

I finished up an 18 month PBeM Dune game earlier this year. I was the moderator, and it went pretty well, despite NO modifications to the basic game turn flow to try to speed things up or make allowances for non-FtF orders. The only thing I did was to try to constantly encourage players to send conditional orders and to ask for everything possible that could be given simultaneously.

Here is the protocol that I used. Since everything was done manually, there were actually fairly frequent minor departures from this as needed:

I. Start Game

- A. The Bene Gesserit have until the first deadline to decide on the predicted turn number and faction identity of the winner.
- B. GM reports player dot assignments.
- C. GM reports traitor candidates drawn by each player.
- D. All players have until next deadline to decide which drawn leader to choose as their traitor. (Harkonnen automatically gets all leaders drawn as traitors.)
- E. The Fremmen also have until that deadline to decide the locations of their initial 10 units.
- F. The Bene Gesserit also have until that deadline to decide the location of their initial 1 unit.
- G. GM reports initial game state.
- H. GM reports initial treachery cards.

II. Storm Round

- A. GM reports current game state.
- B. On the first turn, GM reports the randomized starting location of the storm.
- C. On each turn after the first:
 1. GM reports the distance the storm will travel.
 2. All players have until next deadline to decide to play Weather Control or Family Atomics cards.
 3. GM reports the new location of the storm and any storm and card effects.
- D. GM reports the distance the storm will travel next turn to the Fremmen.

III. Spice Round

- A. GM reports current game state.
- B. GM reports location and amount of one spice blow.
- C. While the spice card is Shai Hulud:
 1. All players have until next deadline to decide to make or break alliances and with whom.
 2. If two factions each declare to the GM that they will ally with each other, GM reports their successful alliance.
 3. All players also have until that deadline to decide to play a Karama card to prevent the Fremmen (or an ally) from controlling the worm.
 4. GM reports worm effects.
 5. Draw another spice card for that spice blow.
 6. If the card is another Shai Hulud, the Fremmen have until next deadline to decide the location of the worm.
- D. GM reports next spice card to Atreides.

IV. Treachery Round

- A. GM reports current game state.
- B. All players have until next deadline to declare whether or not they can and will accept CHOAM charity. (The Bene Gesserit automatically receive CHOAM charity.)
- C. GM reports all recipients of CHOAM charity.
- D. GM reports the number of treachery cards currently held by each player and the number of treachery cards up for bid this turn.
- E. For each card up for bid:
 1. GM reports identify of card up for bid to Atreides.
 2. GM reports bidding sequence order for card up for bid, based on current storm location, player dot assignments, and ordinal number of card up for bid.
 3. For each player in bidding sequence order:
 - a. The bidding player has until next deadline to enter a bid greater than the last bid, or pass. A bid may not exceed the number of spice that player currently holds. A pass means that that player may not make a further bid on the current card. The last player to enter a legal bid wins the card.
 4. At any deadline up to and including the one at which the card is actually bought, any player may decide to play a Karama card to avoid paying the Emperor, if s/he should win the bid.
 5. At any deadline up to and including the one at which the card is actually bought, any player may decide to play a Karama card to prevent the Harkonnen from taking a second free card, if Harkonnen should win the bid.
 6. GM reports the identity of the faction winning the bid and the amount paid. (The amount paid is immediately transferred to the Emperor's treasury. However, spice paid by the Emperor for a treachery card is immediately transferred to the bank.)
 7. GM reports the identify of the card (and the second free card, if applicable) to the player winning the bid.

V. Revival, Shipment, and Movement Round

- A. GM reports current game state.
- B. All players have until next deadline to decide to pay for revival beyond their free revival, or for reviving eligible leaders.
- C. Bene Gesserit also has until that deadline to decide in which territories its forces will *not* be coexisting this turn. (Any territory in which its ally also has tokens *must* coexist.)
- D. GM reports free revival and additional revival received by each player.
- E. GM reports movement order, based on the current storm location and player dot assignments.
- F. For each player in movement order:
 1. Moving player has until next deadline to enter orders for shipment and movement. These orders must include the following:
 - Location of shipment (including sector) and number of tokens shipped
 - Whether or not a Karama card will be played to allow the player to ship at Guild rate
 - Start and end locations of movement (including sector) and number of tokens moved
 - Whether or not a Hajr card will be played to allow a second, and if so, the details of that movement (as in c)

- If the moving player is Bene Gesserit, whether or not tokens shipped or moved into a new territory will coexist
- 2. GM reports shipment orders.
- 3. Guild has until next deadline to decide to play a Karama card to cancel the ordered shipment. (Otherwise, the amount paid for shipment is transferred immediately to the Guild's treasury. However, spice paid by the Guild or its allies for shipping is immediately transferred to the bank.)
- 4. Bene Gesserit also has until that deadline to decide to send a spiritual advisor with the shipment (either to shipment destination or to Polar Sink or not at all), and whether or not it will coexist.
- 5. If Guild has cancelled the shipment, moving player has until next deadline to confirm original movement orders or submit new ones.
- G. At any deadline during movement, Guild may declare to GM that it is going to pre-empt the next set of orders by submitting its own shipment and movement orders.
- H. At any deadline up to and including the one for its own movement, the Guild may instead declare that it is postponing its movement until later in the sequence.
- I. At any deadline up to and including the one for the Guild's movement, a player may decide to play a Karama card to force the Guild to take its turn in normal sequence.

VI. Combat Round

- A. GM reports current game state.
- B. GM reports the location, factions, and numbers of tokens involved in each combat situation.
- C. For each player in order of movement this turn:
 - 1. If the player is involved in more than one combat, that player has until next deadline to decide the order in which the combats will be resolved.
 - 2. GM reports combat resolution order.
 - 3. For each combat in which that player is involved:
 - a. If the Bene Gesserit (or an ally) is involved, they have until next deadline to declare exact application of the Voice.
 - b. GM reports Voice command.
 - c. All players have until next deadline to decide to play a Karama card to cancel the Bene Gesserit's Voice.
 - d. If the Atreides (or an ally) is involved, they have until the next deadline to declare exact application of Prescience.
 - e. GM reports Prescience question.
 - f. Target player has until the next deadline to respond to Prescience, if used.
 - g. All players also have until that deadline to decide to play a Karama card to cancel the Atreides' Prescience.
 - h. GM reports Prescience response.
 - i. All players have until next deadline to decide to play a Karama card to cancel either the Fremmen's Fedaykin, Emperor's Sardaukar, or Atreides' Kwisatz Haderach bonuses in the battle, if applicable.
 - j. Atreides has until next deadline to decide to play a Karama card to view one entire battle plan, in which case their opponent must complete steps k and l before the Atreides.
 - k. Each combatant has until the next deadline to enter battle orders. These orders must include the following:
 - Leader identify or Cheap Hero(ine)

- Number dialed
- Weapon or Worthless Card played
- Defense or Worthless Card played
- Kwisatz Haderach (Atreides only)
- l. GM reports all battle info and result.
- m. Each combatant has until next deadline to decide to reveal a traitor.
- n. GM reports traitor effects, if any, and final battle result.
- o. If winning combatant is Harkonnen, that player has until next deadline to decide to capture an enemy leader.
- p. GM reports identity of captured leader to Harkonnen and victim, if applicable.
- q. All players have until next deadline to decide to play a Karama card to prevent Harkonnen from capturing the leader.
- r. Harkonnen also has until that deadline to decide to immediately kill the captured leader.

VII. Collection Round

- A. GM reports spice collected from spice blows and city income.
- B. GM reports whether or not the game been won and by whom.

VIII. Miscellaneous

- A. At any deadline, any player may decide to play a Gholia card.
 - 1. Fremmen or Emperor must specify number of starred tokens to revive.
 - 2. GM reports tokens revived.
- B. At any deadline, any player may decide to play a Truth Trance card.
 - 1. Player must specify yes/no question and target.
 - 2. GM reports question and target.
 - 3. Normal play sequence is suspended and target player has until next deadline to respond.
 - 4. GM reports response.
- C. At any deadline, a player may decide to play a Karama card for any of the following uses, if applicable:
 - 1. Any player may prevent the Bene Gesserit from using a Worthless Card as a Karama. Normal play sequence may have to "back up" to restart from the point the Worthless Card was cancelled.
 - 2. Harkonnen may trade treachery cards with another player.
 - a. Harkonnen must declare how many cards he will take from which player.
 - b. GM reports cards taken to target player and Harkonnen.
 - c. Normal play sequence is suspended and Harkonnen has until next deadline to decide which of his original cards to return to the target player.
 - d. GM reports returned cards to target player.
 - 3. Fremmen may cause a worm to appear in any territory, with the usual effects.
 - a. Fremmen must declare location of worm.
 - b. GM reports worm effects.
 - 4. Emperor may revive up to 3 tokens.
 - a. Emperor must specify number of starred tokens to revive.
 - b. GM reports tokens revived.
- D. At any deadline, any player may declare the conditions of a deal with another player to the GM. If all players involved in the deal agree to the same conditions and declare such to the GM, GM reports the conditions of the deal.

We were working with a deadline schedule of M-W-F, or about every two working days, but it wasn't too uncommon for us to fall behind due to late orders. (Before the game, we voted to allow a grace period of one deadline for any and all missed orders. We didn't want anyone to get alienated from the game just for being a bit late once or twice.) We also had a little problem with losing a couple of players early on, and then the usual occasional internet lapse or vacation. But we ended up playing 10 full turns in about 18 months.

Looking back, the only thing I would recommend changing is to possibly try some sort of scheme for simultaneous treachery card bidding. We just stayed true to the actual rules of the game, which most players liked, but it took a lot of time. Especially in the early turns when everyone is bidding aggressively on cards, it could take up to about 24 deadlines (or more) to auction six cards.

(I would also recommend using the advanced combat rules, which were voted to NOT be used in this game, but that's another story. :)

As some more interesting information, I was shocked as a long-time player of Dune to realize just how much interpretation and house rules we've incorporated over the years to clarify the imprecise rules of the game. We started out by identifying any likely/common house rules and then voting on them so we were all working with common interpretations, and that was much more difficult than you might expect. Bringing cross-U.S. and international players together to play a game this imprecise yielded a surprising number of differences. Then, as the game proceeded and I had to make occasional rules interpretations for uncommon situations, I continued to record those as questions.

I will post my list of rules interpretations questions with our selected rulings immediately following this post.

If anyone has any specific questions about our game or how it was played, drop me a note.

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