawling in Fisticuffs. Some cards have special bonuses when played:

### SPECIAL CARD ABILITIES

<b>A, K, Q, J</b>	Automatic "Get Your Courage Up"
<b>7</b>	One character may take 3 actions
<b>A or 4</b>	Recover from Unconscious
<b>3</b>	May discard cards at the end of turn
<b>2</b>	"Low Blow" in Fisticuffs

## ACTIONS

When a player has the initiative, each character they control may take two actions. If a "7" card was played for initiative, one character can take three actions! Actions may be taken in any combination, including the same action twice.

**MOVE**

**GOT YOU COVERED!**

**MOUNT**

**DISMOUNT**

**AIM**

**SHOOT**

**RELOAD 3 SHOTS**

**GET YOUR COURAGE UP!**

## MOVING

**On FOOT**      **6" or 3"** (Open vs. Rough)

**On HORSE**    **12" or 8"** (Open vs. Rough)

Rough ground includes scrub, shallow rivers, fences, doorways, and any obstacles players predefine as such.

## GOT YOU COVERED!

This action allows a character to defer his shooting until later in the turn. Place any sort of marker or token on the model as a reminder. He may then take one un-aimed shot at any enemy using a Move action within line of sight. The marker is removed after the shot or if the character is wounded or a different action is performed.

"If there ain't going to be any rules, let's get the fight started." –Butch Cassidy

## SHOOTING

For each Shoot action, roll 1d10 + modifiers to hit. Cross off spent ammunition on the character's sheet.

**SHORT RANGE**      **6+**

**LONG RANGE**      **8+**

**+1**    **Firer is Aiming**

**-1**    **Firer is Lily Livered**

**-1**    **Target in partial or soft cover**

**-2**    **Target in hard cover (rocks, buildings)**

**-2**    **Firer is mounted on horseback**

If a hit is scored, roll on the "Darn, I Been Hit!" table for wound results. If firing at a mounted target, roll again to determine if the horse or the rider is hit (1-5 is the horse, 6-10 is the rider).

## WEAPON TABLE

TYPE	SHORT	LONG	ROUNDS	SPECIAL
Derringer	6"	-	2	
Shotgun	8"	12"	2	+2 at Close, -1 at Long
Revolver	8"	12"	6	Fanfire
Buntline Special	8"	16"	6	Fanfire
Bow	-	16"	-	Free Reload
Repeating Rifle	10"	24"	10	
Sharps Carbine	18"	36"	1	

Fanfire allows up to 6 rounds to be fired in a single action at Short Range, but "10s" are needed to hit.

## SNAP SHOTS

If one of your characters is about to be fired upon or engaged in Fisticuffs by an enemy character, you can try to "get the draw on him" and shoot first or duck for cover. You succeed by playing any card from your hand that is higher than the card the opponent used for initiative at the start of the current turn. Opponents cannot play a card of their own to react. Snap Shots are a single, un-aimed shot. Ducking for cover allows you to move 3" toward nearby cover.

## DARN, I BEEN HIT!

For each hit on a target, roll 1d10 and cross off the corresponding wound hit on the character card. Hits from an Aimed shot can be adjusted +1/-1 by the firer.

ROLL	LOCATION	RESULT
1-2	Leg	Only one Move per turn
3-4	Arm	Only one Shoot per turn
5-6	Graze	No effect
7	Gut Punch	No Shooting effect, but Unconscious from Fisticuffs
8-9	Chest	Cannot Aim
10	Severe Wound	Knocked Unconscious!

A character is killed when he crosses off his last hit against any single wound location. Horses are killed when suffering any combination of three total wounds.

Tip over a model that is Unconscious. They will recover and stand up automatically if the controlling player uses an Ace or "4" for initiative on any subsequent turn. This card will revive all unconscious models for that player.

## FISTICUFFS

Fisticuffs is not an action. It is resolved when two opposing characters are moved into base-to-base contact. Both players immediately select one card from their hand. The highest score wins. The loser is pushed back 2" and suffers **two** wounds on the hit table.

If you cannot play a card or remain Unconscious from a prior Severe Wound, you lose automatically.

Some character traits may offer a bonus in combat, and being mounted always adds +1 to the value of your Fisticuffs card. If a "2" is played, it's a "Low Blow," and the 2 card wins if it matches the opponent card's suit!



"Fast is fine, but accuracy is everything." -Wyatt Earp

## TOUGHNESS

Characters check to see if they become Lily Livered every time they or their horse are hit (including Graze or Gut Punch), **or** if they see a friendly character killed.

In either circumstance, a character must roll their Toughness value or higher on 1d10. If they fail the test, they are marked with a Lily Livered token. Lily Livered characters immediately move toward cover and must remain in some form of cover until they recover.

### "GET YOUR COURAGE UP!"

Characters can recover from being Lily Livered by starting in cover and taking a "Get Your Courage Up!" action. Roll 1d10 + the value of any card in your hand. You are not required to expend a card and any decision to do so must be made before the roll. If the result is equal or higher than your Toughness, you are no longer Lily Livered. Any face card or Ace is a shot of whiskey and automatically passes the test!

"They said I killed six or seven men for snoring. It ain't true. I only killed one man for snoring."  
-John Wesley Hardin

## SKEDADDLE

At the end of each turn, both sides roll 1d10. If the roll is **less than or equal** to the number of your characters currently dead, Lily Livered, or Unconscious, the remaining men skedaddle and the scenario ends!

# RUTHLESS



## SCENARIO DESIGN AND CHARACTER CREATION

### SETTING THE SCENE

*Ruthless* is intended for small, fast-playing gunfights where each player controls 2-5 characters. With these basic parameters you can play multiple scenarios in a single evening. Creating a series of short, linked scenarios with a narrative arc is especially fun! Think of your evening as a three-act movie, with each act building on the next...

Of course, you can play games on larger tables with any number of figures. There are no hard and fast rules to designing a great scenario, but this short guide will get you moseying in the right direction!

### CHARACTER CARDS

Each model on the tabletop is assigned a card to reference his weapons, track ammunition, and mark wounds as they occur. Characters may have additional traits, as well. An example card appears below, and six blank copies are also provided later.

### TOUGHNESS SCORES

Each character in the game has a Toughness value, serving as a "catch all" score to represent his grit and combat experience. When designing new characters, keep in mind that Toughness is a d10 test, which means that Bat Masterson's example Toughness of "3" means he would theoretically pass 80% of his rolls (he needs a 3+ on a d10 each time).

Toughness scores of 1 or 10 should be avoided as too extreme. Even scores of 2 or 9 would be used only in the most exceptional circumstances. Seasoned, veteran gunfighters with true grit should be rated as Toughness 3 or 4. Ratings of 5-6 represent men who've seen a bullet or two in their day and aren't afraid to engage in a gunfight. Once you reach ratings as high as 7 or 8, these are characters who are likely to duck for cover!

"Announcin' your plans is a good way to hear God laugh." -Al Swearengen, *Deadwood*

<b>BAT MASTERSON</b>										<b>3</b>
<b>TOUCH AS NAILS ... IGNORE FIRST WOUND</b>										<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>TRIGGER FINGER ... +1 VALUE TO SNAP SHOT CARDS</b>										
<b>REVOLVER</b>										
<b>WOUNDS</b>										
<b>LEG</b>		<b>ARM</b>			<b>CHEST</b>		<b>SEVERE</b>			

Character name and Toughness rating

Traits, if any, are noted here. One of Bat's traits has a box to check when this trait is expended.

Ammunition is marked off here, then erased as shots are reloaded.

Wounds are recorded here as they are suffered. If you reach the skull and crossbones symbol, the character is killed!

# CHARACTER TRAITS

It's best not to assign characters more than one or two traits—except in exceptional circumstances—in order to avoid overload. When designing characters for a scenario, you're welcome to re-name traits when appropriate or even create your own!

**"BOWIE KNIFE"** When defeating an enemy in Fisticuffs, adjust the wound roll up or down one line on the "Darn, I Been Hit" table as desired

**"COOL HAND"** Ignores first failed Toughness test

**"DIRTY CHEAT"** Once per turn, can pick any card from his hand and swap it with a random card from any other player

**"DRUNK"** May not use "Aim" or "Got You Covered"

**"EXPERT RIDER"** Only -1 to Shooting rolls when mounted, instead of the normal -2 modifier

**"GREENHORN"** -2 to Shooting rolls

**"GUNFIGHTER"** +1 to Shooting rolls

**"LAW DOG"** Cannot Shoot until an enemy fires first

**"LOUD MOUTH"** -1 to enemy Toughness tests caused by this character

**"LUCKY"** Make one free re-roll per game

**"MARKSMAN"** +1 Shooting to all Long Range shots

**"NERVOUS"** -1 to all Shooting rolls

**"OLD WOUND"** Start the game with one arm or leg wound already marked

**"STEALTHY"** Enemies are -1 to Shoot at him

**"STUBBORN"** Ignore any penalty for arm wound

**"TOMAHAWK"** +2 in Fisticuffs

**"TOUGH AS NAILS"** Ignore first wound

**"TRIGGER FINGER"** +1 value to Snap Shot cards

**"UNPREPARED"** Cannot Reload

**"YELLA BELLY"** -1 in Fisticuffs

# SPECIAL RULES

As a scenario designer, you're encouraged to create special rules as needed to evoke the spirit of a historical engagement, movie, or TV show.

Special rules might place restrictions on characters, specify unusual deployment conditions, or offer new objectives. Introducing "silver dollars" or some form of currency to be collected in the game is a great way to build incentives for players to act fast. You may even want to add outlaw affiliations liked "Wanted", allowing players to earn additional victory points or silver for capturing these wanted outlaws!

*Ruthless* is not a rigid game format...after all, the rules are just two pages long! That leaves room for YOU to add in your own ideas. Consider this a tool kit for imagining your own unique scenarios.

## READY-MADE ADVENTURES

There are several official scenarios already made for you to play. We've designed several adventures on the Little Wars TV website and the author of the system, Mark Fastoso, has some fantastic scenarios available at [www.FireballForward.com](http://www.FireballForward.com). If you want to see an example of how a multi-act game can be creatively linked together into a mini-campaign, you can download "**Riding Shotgun**" 100% free on our site, [www.LittleWarsTV.com](http://www.LittleWarsTV.com).

## SMALL GUNFIGHTS

In the standard game rules, playing an initiative card allows all models a player controls to take actions. This keeps the game moving very fast, but in scenarios when each player may only have 2 or 3 figures, it can be fun to adjust this mechanic. For small gunfights, try allowing each card played for initiative to only activate one model instead of every model. You will find the pace of the game to be much more tense!

## CHARACTER BUILDING

The next two pages of this document offer some blank character cards you can use at home. We already told you that *Ruthless* is a free, open toolkit for Western adventures. Maybe you want to design a campaign where the characters gain experience and new abilities as they travel from scenario to scenario? There's no reason you can't do that!

**REVOLVER**

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**WOUNDS**

LEG		ARM		CHEST		SEVERE	

**REPEATING RIFLE**

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**WOUNDS**

LEG		ARM		CHEST		SEVERE	

**SHOTGUN**

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**WOUNDS**

LEG		ARM		CHEST		SEVERE	

**REVOLVER**

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**SHARPS**

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**WOUNDS**

LEG		ARM		CHEST		SEVERE	

**REVOLVER**

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**SHOTGUN**

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**WOUNDS**

LEG		ARM		CHEST		SEVERE	

**BOW**



**WOUNDS**

LEG		ARM		CHEST		SEVERE	