Hi, I'm Zac! I would like to learn how to play IRONDIE. I've been told it's easy. Can you teach me?

DOT: Sure! I'll introduce you into the game. Then, if you wish to master it, you can download the complete IRONDIE handbook for free at www.irondie.com.

DOT: I can teach you how to play IRONDIE in four simple steps, but first, let's go over the tools of this game, the dice.

The IRONDIE dice have 9 different shapes and 8 different colors. The dice with small triangles are called *Attack* dice while those with dots are *Defense* dice and those with figures are *Life* dice. There is a summary of their features on the leaflet included with the *Basic blister*. The nine different shapes have names which identify them, like Barrier, Smasher, etc.;

ZAC: Can I use them all? How do I choose which ones to use? Can I change my *Set* every new game?

DOT: You have to make up your *Set* **by picking 9 dice. You can combine all types and colors as long as your *Set* includes at least 1 *Attack* die, 1 *Defense* die and 1 *Life* die.** As you gain experience you will understand which dice best suit your playing style. There is no such thing as an invincible die set, so winning depends on tactics and, of course, a bit of luck always helps. Remember that the dice included in a *Basic blister* already constitute a *Set* you can play with but part of the enjoyment is improving your *Set*.

ZAC: What else do I need in order to start playing? I saw a colored sheet with some strange boxes in it, what is it?

DOT: You just need to find an opponent who owns a 9 dice *Set* whom you can challenge. The colored sheet you saw is the "*Game board*" where you will place the dice during the game. After some practice you may be able to play without it. You can also download other IRONDIE *Game boards* from the web site and match them with your personalized *Sets*.

ZAC: Hey, these dice are actually metal… and heavy! I guess they will roll better on a smooth surface, and not the crystal table of my living room, right?

DOT: That's a safe bet, Zac.. I'll teach you how to play using the following four steps. Let's start from the beginning!

THE AIM OF THE GAME

The aim of the game is defeating your opponent by reducing his or her life points to zero. A player's life points are the sum of his or her Life dice.

Each IRONDIE game is divided in *turns* and *phases*. Each turn is made up of **3 *phases*** which follow one another in chronological order: **1)** ***Battle,*** **2)** ***Skirmish,*** **and 3)** ***Damage Assessment.*** As some turns may not have a *Skirmish* phase, and since this is the most complex phase of the game, let's first analyze a game that only has *Battle* and *Damage Assessment* phases.

BATTLE
(PHASE 1)

1. Each player selects the type and number of dice to use in Battle and casts them at the same time as his or her opponent does. If this is the first turn, the player must cast at least one Life die (each player must always have at least one Life die into play, otherwise he or she loses the game).

2. Being careful not to change the rolled values, the players slide the dice onto their Game board: the Attack dice are to be placed on the Attack boxes drawn on the board, the Defense dice on the Defense boxes and, of course, the Life dice on the Life boxes (the numbers you find on the boxes signal the order in which the dice have to be placed: 1 for the die with the higher result and so on).

Setting aside for a moment the *Skirmish* phase and the *Colors* rules, let's move on directly to the final phase of each turn.

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT
(PHASE 3)

1. Each player assesses the Damage which has been inflicted to him or her by subtracting the sum of the opponent's Attack dice from the sum of his or her Defense dice.

2. Each player then subtracts the *Damage* points inflicted by the opponent from his or her *Life* dice, choosing how to divide them between the *Life* dice he or she has into play (the total points subtracted must be equal to the *Damage* dealt)

3. Each *Life* die which is reduced to zero must be put into the *Abyss*. The dice put into the *Abyss* are "*destroyed*" and cannot be used anymore in the current game. A player who has no more *Life* dice left loses the game. In the event that both players have no more *Life* dice left during a particular turn, the game ends in a draw.

4. The players declare the end of the turn: all the dice in *Battle*, except the *Life* dice, are put in *Limbo*.

At this point the turn ends and both players start the next turn by taking their dice back from *Limbo*. Each player can also choose one *Life* die placed in the BATTLE ZONE and take it back into his or her hand, as long as they have at least one *Life* die on the *Life* boxes. Then, the next turn begins, starting from the *Battle* phase.

ZAC: If it is that easy, what are all of the different *Types* of dice and shapes for?

DOT: You will need them in the *Skirmish* phase, which can take place between the *Battle* and the *Damage Assessment*. Here's how...

SKIRMISH
(PHASE 2)

DOT: We cast some of our dice and placed them on the *Game board*, but we also kept others in **Reserve** (that is "in our hand"). Now, starting with the player who has the largest number of dice in his or her *Reserve* (in case its a draw, from the one with more *Life* points), players can cast their dice into a *Skirmish* by engaging a *Duel* (once the first *Duel* in this skirmish has ended, the other player will get the chance to engage a *Duel*). During the *Skirmish* phase players use the *effects* of the dice, which you can find summarized on the *Game board*. These *effects* must always have a *target*, that is a die to which the effects are addressed. **Remember: in case of a draw the winner is always the target die (according to the draw rule).**

Let's say that I (DOT) have more dice in my *Reserve* than you (ZAC) do, so that I can start the first *Duel*:

1. *DOT picks one of the dice in his Reserve and casts it, choosing one target die among his or his opponent's dice into play. After that DOT places the die into the box called Skirmish 1.*

2. *ZAC can reply casting one of his die into Skirmish, and then placing it into box Skirmish 1 of his Game board. The dice cast by ZAC must have as its target the die cast into Skirmish by DOT, or the die DOT chose as a target. If ZAC decides not to answer the Duel, or if he cannot answer it, the Skirmish phase ends and the effect produced by DOT'S die is applied.*

3. *DOT can reply as well, casting a second die. That die can target only the dice which are in the Skirmish boxes or those which have been chosen as targets during the current Duel. The die cast by DOT is then placed into box Skirmish 2 on his Game board.*

4. *ZAC can (and this will be the last move of the Duel) cast a second die (following the same rules at point 3).*

5. *At this point the game moves on to determine the result of the Duel. In order to do this all the effects generated are applied starting from the effect of the last die cast in Duel to the first one.*

ZAC: Ok, I think I got it, but could you give me an example?

DOT: Let's say that I cast a *Smasher* on one of your *Attack* dice, you replied casting a *Nullifier* on my *Smasher* and I decided to pass on the opportunity for a second cast. In order to determine the result of the *Duel,* we take into consideration first the result of your *Nullifier*: if it wins the against *Smasher*, the latter will be put into the *Limbo* (according to the effect of the *Nullifier*) and, as a consequence, my *Smasher* will not be able to destroy its *target* (according to the effect of the *Smasher*) despite the outcome of the roll. If, on the contrary, the *Nullifier* loses the comparison, we will move on to analyze the result of the *Smasher*. If the *Smasher* wins the confrontation, your *Attack* die will be put into the *Abyss*.

Oh, one more thing: **the value of a die can never be higher than 6 nor lower than 1**. So, for example, if you score 4 casting an *Assault* die into *Skirmish* and the *target* die scores 3, and you decide to increase the value of your *target* die, this die will be raised to 6 (3+4=6!), Otherwise, if you decide to reduce it, your *target* die will go to *Limbo*. The *Life* dice are an exception to the rule, for when their value becomes equal to or lower than zero they must be put directly into the *Abyss*.

ZAC: Ok, now it is clear. Now what do we do after the first *Duel* has ended?

DOT: Well, the dice which are in the *Skirmish* boxes must be put into *Limbo* and you have the right to engage another *Duel*.

ZAC: And when does the *Skirmish* phase end so that we can move on to the *Damage Assessment* phase? How many *Duels* can there be?

DOT: The *Skirmish* phase ends when both players have no more dice left in their *Reserve* or if they decide that they do not want to start other *Duels*. Remember that whenever a player decides to give up his or her right to start a *Duel*, that player will only be able to answer the *Duels* engaged by the opponent for the rest of the *Skirmish* phase. The opponent then has the right to engage as many *Duels* as he or she pleases.

ZAC: Well, I guess you were right. The *Skirmish* phase is more complex than the other two. I better re-read it a couple of times!

DOT: Actually it is easier to play than to describe, but soon you will understand the strategy of the game. Each turn you can decide which dice to use in *Skirmish* and which to cast into *Battle*; one turn you can decide to keep six dice in your hand while the other you might decide to cast them all. It depends on your strategy, that of your opponent, and the different situations that ensue.

Remember also that although I explained the phases starting from the first to the last and then back to the second one (*Battle, Resolution* and *Skirmish*), their correct order is: Phase 1- *Battle*, Phase 2-*Skirmish* and Phase 3- *Damage Assessment*.

CHROMATIC TABLE

| A | ALLIED | H | HOSTILE |
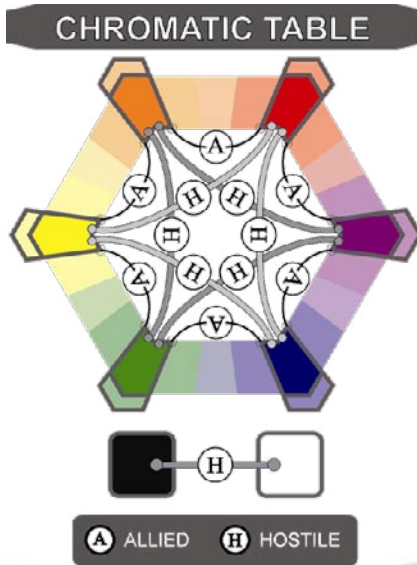
THE COLOR BONUS AND THE SPECIALIZATIONS

ZAC: Well, so now there are just the *colors* and their *effects* missing right? They are described in the "*Chromatic table*" of the *Game board*, aren't they?

DOT: Precisely! But first you must know that these *colors* are related to each other according to a "degree of kindred": two primary colors are the "parent" colors of a secondary, and a secondary color is the "child" of two primaries. This is quite easy to remember, think of how colors can be mixed on a palette! For example, Red and Blue are the parent colors of Purple, Green is the child of Yellow and Blue. Black and White have no degree of kindred with any other color.

According to their relationship, there are _allied colors_ (as the parent colors to their children and vice versa), and colors which are _hostile_ to one another (as the colors within the same category: Red is *hostile* to Yellow and Blue, Orange is *hostile* to Green and Purple, Black is *hostile* to White) and finally there are *colors* which are _neutral_ to each other (as are those colors which are not *allied* nor *hostile* to one another like, for example Yellow and Purple).

ZAC: All right, but what do we need this distinction for?

DOT: **Every time a die cast scores "1" I apply, whenever possible, the effect generated by its color** (according to what is stated in the _Chromatic table_ on the back of the *Game board*) to any allied die (but never to itself). This rule, called the "_1 rule_" has to be applied immediately, before any other *effect* (for example a die cast during the *Skirmish* phase), as soon as the die is cast on the *Game board*.

Consider that in the *Expansion Boxes* you will also find some *Rare* dice, which apply this rule even when the die scores 2! This will be better explained in the Manual that you can download for free on www.irondie.com.

ZAC: Great, so even in case of an unlucky cast I can get a bonus if my *Set* is well built!

DOT: Absolutely! This is the reason why it is important to choose the right *shape* of die but also the right *color* which fits well with the other *colors* in your *Set*. A one color *Set* gets the maximum benefit out of this rule but becomes more predictable.

ZAC: Ok, now I understand why the dice of a *Set* have particular color combinations, but is it the same if you have a Yellow-Blue and Purple *Set* and a Red-Yellow and Orange one?

DOT: Not exactly: there is one more thing you need to know, and it is that the dice have *specializations*. You can find them out by looking at the color assigned to each die in the table which sums up their *types* and *effects*. The table is on the *Game board*. As you can see Black is "*specialized*" for the *Smasher*, Red for the *Assault* and so on. A *specialized* die (that is a die with the best *color-type* combination: a Black *Smasher*, a Red *Assault*, etc.) breaks the draw rule that we defined talking about the *Skirmish* phase. This means that **whenever a specialized die targets a NON-HOSTILE die, it wins the comparison also if it ends in a draw!**

To be clear, here is another example: a Black *Smasher* targeting a Yellow die wins even if it scores the same value of its target die; this can happen because Black is specialized for the *Smasher*. On the contrary, a Black *Smasher* which targets a White die cannot apply this exception to the "*1*" rule because White is *hostile* to Black and loses the comparison in case of a draw.

ZAC: This means that a *specialized* die is more powerful than the others! I should build my *Set* with *specialized* dice only.

DOT: Well, it's not so easy, because then your set would not use the "*1*" rule very often. Every tactic aspect in IRONDIE must be skillfully balanced and only experience will grant you this ability.

Anyway, remember to visit www.irondie.com, where you will find a richer and more detailed manual, new *Game boards* and many examples of tactics and pre-established *Sets*. You will also be able to compare the *Sets* you want to create with those built by other players online and at your nearest retailer. Is it all clear?

ZAC: Ehm...

DOT: Let's play then, there's nothing better than a bitter defeat to teach you how to win. And besides, these are dice and, unlike chess, you will have beginner's luck on your side

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