



META GUIDE

SEASON 1 · AGE OF INVENTION



Season 1 meta, based on AI simulations as of 29 Sep 2026 · card data version 5

ROBERTS BROS GAMES · DEVBERRI

STATE OF THE GAME

WHERE SEASON 1 STANDS

The computer opponent was just rebuilt and plays far better than before, so every number here is fresh: what a strong AI does with each starter deck.

DUELS · 7,280 GAMES, ALL 14 LEADERS, 80 PER PAIRING

49%

First player win rate. The going-first edge is gone.

11

Turns in an average duel, both players counted (about 5 or 6 each).

55%

Games where a Leader used its ★ Command, on turn 7 on average.

0.32

Triumphs played free from Life per game, per player.

0.09

Counters cast per game, per player. 90% of them did their job.

0.09

Braces per game, per player. Rare, but every one tracked paid off.

56%

Of blocking chances actually taken. Blocking is the default.

25%

Opening hands sent back with the mulligan.

CONVENTION · 800 FOUR-PLAYER GAMES

28

Turns per game: about 7 turns each, roughly 23 minutes at a relaxed pace.

4.7

Round of the first knockout on average.

9.5

Times the Shard changes hands in a typical game.

0.39

Braces per game and 0.07 Interjects. Instant speed is a big edge nobody uses yet.

WHAT CHANGED · V4: EXPLORERS BRING SOMETHING HOME · V5: ONE-TWO PUNCH

- Collin (v4).** Power 4 and no Adventurer bonus, but once per turn, when **any** character of his hits an enemy Leader, **Recover 1**. Keeps his Swift line.
- Earhart (v4).** Gains the same trigger for her **Explore** characters: a hit on a Leader Recovers 1, once per turn.
- Washington (v4).** Continental Army costs 2 (was 3).
- Bekah (v5).** **One-Two Punch** replaces her Event draw: once per turn, an Event refreshes a character of hers with +1/+0.
- v3 pass.** Andy: power 5, 1 fewer Life, rest costs 3. Bekah and Brody: 1 extra Life; Bekah power 5; Brody grows +1/+1 with 2 characters.
- v2 rules.** Second player +1 crystal on 3 turns; 3 players: seats 2 and 3 +1 Life; plus small card fixes.

HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

These are **AI versus AI** games with each Leader's **starter deck**. A duel rate is good to about **3 points** either way; a single matchup (80 games) to about **11**, so 40 to 60 is close; Convention rates to about **8**. Hence **tiers**, not rankings. Card ratings on page 8 come from the balance audit's 27,300-game card study.

BIGGEST MOVERS

LEADER	PRE PASS 2	V2	V3	NOW
Collin	49%	47%	45%	52%
Earhart	47%	46%	46%	52%
Washington	52%	43%	43%	46%
Bekah (v5)	52%	34%	48%	48%
Brody	52%	32%	49%	47%
Armstrong	47%	59%	60%	58%

Same seeds and size each version. Bekah "Now" is v5.

GOING SECOND IS FINE NOW

Before the pass the first player won about **56%** of duels. With the catch-up crystal lasting three turns, that is down to **49%** in this batch.

So don't sweat the coin flip. Plan your first three turns around the extra crystal instead: a 3-drop on your first turn is normal.

THE DUEL TIER LIST

All 14 Leaders by win rate against the field. The big number is the sim result; the small range is where the true rate most likely sits.



Clear of the field. His Leader engine is under review and a fix is pending



ARMSTRONG ●
A Leader almost nobody can block
58% · 56 to 60%



A little above even, all within 2 points of each other



JOSH ●●
Sturdy bodies that get back up
53% · 51 to 55%



COLLIN ●●●
Swift raiders who bring Life home
52% · 50 to 55%



BLACKBEARD ●●
Removal, Rebels and a raided hand
52% · 50 to 54%



EARHART ●●
Explorers fly over and bring Life home
52% · 49 to 54%



JARED ●●●
Explorers ramp into Vehicles
51% · 49 to 53%



PHILLIP ●●●
Guards that hit back, duels on his terms
51% · 49 to 53%



DR. KING ●●
A wide crew that grows when hit
51% · 49 to 53%



Between 45 and 48%. A good custom deck closes the gap



BEKAH ●●●
Cheap Events, then a One-Two Punch
48% · 46 to 50%



TESLA ●●
Tinkers every turn, then overload
48% · 46 to 50%



BRODY ●●●
Go wide, grow every turn
47% · 45 to 49%



ANDY ●●●
Rests their blockers, lives on 4 Life
47% · 44 to 49%



WASHINGTON ●●
Refresh and charge again
46% · 44 to 48%



DEVIN ●●●
Every Item leaves a Tinker
45% · 43 to 48%

THE HEADLINE

Armstrong is still **on watch** at 58% and a fix is pending, but he now has a real counter: **Collin** beats him 69% of the time. Behind him, 13 Leaders sit between 45 and 53%.

VERSION 4: EXPLORERS BRING SOMETHING HOME

Green got a multiplayer tool: Collin's and Earhart's hits on a Leader now Recover 1. In duels Collin rose from 45% to 52% and Earhart from 46% to 52%. At a 4-player table Collin roughly doubled (9% to about 20%). A cheaper Continental Army lifts Washington to 46%.

VERSION 5: ONE-TWO PUNCH

Bekah's Events now refresh a character with +1/+0 instead of drawing. Her duel rate rose from 46% to 48%, and at a 4-player table from 8% to 24%, and she keeps attacking: 1.7 charges a round, up from 1.4.

THE WIDEST MATCHUPS

Armstrong over Washington 78% and Brody 76%; Josh over Brody 73% and Devin 71%; Collin over Phillip 73% and Armstrong 69%. Single matchups are 80 games each (about 11 points either way), so only these big gaps are firm.

THE TOP OF THE TABLE



58%
DUEL WIN

NEIL ARMSTRONG ●

Game plan. Your Leader has Explore, so only Explore characters can block it, and every hit on their Leader draws. Mission Control makes Items and Locations 1 cheaper.

Command. Cheap and explosive: when no enemy Explore blocker is ready, Scout 3 and hit with +2 power and Double Chapter. Used in 82% of games, around turn 5.

Pro tip. On watch: the Explore plus draw engine is the current outlier and a fix is pending. Collin is his hardest opponent (31%).

Power 6 · ★ Giant Leap (2)

SIGNATURES

Neil Armstrong, Space Explorer, Space Helmet, Apollo 11

BUILD AROUND

Little Anne, Rosa Parks, Alexander and the Virginians

GOOD VS Washington 78, Brody 76, Dr. King 65

TOUGH VS Collin 31, Earhart 48



53%
DUEL WIN

JOSH ● ●

Game plan. Characters costing 2 or less get +0/+1, and for 2 crystals the last character in your trash comes back to hand. Trade cheap bodies, then buy them back.

Command. After your first wave: Recover 1, refresh everyone with +0/+2 and attack again. Or save it as an emergency at 2 Life. Used in 55% of games.

Pro tip. Strong in both formats: 53% in duels and top of the Convention table, winning 39% of 4-player games.

Power 5 · ★ The Mending Room (3)

SIGNATURES

Josh, Harriet Tubman, Squanto

BUILD AROUND

William Faulkner, Alexander, George's Cat, Make Camp

GOOD VS Brody 73, Devin 71, Tesla 70

TOUGH VS Jared 36, Andy 38



52%
DUEL WIN

COLLIN ROBERTS ● ●

Game plan. The first character you play each turn gets Swift. Once per turn, when any character of yours hits an enemy Leader, Recover 1: every raid brings a Life card home.

Command. Before combat on the attacker that makes a kill or pushes a Life: +2/+1, Explore, draw. Used in 67% of games; 58% wins when it fired.

Pro tip. Hit their Leader early with a Swift character: the Recover refills the Life you spend racing. Armstrong's worst matchup, and about 20% at 4 players (was 9%).

Power 4 · ★ First Through the Door (2)

SIGNATURES

Collin Roberts, Corps of Discovery, Christopher Columbus

BUILD AROUND

Daniel Boone, Rebel, Two Sided Hound, Sally Ann Thunder

GOOD VS Phillip 73, Armstrong 69, Andy 66

TOUGH VS Devin 34, Josh 36, Brody 38



52%
DUEL WIN

EDWARD TEACH "BLACKBEARD" ●

Game plan. Rebels get +1/+0, and every time your Leader hits theirs they discard at random. Heavy removal clears the way for a fast Rebel curve.

Command. Two damage to every enemy character: hold it for a board of 2-health bodies. Fired in 10% of games, 74% wins when it did.

Pro tip. His starter has 10 removal cards, the most in the game. Clear the blockers, then let Leader hits empty their hand.

Power 6 · ★ Broadside (5)

SIGNATURES

Edward Teach "Blackbeard", Bartholemew Roberts, The Queen Anne's Revenge

BUILD AROUND

Susan B. Anthony, Benedict Arnold, John Wilkes Booth

GOOD VS Dr. King 65, Jared 61, Washington 59

TOUGH VS Armstrong 38, Collin 39



52%
DUEL WIN

AMELIA EARHART ●

Game plan. Adventurers and Pilots get +1/+0 and Explore, and charging with 2+ Explore characters draws. Once per turn, when an Explore character of yours hits an enemy Leader, Recover 1.

Command. The second wave: attack with your Explorers, then refresh them and attack again. Fired in only 19% of games, but those games won 75%.

Pro tip. Explore hits are hard to block and now heal you. Her starter still carries 9 Locations; trim them when you build your own list.

Power 6 · ★ Across the Atlantic (3)

SIGNATURES

Amelia Earhart, Adventurer, Amelia Earhart, Vehicle Junkie, Cockpit

BUILD AROUND

Daniel Boone, Corps of Discovery, Colony Vessel

GOOD VS Washington 63, Brody 61, Phillip 61

TOUGH VS Collin 36, Dr. King 40

SOLID GROUND AND A NEW PUNCH



51%

DUEL WIN

JARED NELSON ● ●

Game plan. Ramp: any Explore character on your field gives +1 crystal at the start of your turn. Then land Vehicles and big bodies ahead of schedule.

Command. Early: a permanent crystal is worth most before turn 8. Scout 3 finds the Vehicle. Used in 56% of games, on turn 5 or 6.

Pro tip. Keep one Explore character alive at all times: it is your extra crystal.

Power 6 · ★ Radio Home (3)

SIGNATURES

Jared Nelson, Colony Vessel, Apollo 11

BUILD AROUND

Amelia Earhart, Vehicle Junkie, Daniel Boone, Paul Bunyon & Babe

GOOD VS Josh 64, Tesla 60, Washington 60

TOUGH VS Phillip 38, Blackbeard 39



51%

DUEL WIN

PHILLIP ● ●

Game plan. Guards hit for +1 and opponents' Events cost 1 more. Build a wall that punishes attackers, then win the fights you pick with Duel and Aaron Burr.

Command. Your strongest duels an enemy character and they discard at random. Fire it when your strongest wins the fight. Used in 65% of games.

Pro tip. Duel is a Counter. Hold 2 crystals on their turn and make their attacker fight your strongest. He casts the most Counters of any Leader.

Power 5 · ★ Objection! (3)

SIGNATURES

Phillip, Duel, Aaron Burr

BUILD AROUND

Red Coats, Chips, Purple Hearted, Speak Softly, Carry Big Stick

GOOD VS Jared 63, Devin 61, Brody 59

TOUGH VS Collin 28, Earhart 39



51%

DUEL WIN

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ●

Game plan. Flood the board with sturdy characters that all have Resolve. At 4 or more characters you draw a card at the end of every turn.

Command. Before combat with 3+ characters: +1/+1 to the team, and Recover 1 at 4+. Used in 83% of games; 59% wins when it fired, 9% when it never did.

Pro tip. Resolve pays for surviving: block with high-health characters and they grow +1/+0 each time.

Power 5 · ★ The March (3)

SIGNATURES

I have a Dream, Rosa Parks, Fredrick Douglas

BUILD AROUND

Red, White, & Blue, Alexander and the Virginians, the Dr. King card

GOOD VS Washington 63, Bekah 60, Earhart 60

TOUGH VS Armstrong 35, Blackbeard 35



48%

DUEL WIN

REBEKAH "BEKAH" KENT ● ●

Game plan. Events cost 2 less and you start with 1 extra Life card (6 in a duel). One-Two Punch: once per turn, when you play an Event, refresh a character of yours with +1/+0, so every cheap Event sends a hero back in for a second hit.

Command. Get back your best Event (a Duel or Independence Day) and draw. Used in 61% of games, around turn 9; 56% wins when it fired.

Pro tip. Charge first, then play an Event: the refreshed hero swings twice. One-Two Punch took her from 8% to 24% at a 4-player table.

Power 5 · ★ Write It Down (3)

SIGNATURES

Rebekah Kent, The Constitution, Sign Your Name

BUILD AROUND

Independence Day, Alexander and the Virginians, Duel

GOOD VS Andy 61, Josh 58, Jared 55, Devin 55

TOUGH VS Armstrong 36, Brody 39, Dr. King 40



48%

DUEL WIN

NIKOLA TESLA ●

Game plan. Go wide with Tinkers and Inventors (+1/+0), pay 2 for a Tinker whenever crystals are spare, then swing with more bodies than they have blockers.

Command. Fire it before combat with 2 open field slots. The AI used it in 23% of games and won about as often either way: a tempo tool, not a must.

Pro tip. His starter holds 5 Counters, the most of any Leader. End turns with 2 crystals up for Zap.

Power 4 · ★ Wardenclyffe Tower (4)

SIGNATURES

The Lightbulb, Zap, Inventor's Goggles

BUILD AROUND

The Workshop, Genius Convention, Kite and Key

GOOD VS Brody 59, Andy 55

TOUGH VS Josh 30, Jared 40

EVEN, WITH A PLAN



BRODY VINSON ● ●

Power 4 · ★ Scale for Sale (4)

Game plan. Go wide with Golems, Tinkers and Founders. You start with 1 extra Life card, and with 2 or more characters one of them grows +1/+1 at the end of every turn.

Command. Two Golems and +1/+1 on every token: fire it with 2 open slots. Used in 72% of games, on turn 6 or 7.

Pro tip. Version 3 lifted him from 32% to 49%. Two bodies are enough now, so the growth starts on turn 2 or 3. Strong at 4 players (31%).

SIGNATURES

Brody Vinson, Andrew Carnegie, St. Augustine

BUILD AROUND

Issac Singer, Washington, Nation Builder, The Workshop

GOOD VS Andy 69, Collin 63, Bekah 61

TOUGH VS Armstrong 24, Josh 28

47%

DUEL WIN



ANDY VARNES ● ●

Power 5 · ★ Front Page (4)

Game plan. Rest their blockers, then walk past. Pay 3 each turn to rest an enemy; rested characters can't block and can be charged. The price: you start with 1 fewer Life card (4 in a duel).

Command. Rest everything, draw, then swing. Used in 75% of games, around turn 6 or 7; 53% wins when it fired, 28% when it never did.

Pro tip. With 4 Life you can't win long trades. Keep his 1/6 Guard card home and save Front Page for the swing that ends it.

SIGNATURES

Andy Varnes, P.T. Barnum, The Circus

BUILD AROUND

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edgar Allen Poe, Whiskey Rebellion

GOOD VS Josh 63, Jared 56

TOUGH VS Brody 31, Collin 34, Bekah 39

47%

DUEL WIN



GEORGE WASHINGTON ●

Power 6 · ★ Continental Army (2)

Game plan. Founders get +0/+1, and for 1 crystal a turn you refresh a character to charge (or block) again. Golems and a team pump come early.

Command. Now 2 crystals: the AI fires it in 99% of games, on turn 4 on average. Two Golems plus +1/+1 on turn 3 or 4 is a whole turn of board for less.

Pro tip. The refresh is the best 1 crystal in the game: charge, refresh, charge again. A Convention favourite (36%).

SIGNATURES

Crossing the Delaware, George Washington, Freeworld Founder, Winter Encampment

BUILD AROUND

John Adams, Abigail Adams, Chips, Purple Hearted

GOOD VS Andy 59, Devin 58, Bekah 56

TOUGH VS Armstrong 23, Dr. King 38, Earhart 38

46%

DUEL WIN



DEVIN ROBERTS ● ●

Power 4 · ★ Attempt Forty-Seven (4)

Game plan. Items are the engine: the first Item each turn builds a Tinker. Cheap Items (The Lightbulb, Kite and Key, Space Helmet) mean a Tinker almost every turn.

Command. A value play, Scout 3 plus a Tinker. The AI fires it late (turn 12) and in 23% of games: build the board first, then dig.

Pro tip. The Devin card is 5/1 and draws every turn. Keep it home as an engine. He shines at 4 players (32%).

SIGNATURES

Devin Roberts, The Workshop, Alexander Graham Bell

BUILD AROUND

Eli Whitney, Finished Product, Zap

GOOD VS Collin 66, Brody 56

TOUGH VS Josh 29, Armstrong 36, Phillip 39

45%

DUEL WIN

COMMAND REPORT · HOW OFTEN EACH ★ COMMAND FIRED IN THE DUEL BATCH

LEADER	USED	AVG TURN	WIN USED	WIN NOT	LEADER	USED	AVG TURN	WIN USED	WIN NOT
Armstrong	82%	5	64%	33%	Dr. King	83%	7	59%	9%
Collin	67%	6	58%	42%	Tesla	23%	8	44%	49%
Josh	55%	9	57%	47%	Brody	72%	7	49%	45%
Blackbeard	10%	8	74%	50%	Andy	75%	7	53%	28%
Earhart	19%	8	75%	46%	Washington	99%	4	46%	-
Jared	56%	6	51%	51%	Bekah	61%	9	56%	36%
Phillip	65%	8	60%	34%	Devin	23%	12	42%	47%

"Win used / not": games where it fired against games where it never did (timing, not cause).

ARCHETYPES

Every colour supports at least two plans. Pick one, fill the curve, cut what doesn't serve it.



● GOLD • INVENTORS AND INDUSTRY

Tinker swarm. Eight Inventors and eleven token makers. Isaac Singer, The Workshop, Genius Convention and Andrew Carnegie flood the field; Tesla's aura makes the whole crew hit.

Items and equipment. Eli Whitney and the Vehicle Junkie search for gear; Finished Product and Inventor's Goggles turn any body into a threat. Devin's home.

Pilots. The Wright Brothers, Orville and Wilbur, Cockpit. Fun, but only a couple of Pilot bodies exist so far.



● COBALT • THINKERS AND DREAMERS

Sturdy and wide. Rosa Parks, Red, White, & Blue and the Dr. King card: high-health characters that survive blocks and grow with Resolve.

Thinkers draw. Emily Dickinson, William Faulkner, Frederick Douglass: card flow first, fights later.

Free Spirits. P.T. Barnum, Harriet Beecher Stowe and The Circus. Andy's half of the colour.



● EMERALD • FRONTIER AND EXPLORERS

Explore. Nine Adventurers and seven Explore cards. Sacagawea gives the whole team Explore, so blockers stop mattering. Earhart's and Collin's engine: their hits on a Leader now Recover 1.

Ramp into giants. Louisiana Purchase and Jared's crystal lead into Sally Ann Thunder, Paul Bunyan & Babe and The Rough Riders.



● GARNET • REBELS, PIRATES AND WAR

Rebel rush. Rebel, Two Sided Hound, Charles Lee, Susan B. Anthony, then Whiskey Rebellion rests their blockers and swings for the win.

Removal control. John Wilkes Booth, Benedict Arnold, Aaron Burr, The Boston Massacre: the most removal in the game.

Double Chapter. Ulysses S. Grant, Blackbeard and the Abrams Tank take 2 Life a hit.



● QUARTZ • FOUNDERS AND REVOLUTION

Founder lords. Twelve Founders plus John Adams, The Constitution and George Washington, Freeworld Founder to pump them all.

Guard wall. Abigail Adams, Chips, Speak Softly, Carry Big Stick and Golem tokens. Phillip adds +1 power to every Guard.

THE EIGHT TRAVELER PAIRS

●● **DEVIN:** cheap Items, a Tinker off each one, Cobalt draw to refill.

●● **BEKAH:** nine Events at a discount, Founders to cash them in.

●● **ANDY:** rest effects from both colours, Free Spirits to swing past.

●● **JOSH:** two-drops with +0/+1, recursion, Make Camp and Recover.

●● **COLLIN:** Emerald explorers plus Garnet raiders, all Swift on arrival.

●● **BRODY:** Golems, Tinkers and Founders; the widest board in the game.

●● **JARED:** Explore ramp, then Gold Vehicles like Apollo 11.

●● **PHILLIP:** Quartz Guards and Duel, Garnet's Aaron Burr and removal.

STAPLES AND SLEEPERS

The number next to each card compares the win rate when it was played with that Leader's other cards of the same cost: **1.00** is typical, 1.10 is a strong card, under 0.90 is a weak one.

 1.24 · Dr. King's Triumph	 1.19 · steals their best	 1.17 · best Traveler card	 1.14 · free from Life	 1.07 · Guard that refunds	 1.07 · cheap clean removal
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COLOUR	STAPLES (PLAY THEM)	SLEEPERS (RATED HIGH, RARELY PLAYED)	HANDLE WITH CARE
● Gold	The Workshop 1.15 , Genius Convention 1.14 , George Westinghouse 1.09 , Andrew Carnegie 1.08 , Kite and Key 1.08	Ring, Ring! 1.07 (played 32%), Southern Citrus 1.06 (17%)	The New World 0.81 , Cockpit 0.90 outside Pilot decks
● Cobalt	I Have a Dream 1.24 , Martin Luther King Jr. 1.15 , Alexander and the Virginians 1.10 , P.T. Barnum 1.05	Red, White, & Blue 1.13 (19%), Mightier than the Sword 1.08 (34%)	NASA 0.73 , Crossing the Delaware 0.79
● Emerald	Guerrilla Warfare 1.07 , Chief Powhatan 1.06 , Buffalo Bill 1.05 , Daniel Boone 1.05 , Louisiana Purchase 1.05	Jamestown 1.17 (17%), Hound Treats 1.06 (21%)	Mount Rushmore 0.84 , Trade Routes 0.85 , Out West 0.86
● Garnet	The American Dream 1.20 , Benedict Arnold 1.19 , Susan B. Anthony 1.13 , Honest Abe Lincoln 1.12 , John Wilkes Booth 1.07	Whiskey Rebellion 1.32 (9%), Abrams Tank 1.12 (15%)	Siege of Yorktown 0.83 , Battle of Bunker Hill 0.86 , Parley 0.86
● Quartz	Fort Sumter 1.12 , John Paul Jones 1.10 , The Gettysburg Address 1.09 , Marquis de Lafayette 1.08 , Chips 1.07	The Constitution 1.13 (7%), Strange Purple Rock 1.12 (20%)	Mount Vernon 0.84 , John F. Kennedy 0.86
Travelers	Andy Varnes 1.17 , Jared Nelson 1.09 , Devin Roberts 1.02 , Josh 1.01	Every Traveler card rates between 0.97 and 1.17: all of them earn their slot.	

WHY SLEEPERS SLEEP

Sleepers win when they are played but sit in hand: expensive Locations, Whiskey Rebellion waiting for the right board, a Treasure that needs a quiet turn. The new AI still plays Oval Office, Strange Purple Rock, NASA, The New World and Boomtown almost never. A human who plans a turn around them can get more than the AI does.

CONVENTION RISERS

In the new four-player batch these gained the most over their duel value: **Lexington & Concord**, **The Steam Engine**, **Chief Powhatan**, **The Statue of Liberty**, **Up a River** and **Colony Vessel**. Longer games pay team buffs and engines.

BUILDING PAST THE STARTER

One Location is plenty. Earhart's and Washington's starters carry 9 Locations each, and only one can be in play. Swap most of them for staples.

Watch the curve. The cheapest starters (Devin, Josh, about 3.5 average cost) come out fast; the priciest (Blackbeard, Washington, about 4.6) start slow.

Add Counters. Most starters hold 1 to 3 Counters; Tesla's has 5. Two cheap Counters give your spare crystals a job.

Duel ratings: balance audit card study, 27,300 starter-deck duels (run before the AI upgrade; percentages are how often the card was played when drawn). Convention risers: this guide's 800-game batch.

PLAYING WELL

The same deck wins more in better hands. These habits are where the upgraded AI gained the most over the old one, which it now beats about 9 games in 10.

CRYSTALS: SPEND OR HOLD?

- Crystals come back at the start of **your** turn. Whatever you don't spend is free Brace money on their turn, so in a duel a leftover crystal is never wasted.
- Holding up a Counter costs a real card's worth of tempo. Hold when you have the Counter **and** nothing better to cast: Zap, Duel and Make Camp are cheap enough to keep up.
- In Convention, crystals are dearer: the ones you keep must cover several rivals' turns. Save them for your own knockout defence, not someone else's.
- The second player's bonus crystals on turns 2, 4 and 6 are for tempo. Use them to land a bigger character early.

COMBAT MATH, THREE EXAMPLES

Guard wins for free. Teddy Roosevelt, Rough Rider (4/3) charges. The Queen's Rangers (4/5, Guard) block without resting, take 4 and survive, deal 4 and destroy Teddy.

Brace turns a bounce into a kill. Aaron Burr (4/4) charges into your Nathaniel Hawthorne (2/5, Guard). Hawthorne survives either way; Brace 2 crystals and he hits back for 4 and destroys Burr.

Infuse for the kill. P.T. Barnum (2/3) charges a rested John Jay (2/3). Infuse 1 crystal: Barnum deals 3 and Jay is destroyed. Jay deals 2, so Barnum lives (unless they Brace).

FACE OR BOARD?

Every Life you take goes to your rival's **hand**, and a Triumph fires free (about once every three games per player). Early chip damage refuels them. Clear their characters first, then go face when you can push **Life + 1** hits past their untapped blockers in one or two turns. That lethal check is exactly what the AI does.

RESTED MEANS EXPOSED

An attacker rests. Until your next turn it can't block and it can be charged. Before each attack, ask what their board does to yours on the swing back. Your **Leader** can't be destroyed, so charging with it risks nothing on your field: use it to finish rested characters.

MULLIGAN GUIDE

Send the hand back if it has **no character costing 3 or less**, or **three or more cards costing 6+**. That is the AI's rule and it mulligans about one hand in four. Keep a hand with a two-drop, a three-drop and one answer. Traveler and Signature discounts count: check the real cost.



THE CHEAP COUNTERS

Zap (2), Duel (2) and Make Camp (1) are the Counters worth holding up in almost any deck of their colour. When a Counter was cast in the sims it worked **90%** of the time, yet players ended only 4% of turns holding one. Holding one up is the cheapest edge in the game right now.

Test Flight (now 4) and Pulling Up (now 5) are playable again after the cost cuts.

COMMAND TIMING IN ONE LINE

A Command is once per match. Fire **board** Commands (Continental Army, Wardencllyffe Tower, Scale for Sale) with open slots before combat; fire **second-wave** Commands (Across the Atlantic, The Mending Room) after your first attacks; fire **value** Commands (Attempt Forty-Seven, Write It Down, Objection!) when the value is really there. Holding one to the end is a mistake: at 1 Life or from about turn 9, just use it.

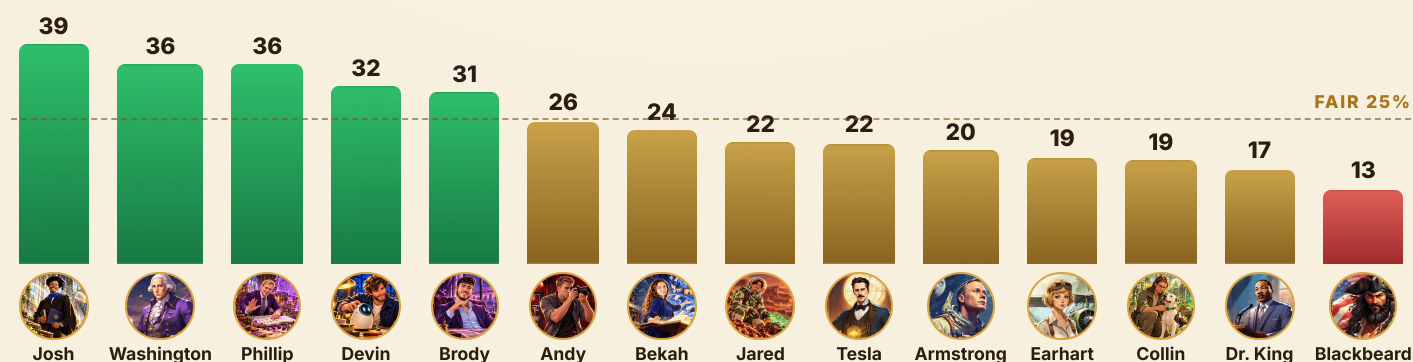
THREE TO FIVE PLAYERS

THE CONVENTION META

Four players, starter decks, 800 games, Leaders dealt at random. Fair is 25%. Each Leader played about 200 to 250 games (about 6 points either way), so read the tiers, not the decimals.

TIER	LEADERS (4-PLAYER WIN %)	WHY
Table favourites	Josh 39 · Washington 36 · Phillip 36 · Devin 32 · Brody 31	Engines and walls that survive being ganged up on.
Middle of the table	Andy 26 · Bekah 24 · Jared 22 · Tesla 22 · Armstrong 20 · Earhart 19 · Collin 19 · Dr. King 17	Within reach of fair. Bekah (from 8%) and Collin (from 9%) both climbed here.
Hard mode	Blackbeard 13	His hits make everyone discard, so the whole table turns on him.

FOUR-PLAYER WIN RATE BY LEADER



POLITICS

- **Interject** lets you play a Counter to save someone else. Use it to stop the race leader, never to help them. "I'll Zap your attacker if you leave me alone" is a real deal.
- **The Shard** goes to the Life leader in round 3 and changes hands about 9 times a game. Holding it gave no real edge (26% wins, the same as not holding it).
- **Knockout draw 2** is not a snowball. The first player to knock someone out went on to win only 27% of games (the base rate is 33%).
- **Mass effects** hit every opponent. Whiskey Rebellion or Front Page rests every board, which also opens those boards to the players after you.

SEATS

- Seat 1 won least again (15%, against 25 to 31% for seats 2 to 4, margin about 3). It showed in all four of our batches, so going first at a full table is a real, if modest, handicap.
- Seats 4 and 5 get 1 extra crystal on their first turn. Use it for a 3-drop on turn 1.
- At 3 players, seats 2 and 3 start with 1 extra Life, on top of any Leader Life change.
- The first round is peaceful. Build, don't overcommit: Swift is wasted until round 2.
- Builders draw fire: Brody, Tesla, Josh and Collin were charged about 1.9 to 2.0 times a round. Keep a Guard or a Counter up once your board is the biggest.

WHO SHINES

Josh, Washington and Phillip top the table; Washington's 2-crystal Command makes him a favourite (36%). Devin and Brody build engines while others fight.

GREEN BRINGS IT HOME

Collin and Earhart now Recover 1 when they hit a Leader (once per turn), so early pressure no longer leaves them empty. Pick the weakest player, keep hitting, and collect the draw 2.

ONE-TWO PUNCH FIXED BEKAH

Before v5 she charged the least of any Leader and won about 8% of 4-player games. Now each Event sends a refreshed hero back in: 1.7 charges a round and 24% wins, right at fair. Charge first, then play the Event.

YOUR FIRST DECK

After you sign up you pick one of five first decks, one per colour. Here is how they compare. Strength is the Leader's duel tier with its starter; the first-deck lists are close cousins, so treat it as a guide.

DECK	STRENGTH	DIFFICULTY	PLAYSTYLE
 ● The Dreamers Dr. King	Tier B	Easy	A wide crew that won't break. Play a character every turn, block with the sturdy ones and let Resolve grow them. At 4 characters you draw every turn.
 ● Blackbeard's Crew Blackbeard	Tier B	Medium	Fast Rebels and dirty tricks. Clear blockers with removal, hit their Leader and they lose cards. Rewards knowing when to go face.
 ● Tesla's Workshop Tesla	Tier C	Medium	Build Tinkers every turn, arm your Inventors, then overload the board. Plenty of Counters to learn instant speed with.
 ● Wings Over the Frontier Earhart	Tier B	Easy	Explorers fly over blockers, and every Explore hit on a Leader Recovers 1. Strap on a Vehicle and strike twice with Across the Atlantic.
 ● The Continental Army Washington	Tier C (duel), favourite (Convention)	Harder	Founders hold the line, Golems join the ranks, then the army marches as one. The refresh ability rewards careful crystal planning.

OUR PICK FOR BEGINNERS

The Dreamers (Dr. King). It is in the solid tier, its plan is one sentence (play characters, keep them alive), and mistakes are forgiving because the characters are tough. You learn blocking and Brace naturally.

Like to attack? Take **Blackbeard's Crew**. Planning a game night with 4 friends? **The Continental Army** is the strongest of the five at a full table.

GOT A TRAVELER CODE?

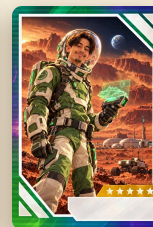
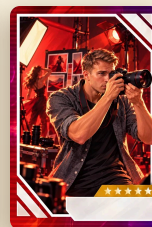
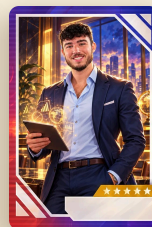
If you hold one of the special codes, a secret sixth option appears: **your own Traveler deck**, with your Leader, your promo card and your two colours. It is built from the same rules (40 cards, colour legal, a small rare budget). Check your brief on pages 4 to 6 for how it plays.

YOUR FIRST UPGRADES

Learn one deck first. Play ten games with it before you change a card. You will learn which cards you never want to draw.

Cut Locations first. Each first deck carries a few and only one can be in play. Page 8 lists the staples to put in their place.

Open a few packs. A fresh collection holds 28 to 36 legal copies for a one-colour Leader, so a custom 40 takes a few packs. Two-colour Travelers have enough from day one.



META CHEAT SHEET

DUEL TIERS (VERSION 5)

- A** Armstrong (on watch, fix pending; Collin counters him)
- B** Josh, Collin, Blackbeard, Earhart, Jared, Phillip, Dr. King
- C** Bekah, Tesla, Brody, Andy, Washington, Devin

13 of 14 Leaders sit between 45 and 53%.

CONVENTION TIERS (4 PLAYERS)

- 1** Josh, Washington, Phillip, Devin, Brody
- 2** Andy, Bekah, Jared, Tesla, Armstrong, Earhart, Collin, Dr. King
- 3** Blackbeard

Strong in both formats: Josh, Phillip.

TEN RULES OF THUMB

1. Leftover crystals are free Brace on their turn.
2. Hold Zap, Duel or Make Camp when you have them.
3. Clear the board first; go face for lethal.
4. Count Life + 1 hits past their blockers.
5. Your Leader can't be destroyed: use it to finish rested characters.
6. Rested attackers can't block. Check the swing back.
7. Mulligan with no 3-drop or three 6+ cards.
8. Use your Command; never die holding it.
9. Convention: don't be first to knock someone out unless it wins.
10. Convention: Interject against the leader, never for them.

NUMBERS TO KNOW

- Duel first player wins 49%: going second is fine now.
- Second player: +1 crystal on turns 2, 4 and 6.
- Average duel about 11 turns; Convention 28 turns.
- Commands fire in 55% of duels, turn 7 on average.
- Cast Counters work 90% of the time.
- Life: Andy starts with 1 fewer, Bekah and Brody 1 extra; Collin and Earhart Recover on hits.
- Bekah: play an Event after a charge to swing twice.
- Three players: seats 2 and 3 start with 1 extra Life.
- Four players: seats 4 and 5 get +1 crystal on turn 1.

COMMANDS AT A GLANCE

Tesla · Wardencllyffe Tower (4): open slots, before combat
Dr. King · The March (3): with 3+ characters
Armstrong · Giant Leap (2): no Explore blocker ready
Earhart · Across the Atlantic (3): after the first wave
Blackbeard · Broadside (5): on a board of small bodies
Washington · Continental Army (2): early, turn 3 or 4
Josh · The Mending Room (3): after the first wave

Devin · Attempt Forty-Seven (4): after the board is built
Collin · First Through the Door (2): on your key attacker
Bekah · Write It Down (3): a great Event in the trash
Brody · Scale for Sale (4): with 2 open slots
Andy · Front Page (4): the swing that ends it
Jared · Radio Home (3): early, for the ramp
Phillip · Objection! (3): when your strongest wins



Season 1 meta, based on AI simulations as of 29 Sep 2026 (card data version 5). The meta is yours to change: play at lost-chapters-game.nellify.app.