THRONEBOUND

- A three-player factional strategy game focused on throne control, integrating map control, unit advancement, and card mechanics.

- Designer: Min Yang
- Personal Roles: Designer, Artist
- Development Duration: 2024.11-2025.1
- Tools: Procreate, Photoshop

- Players: 3
- Playtime: 50–90 mins
- Genre: Tactical Strategy · Area Control · Card Management
- Target Players: Aimed at enthusiasts of turn-based tactics and deep strategic play. Tailored for three-player matches, the game captures the tension of factional conflict and the satisfaction of mastering territory through smart action management.

INTRODUCTION

THRONEBOUND is a three-faction strategy board game where players vie for control of an ancient throne. It blends **territorial dominance, unit progression**, and **card-driven tactics** across an ever-shifting battlefield.

At its core lies an **action-point management** system that forces meaningful decisions under limited resources — whether to **expand territories, launch assaults**, or **secure shrines and sanctuaries** for lasting advantages. A map-unlocking mechanism further shapes the pacing, gradually revealing new regions and redefining the strategic landscape.

Victory demands both **long-term foresight and tactical adaptability**. Players must balance **risk and reward, chance and calculation**, as only the most resourceful faction can ascend the throne.

MOOD BOARD

Area Control (Risk)



Unit Deployment (Memoir '44)



Multiple Victory Paths & Map Unlocking Mechanism (Scythe)





Three-Player Conflict & Terrain Interaction (Root)

Simplified Map Style (Kingdom Rush)





Card System & Item Card Mechanics (Slay the Spire)

Stacked Disc Structure (Warhammer)





Action Point System (Mage Knight)

BACKGROUND STORY

In an age long forgo tten, legends tell of an **ANCIENT THRONE** — a relic of divine power that once united the continent. When the empire fell, its sacred lands fractured, and chaos reclaimed the realm.

From the remnants rise **THREE FACTIONS**, each seeking to claim the throne’ s legacy:

- **THE EMBERBORN**, forged in fire and endurance;
- **THE ABYSSAL TIDE**, masters of arcane depth and ceaseless assault;
- And **THE RADIANT DAWN**, bringers of swiftness, order, and divine light.

But conquest alone does not ensure victory. Commanders must balance aggression and defense, harness mystical sanctuaries, and adapt to the ever-shifting battlefield.

Only the most resourceful will ascend the throne — and inscribe their name into the chronicles of eternal dominion.

COMPONENT

"**SANCTUARY CARDS:** Provide lasting buffs and strategic advantages."

"**ALTAR CARDS:** Offer powerful one-time effects and distinctive tactical options."





Sanctuary Card – "Time Distortion"
ARTWORK: A spiraling clock face symbolizing time manipulation and cyclical control.
EFFECT: Choose one locked structure; advance or delay its unlock timer by 3 turns.

Altar Card Example – "Healing Light"
ARTWORK: Radiant green crosses descending like holy light, symbolizing restoration and divine power.

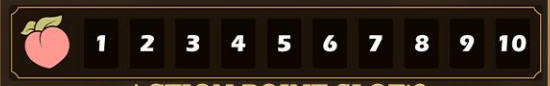


EFFECT



EFFECT

EXAMPLE CARDS



ACTION POINT SLOT*3



UNIT TOKENS × 30 (10 PER FACTION)



Yellow Disc — Attack Power* 90
Red Disc — Health*260
Black Disc — Upgrade Status*10



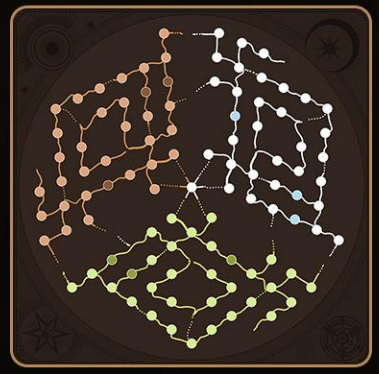
"Faction Flags ×18 — six per faction"

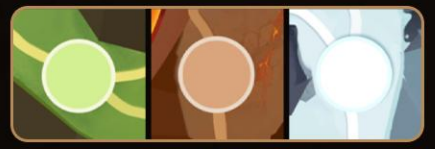


Sanctuary | Magic Domain | Throne | Altar | Scoring Building | Unlockable Building



"Headquarters: Each faction's starting base and initial deployment point."





Passable Tiles



Impassable Tiles

CARD EXAMPLE

AP Expansion


Increase your Action Point maximum by +1.

Reinforcement


Gain one additional unit of the selected type.

Turn Reversal

Reverse the play order. The next round starts with you, changing clockwise to counterclockwise or vice versa.

Cursed Grounds

Designate one area. Units entering it must spend +1 AP each time. (Permanent, stackable.)

Forced Recall

Send a target enemy unit back to its home base. (Costs 1 AP)

Time Distortion

Choose one locked structure; advance or delay its unlock timer by 3 turns.

Last Stand

The chosen unit sacrifices itself to deal 6 damage to all adjacent enemy units. (Costs 1 AP)

Frozen Seal

Choose one unlocked area; it becomes sealed again and cannot be entered.

Claim Territory

Convert one neutral area into your control. (Costs 2 AP)

Charge Forward

Grant a unit the Charge ability. The unit may dash 3 tiles toward an enemy structure or unit. (costs 3 AP)

Resurrection

Revive one fallen unit in your base area at full HP.

Displacement

Move one of your units onto an adjacent tile occupied by an enemy.

Counter Nullify

Play at any time. Cancel the effect of one target card or ability.

Scoring Surge


Gain +5 points for all building control scores this turn.

Neutralize Zone

Choose one area; it becomes neutral. (uncontrolled) (Costs 1 AP)

Unlock Sigil

Instantly unlock one sealed building or area.

Healing Light

Choose one damaged unit; it restores 5 HP. (cannot exceed its max HP)

Suicidal Charge

Move a unit up to 3 tiles toward an enemy and deal 4 damage. The attacker takes 2 damage in return. (Costs 1 AP)

Power Boost

All units of the same type gain +1 ATK, or choose one unit to gain +2 ATK.

Curse of Weakness

Target unit cannot move or attack during its next turn.

First Ascension


Choose one unit. It immediately gains its first upgrade

Pillage

Steal one random card from another player's hand.

Time Rift

Advance or rewind the current game round to a chosen turn.

Raid

Take control of an enemy's scoring building. (Costs 4 AP)

Swap Fate

Exchange the positions of one of your units and an enemy unit. (Costs 1 AP)

Battle Cry

Target unit gains +1 Move Range and +1 ATK this turn.

Vitality Surge

All units of the same type gain +1 HP, or choose one unit to gain +3 HP.

Lucky Roll

During combat, roll 1 die: 1–5 → a friendly unit gains +1 HP permanently; 6 → gains +2 HP permanently. (Effect stacks)

Special Skill Card

Keep this card. You may use it to trigger a unit's unique special skill.

AP Recovery

Restore 3 Action Points immediately. (Max 1 AP Recovery Card per turn)

RULE 1 - GAME SETUP

FACTION SELECTION

- Each player chooses one of the three factions: Red, Blue, or Yellow.
- Collect the corresponding unit tokens, discs, and faction flags.



STARTING UNITS AND RESOURCES

Each player begins with:

- 1 Shieldbearer
- 1 Archer
- 1 Mage
- 1 Action Point Slot (starting capacity: 5 AP)

MAP PREPARATION

- All Score Buildings begin unoccupied.
- The Throne Zone remains sealed until Round 15.
- Unlock Buildings open starting from Round 10.

BOARD AND COMPONENTS SETUP

- Place the main map board at the center of the table.
- Shuffle and place the Item Card deck nearby.
- Prepare the dice, score trackers, and round tracker.

DETERMINE STARTING PLAYER

- All players roll dice; the highest roll becomes the starting player.
- Turns proceed clockwise from that player.

RULE 2 - GAMEPLAY

ROUND STRUCTURE

- Each round consists of three turns — one per player — taken in clockwise order.



PLAYER TURN

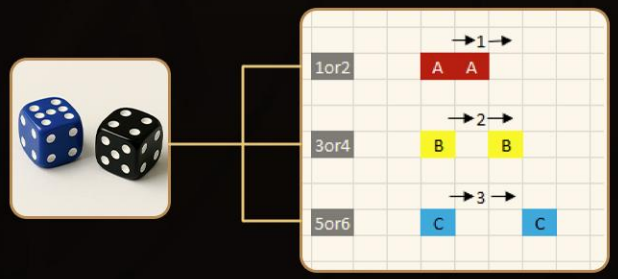
- At the start of their turn, the active player restores Action Points (AP) up to their maximum: 2 + the number of surviving units.



- During their turn, a player may spend AP to perform actions in any order.

BASIC ACTIONS (each unit once per turn)

- Move: Roll one die to determine distance.
  - 1–2 = 1 space
  - 3–4 = 1–2 spaces
  - 5–6 = 1–3 spaces



COMBAT RESOLUTION

- ATTACK INITIATION

To initiate combat, a unit must move into the same space as an enemy unit. Once both occupy the same space, the combat sequence begins and is resolved using the following steps:

1.Attack Roll

Roll 1 die (d6).

- 4–5 → +1 ATK bonus
- 6 → +2 ATK bonus



2. Damage Calculation

Damage = Base ATK + Dice Bonus.
Subtract this value from the defender’ s HP.

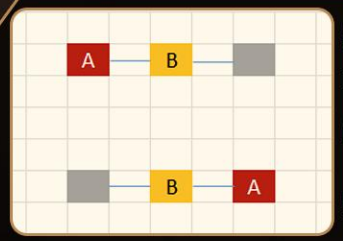


3. Defeat

If a unit’ s HP is reduced to 0, it is sent back to its Headquarters.
Reviving a defeated unit costs 5 AP or 10 Points.

4. End of Combat

If the defender survives, both units remain in their current spaces and combat ends.



Step 1 — CONDITION CHECK
The Charge can only succeed if there is at most one enemy unit along the path between the starting and target spaces.

Step 2 — AP COST
The player spends 3 Action Points (AP) to initiate the Charge.

Step 3 — RESOLUTION
Unit A ignores B’ s occupied tile and moves directly to the target gray zone.

SPECIAL ACTIONS (require AP expenditure)

- Charge (3 AP): Launch a cross-region assault. The move succeeds only if no more than one enemy unit lies between the attacker and target.
- Special Skill (3 AP): Activate the unique ability of the selected unit type.*

*ALL SPECIAL SKILLS ARE DETAILED ON PAGE 9.

UNIT OVERVIEW

	LEVEL 0 SKILL	LEVEL I SKILL	LEVEL II SKILL
	12 2	+1 ATK/+2 HP	Reflects 3 damage back to the attacker
	8 4	+1 ATK/+2 HP	Increases attack range by +1
	6 3	+1 ATK/+2 HP	Gains +3 ATK and +1 range

*Upgrade Cap: Each unit may upgrade a maximum of two times.

EXAMPLE: BATTLE RESOLUTION

LEVEL I  8 4+1=5 Attack LEVEL 0  12 2

Step 1 — Attack Roll

1.The attacker rolls 1 d6.

2.  granting a +1 ATK bonus.

3.Total Attack = Base ATK (5) + Dice Bonus (1) = 6.

Step 2 — Damage Calculation

 8-2=6 4+1=5

 12-6=6 2

Result — The defender survives; both units remain in place and the combat ends.

RULE 3 - MAP DESIGN

Zone	Effect	AP Cost
Throne 	The core victory objective. Only one unit may occupy the throne at any time. Once unlocked, the controlling player gains +3 points per round. The occupying unit gains +1 ATK and recovers 3 HP at the start of each turn.	First entry: all remaining AP Each subsequent attack: 3 AP
Score Building 	Each occupied building grants the controlling player +2 points per round.	—
Sanctuary 	Spend AP to draw one Sanctuary Item Card, which may grant immediate effects or long-term bonuses.	4 AP
Altar 	Obtain one Altar Item Card with powerful or permanent effects that influence mid- to late-game strategies.	5 AP
Magic Domain 	When entered, player units may upgrade up to two times total, improving Attack or Health values.	First upgrade: 5 AP Second upgrade: 7 AP
Unlock Building 	Opens at Round 10, creating new passageways or choke points for strategic movement.	—



BASIC RULES

- Tile Limit: Each tile may contain up to two friendly units at a time.
- Movement Limit: Each unit may perform one basic move per turn.
- Card Usage: Cards may be played at any time and their effects resolve immediately.

SPECIAL RULES & REVIVAL

- Charge Failure: If the chosen path contains two or more enemy units, the charge attempt fails, and the Action Points (AP) spent are not refunded.
- Unit Revival: A defeated unit may be revived at its Headquarters by spending 5 AP or 10 Points.

RULE 4 - END

END OF TURN

- Gain +2 Points per round for each Score Building you occupy.
- Gain +3 Points per round for controlling the Throne.
- Gain +5 Points for each enemy unit defeated during the round.
- Discard all used cards.
- Pass play to the next player in clockwise order.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

- Throne Victory: Occupy the Throne for a total of 5 rounds to win instantly.
- Building Victory: Win by occupying all Score Buildings on the map.
- Elimination Victory: Win by eliminating all enemy units from the board.
- Score Victory:
  - At the end of 30 rounds (or 20-round variant), the player with the highest total score wins.
  - If any player reaches 100 Points, they win immediately.

Questionnaire Investigation

1.Which mechanics in the game play a central role in shaping player strategy? Conversely, which mechanics appear redundant or have little to no meaningful impact on gameplay?

2. Are the victory conditions balanced and fair? Which conditions are more difficult to achieve, and which are comparatively easier?

3. Does the game rely too heavily on randomness? Is there an appropriate balance between luck and strategic decision-making?

4. Are certain item cards disproportionately powerful while others have negligible effects? How might this imbalance affect the overall experience?

5. Is the timing for unlocking buildings and the throne appropriate in the flow of gameplay? Does it contribute positively to pacing and strategic depth?

6. Do players perceive the number and variety of cards as overwhelming? Should some cards be removed or merged to streamline the system?

7. Are the mechanics and numerical values of each unit type balanced? Are there any units that feel overly strong or weak, thus disrupting game balance?

8. Should the dash/charge mechanic exist in the game? If so, does it meaningfully contribute to the game's progress and strategic possibilities?

ALPHA TEST – CARD BALANCE ADJUSTMENTS

During the Alpha Test, several balance issues were identified through player feedback. These insights directly influenced the redesign of certain cards and game systems.



PLAYER FEEDBACK:
"The Self-Destruct Charge card feels too strong — it can instantly change the battlefield, especially when used on low-HP units."

OLD:Deals 10 damage to all adjacent enemies.

NEW: Deals 6 damage to all adjacent enemies.

DESIGNER COMMENT: Reduced burst power to maintain fairness while preserving the card's explosive identity.



PLAYER FEEDBACK:
"The ways to obtain new units are too few, making it hard to recover after losing troops."

OLD:New units could only be gained through limited objectives.

NEW: Added a 'Unit +1' card obtainable from both Sanctuary and Altar structures.

DESIGNER COMMENT: Improves mid-game recovery and prevents snowballing after early losses.



PLAYER FEEDBACK:
"Some powerful item cards completely overshadow others, making weaker ones feel irrelevant."

OLD:Playable without cost or condition, leading to turn imbalance.

NEW: Introduced Action Point (AP) cost and restricted usage timing.

DESIGNER COMMENT: Keeps the card impactful but requires deliberate resource investment.

SELF EVALUATION

PROBLEM SOLVING AND ADJUSTMENTS
In my earliest prototype, I included complex item card combinations that created additional skills, but these proved unnecessarily complicated and were later removed. To improve balance, I enhanced or merged weaker cards, reducing redundancy while maintaining variety. I also expanded the ways players can acquire unit cards, ensuring more consistent access to core gameplay elements and reducing frustration caused by pure luck. These changes made the system more streamlined, strategic, and approachable.

FUTURE PLAN

- Introduce new asymmetric playstyles, mechanics, and map variations.
- Refine card balance and streamline the resource system.
- Enhance rulebook clarity through extensive playtesting.
- Expand factions and add special modes—such as event cards or cooperative variants—to increase replayability and strategic depth.

UNIT TYPES & ALL SPECIAL SKILLS

	SKILL NAME	DESCRIPTION	AP COST	DURATION
	Counter Shield	When attacked, immediately deal 2 counter damage back to the attacker.	3	1 turn
	Iron Will	Permanently gain +1 HP. Can be stacked once per game.	3	Permanent
	Guerrilla Step	After attacking, move up to 2 tiles for free. Cannot trigger another attack.	3	1 turn
	Precise Shot	This attack deals +1 extra damage (before dice bonuses).	3	1 turn
	Empower Ally	Choose one adjacent ally — it permanently gains +1 HP.	3	Permanent
	Hex Curse	Choose one adjacent enemy — it permanently loses 1 HP.	3	Permanent