



Shadows

Rulebook



Puzzle Strike: Shadows features 10 characters from the *Fantasy Strike* universe.

Sirus Quince, Chief Magistrate of Flagstone is not happy about the *Fantasy Strike* tournament because it seems designed to breed dissension in the ranks. He orders his General, *Onimaru*, to disrupt the would-be entrants any way possible. His rousing speeches convince the Flagstone citizens of his righteousness.

NEXT
PIECE



BBB



Vs

Meanwhile, *Captain Zane* of the Blood Guard and his trusty assassin *Vendetta* are interested in causing as much mayhem as they can, for mayhem's sake. If Flagstone crumbles in rubble, all the better. *Zane* is happy to attend the *Fantasy Strike* tournament to recruit new members who will help him defy authority. And this is them playing a puzzle game!



NEXT
PIECE



Troq



/s.





"A card game played with chips instead of cards that simulates a puzzle game that simulates a fighting game."

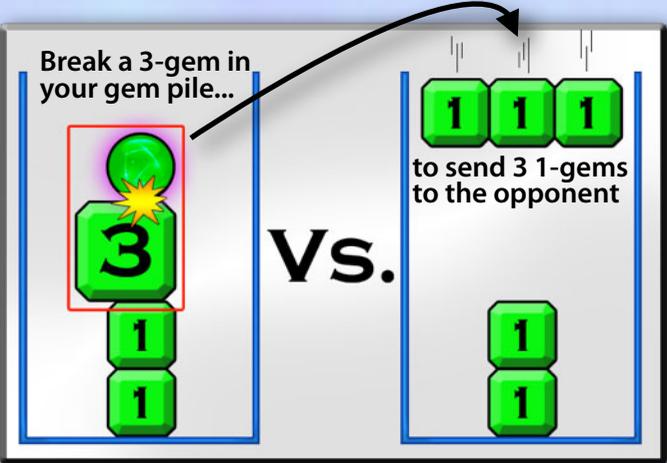
Rules version 7.3

Introduction

Puzzle Strike is a deck building game that simulates a puzzle game played amongst Fantasy Strike characters. In this puzzle game, gems fall into each player's gem pile every turn, and whoever's gem pile fills up first loses. You **combine** gems in your own gem pile to create bigger gems, then **crash** those gems to break them apart and send them to other players. The more full your gem pile is, the closer you are to losing, but the more chips you get to draw each turn to make a comeback.

You start the game with a small "deck" of chips and you buy more chips as you play, allowing you to customize your deck as you go. You'll probably pursue different strategies from your opponents because you each play a different character with different strengths and weaknesses. You'll definitely pursue different strategies each game because the set of common chips you build your deck from (the "bank") changes every game. The number of combinations is staggeringly large, so there's a lot to explore.

Puzzle Strike has several modes: 2-player, 3/4-player free-for-all, 2 vs. 2 Team Battle, and Custom Clockwork Mode where you build your own characters.



At the end of your turn if gems in your pile total 10 or more, you lose!

Object of the Game

Your goal is to overflow your opponents' gem piles with too many gems. If you end your turn with the gems in your gem pile totaling 10 or more, you lose. (For example, four 1-gems, a 2-gem, and a 4-gem total 10.)

Components

- 342 Chips
 - 120 Puzzle Chips (24 x 5 copies)
 - 30 Character Chips
 - 20 Combines
 - 16 Crash Gems
 - 10 Double Crash Gems
 - 64 1-gems
 - 20 2-gems
 - 16 3-gems
 - 12 4-gems
 - 24 Wounds
 - 10 blank chips
- 4 bags
- 4 screens with 8-bit tips!

QUICK START RULES

- Pick your character, then put your starting chips in your bag.
- Set up the bank.
- Shake your bag to shuffle, then draw 5 chips.
- Ante a 1-gem from the bank to your gem pile each turn. (Or a bigger gem when Panic Time starts!)
- Play action chips from your hand.
- **Crash Gems** let you send gems from your gem pile to an opponent. You get money for doing so.
- Buy at least one chip from the bank each turn.
- Discard your hand, then draw 5 chips, plus any chips from the "height bonus" from having a full gem pile. The next player takes his turn unless...
- If your gem pile totals 10 or more, you lose.

TURN STRUCTURE

1) Ante, 2) Action, 3) Buy, 4) Cleanup

Try the online tutorial at www.fantasystrike.com

The Purple Chips

The three purple chips are the heart of the game. They allow you to combine the gems in your gem pile and to get rid of those gems and send them to your opponents.

Combine

Combines two gems in your gem pile into a single gem if the total is 4 or less. For example you can combine a 1-gem and 2-gem into a 3-gem. (Put the 1-gem and 2-gem in the bank, then put a 3-gem from the bank into your gem pile.)

The -\$1 means you have less gem power (money) to spend during the buy phase.

The arrow on the Combine means you get to play another action afterwards.

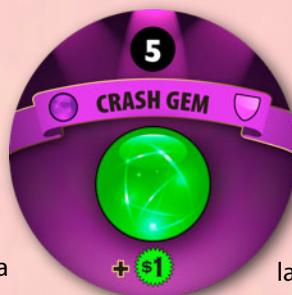


Crash Gem

Crash Gems break gems in your gem pile and send them to any opponent you want. If you crash a 1-gem from your gem pile, you get rid of it and send it to an opponent's gem pile. Crashing a larger gem is even better because it breaks apart into 1-gems and sends them all at once.

For example, if you crash a 3-gem, it splits into three 1-gems and all of them go to your chosen opponent's gem pile. (Put the 3-gem back in the bank, then get three 1-gems from the bank to send to that opponent.)

The +\$1 on the Crash Gem means you also get a little extra money to use during your buy phase.



Double Crash Gem

The Double Crash Gem works the same way as the Crash Gem except that you can break two Gem chips in your gem pile instead of just one, and you gain +\$2 of gem power that turn, instead of +\$1.

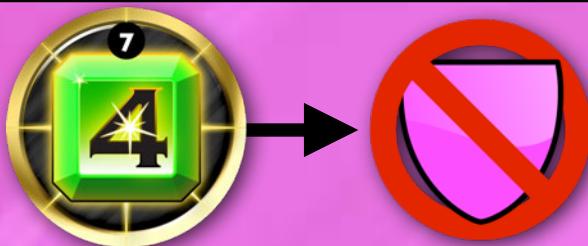
If you have only one gem in your gem pile, it's still legal to play a Double Crash Gem, though it would do nothing more than playing a regular Crash Gem in that case. You get \$1 for each gem you break (normally that's +\$2 total).



Counter-Crashing

You can also use a Crash Gem to "counter-crash" gems in your gem pile when an opponent sends gems to you. When you do that you're playing it as a reaction, indicated by the purple shield in the banner, and it doesn't cost an action to play. When you counter-crash, your gems and your opponent's gems collide in the air! Each 1-gem from your counter-crash negates a 1-gem sent by your opponent. Negated gems go back to bank. Any left-over 1-gems are sent to the player who crashed fewer gems.

For example, if an opponent crashes a 2-gem at you and you counter-crash a 1-gem, you'd negate one of the two incoming 1-gems, and the other one lands in your pile. Because you got rid of a 1-gem in your pile, but received another 1-gem, your pile would remain the same size. If instead you counter-crash a 2-gem, you'd negate both incoming 1-gems. Or if you counter-crash a 3-gem, you'd negate both incoming 1-gems and send a 1-gem to your opponent. Be careful—your opponent can counter-counter-crash that gem!



Uncounter-Crashable!

4-gems are special. If you crash a 4-gem in your gem pile, no one can counter-crash it; they can't even play a purple shield chip as a reaction because the 4-gem is just that powerful! (If you use a Double Crash Gem to break a 4-gem and another gem, the whole thing is uncounter-crashable.)

The Fine Print

- Crash Gems and Double Crash Gems give you money when you use them on your own turn, even if you counter-counter-crash with them. They don't give you money if you use them on someone else's turn.
- You can only play one reaction (such as a counter-crash) per "event." If someone crashes a 3-gem at you, that's one event, and you can only counter-crash it one time.
- Counter-crashing can go on and on back and forth, but you can't do it unless at least one gem is sent to you. And you can't do it if someone crashed (or counter-crashed) a 4-gem, either.
- You can play a Combine even if it doesn't combine anything in order to get the +black arrow.

Other Types of Chips

Gem Chips

Gems function differently when they are in your hand and when they're in your gem pile. In your hand, they act as money that you use to buy chips from the bank each turn. Gems in your gem pile aren't money though. They're the kind of gems you want to crash to send to your opponents. You'll have to add more gems to your pile each turn, and if it's too full you lose the game.



Puzzle Chips

Puzzle chips all have a puzzle icon at the top, with their cost inside. Puzzle chips start as part of the bank, and you can add them to your deck as you play by buying them.



Puzzle chips cost one action to play.

Character Chips

There are 10 characters to choose from and each character has 3 chips. Your character's 3 chips start in your deck, and they tend to push your strategy in one direction or another. Find which characters match the playstyles you enjoy.



Character chips can't be trashed.

Character chips cost one action to play (unless they have shields in the banner and are played as reactions).

Wounds

Wounds are useless chips that clog up your deck. Try to avoid them or get rid of them if you can. You must buy at least one chip per turn, and if you can't afford to buy anything else, you'll have to buy a wound (they cost 0). If you have negative money, you still can (and must) buy a wound. You are only allowed to buy one wound per turn, though you wouldn't want to buy more anyway unless you were trying to disrupt the game. If there are no wounds left in the bank, you don't have to buy a chip at all that turn.



Setup the Game

Screens and Game Boards

Each player takes a screen. If you'd rather put your chips on the table instead of holding them in your hand, you can hide them behind a screen. Each of the four screens illustrates a different game rule, with retro 8-bit style!

Each player takes a game board. The boards mark the game zones for the gem pile, ongoing zone, and discard pile. It's really important to keep the gems in your gem pile separate from everything else, and visible to other players. The ongoing zone is for chips that say "ongoing" on them: they stay in the ongoing zone until something says to discard them. The discard pile is for your discarded chips, and those chips will cycle back to your bag the next time you try to draw chips while your bag is empty.

Your Starting Deck

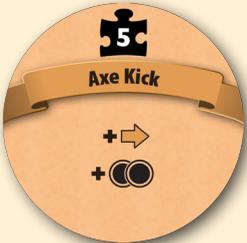
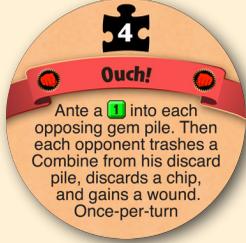
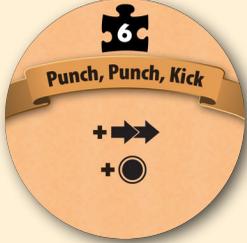
First, each player chooses a character from the 10 possible characters. Each character has exactly 3 Character chips with that character's picture at the top. Take your **3 Character chips**, **1 Crash Gem chip**, and **6 1-gem chips** and put them in your bag. This is your starting deck. Draw 5 chips for your opening hand.



Setup: The Bank

Next, set up the bank. The bank consists of stacks of all the chips players are allowed to buy during the game, but you don't use all the chips every game. There are 24 different Puzzle chips, each with 5 copies. Select just 10 of these 24 stacks, put them in the bank, and leave the other 14 stacks of Puzzle chips in the box. The bank always contains the Gem, Purple, and Wound chips. For your first game, we suggest these 10 stacks of Puzzle chips:

This variation of starting stacks, along with the possible character choices in a 4-player game means that there are **411,863,760** different starting conditions in Puzzle Strike.

| The Bank | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Puzzle Chips -- 10 Different Stacks Each Game* | | | | |
|  x5 |  x5 |  x5 |  x5 |  x5 |
|  x5 |  x5 |  x5 |  x5 |  x5 |

| Gems, Purples & Wound -- Same 8 Stacks Every Game | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  x64** |  x20 |  x16 |  x12 |
|  x20 |  x16** |  x10 |  x24 |



*These ten stacks are recommended for the first game, but after that you can play any 10 stacks you want.
 **That's the total number of 1-gems and Crash Gems but some will start in your deck.

Turn Phases

Turn Structure

A, A, B, C are the four phases each turn: Ante, Action, Buy, Cleanup. Do each phase in order on your turn.

Ante Phase

At the start of the game, your gem pile is empty. **At the beginning of your turn, take a 1-gem from the bank and put it in your gem pile.**

If the game goes too long, you'll enter Panic Time and you'll have to ante more. See the next page for more info on that.

Action Phase

Each turn you may play one Action chip--any chip with a banner. To play an Action chip, put it face up on the table and do whatever it says. (It won't go to your discard pile until the cleanup phase.)

Chips with **+ ➡** on them let you play more actions that turn. For other colored arrows, see page 11.

If an effect would make you draw a chip when your bag is empty, then put the chips from your discard pile (not including the chips you played to the table this turn) into your bag, shake your bag to shuffle them, then continue drawing.

Buy Phase

During the buy phase, you buy chips from the bank. **You must buy at least one chip per turn.** Bought chips go to your discard pile.

Play as many Gem chips as you want from your hand to the table (not to your gem pile!), then add their values to any +gem power you might have gotten during this turn's action phase. Subtract \$1 for each Combine you played this turn. That total is how much money you may spend this turn. **Gems in your gem pile do not count as money.**

You don't have to spend all your money each turn, but you get no benefit from unspent money because all your money--spent or unspent--will go to your discard pile at the end of your turn. You can buy as many chips as you want each turn, as long as you can afford to pay for them.

For example, if you had 6 money to spend this turn, you could buy any chip costing up to 6 or you could buy two chips costing 3. You could even buy a chip costing 1 and let your other 5 money go unused, if you wanted.

Wound chips are notable because they are the only chips in the bank that cost 0 to buy. Even if you have no money during a turn, you must still buy a Wound for 0. You can and must buy a Wound if you have less than 0 money. You can't buy more than one wound per turn.



Remember that the chips you buy go directly to your discard pile and their effects don't trigger when you buy them. You'll draw those chips later in the game though, so buying now is planning for the future.



Cleanup Phase

Make sure any chips you bought this turn are in your discard pile, put all the chips you played to the table this turn (including gem chips used as money) into your discard pile, and discard the chips in your hand. **Then draw 5 chips.**

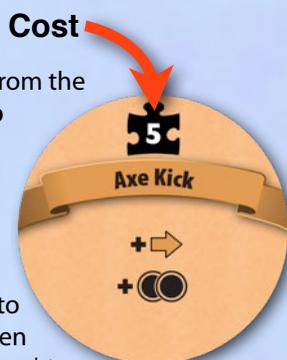
The Height Bonus

The higher the sum of your gem pile is, the more extra chips you get to draw. Remember this shorthand: **"If your gem pile has 3 / 6 / 9 in it, then draw an extra +1 / +2 / +3 chips."** In other words, if your gem pile totals 3, 4, or 5, draw an extra chip. If it totals 6, 7, or 8, draw two extra chips instead. If it totals 9, draw 3 extra chips instead. These bonus draws are in addition to the usual 5 chips you draw during the cleanup phase.

Winning the Game

Whenever a player ends his turn with his gem pile totaling 10 or more, he loses the game. In a 2p game, that's it! In a 3p or 4p game, the **player with the lowest gem pile total wins the game.**

If there is a tie for lowest total, the tied players each take one more turn, check for a lowest, and repeat until there is one winner.



Panic Time!

You have to ante bigger gems as the game goes on! You'll find that this rule kicks in a lot less as you get better at the game.

In a 2-player game, the first moment there are two simultaneously empty stacks in the bank, Panic Time is activated and everyone must ante 2-gems from then on. Even if chips later return to bank and fill up some stacks, the game does not return to Normal Time. The first moment there are three simultaneously empty bank stacks, Danger Time is activated and everyone antes 3-gems from then on. The first time four stacks are simultaneously empty, Deadly Time is activated and everyone must ante 4-gems from then on. Note that if you would ever ante a certain kind of gem that the bank is out of, you must ante it anyway with a stand-in gem of some sort.

For games with 3 or 4 players, the same sort of thing happens. The number of empty stacks needed to activate Panic Time is actually X , where X is the number of players. $X+1$, and $X+2$ empty stacks are when Danger Time and Deadly Time activate. The 2 vs. 2 Team Battle mode counts as 4-player game for purposes of the Panic Time rules.



Basic Strategy

Puzzle Strike's strategy is a tricky thing, and you can go really wrong if you're not careful. If you follow these tips as a beginner, it should get you on the right track to improving though. These tips are just a starting point, and when you understand more about each character and more about how the game changes with each different bank, you'll graduate past them. But you have to start somewhere!

Remember that your ultimate goal is to fill up your opponents' gem piles. Just buying gems for money all day won't accomplish that. Money is a means to an end, and the value of buying more gems for money goes down as the game goes on. What matters a lot is your ability to combine and crash. Building a deck that can draw tons of chips and play tons of actions each turn means that you'll access your combines and crashes even faster. And red chips can disrupt your opponents, which means you'll be under a little bit less pressure.

Combining to build 4-gems in your gem pile is really good. Those are uncounter-crashable and they really help you win.

When you're winning, generally don't counter-crash. Doing so has the net effect of slowing down the game by removing gems from the system. If you're winning, let those gem piles fill up so your opponents lose! If you are in trouble and need to slow the game down a bit, that's a good time to counter-crash.

Buying Tips

- You want about 1-2 Combines per Crash Gem in your deck. You usually want Combines more in the late game than early game.
- You probably want another Crash Gem around every 7 buys. Sometimes you can delay the 2nd Crash Gem buy a bit.
- Don't buy money if your pile totals more than six, and don't buy more than one purple if your pile totals less than three.
- Try to get a couple 2-gems or a 2-gem and a 3-gem somewhere in your first 7 buys. Or, you can fill those slots with puzzle chips that help your money situation.
- Think about how you'll be able to play the chips you're buying. You need +arrows to be able to play "enders" (meaning chips that themselves don't give any +arrows). If you find yourself with too many enders, they might have been poor buys. If you find yourself with more +arrows than you can use, you are wasting that resource and you could have bought some more powerful enders.

2 vs. 2 Team Battle Mode (4 Players)

Want to team up with a friend? In this mode, no one can get eliminated early, so all four players get to play the entire time. Form up your teams of two and get ready for Team Battle!

Shared Gem Pile. Teammates share a (normal sized) gem pile, but do not share other resources. Each player has his own hand, bag, and discard pile as usual. If you get +arrow or +\$, etc., that goes to you only—it's not shared with your teammate. Anything that says "you" in the game means "you," so if you have Troq's Giant Growth on the table and your teammate buys a purple chip, it doesn't get rid of your Giant Growth because "you" didn't buy that purple chip.

Ante Phase. Your team antes just one 1-gem each turn.

Action Phase. Teammates share their action phase. You can each play your actions in any order, and you each get your natural one action per turn. For example, you might play Axe Kick (and draw from it), then your teammate could play something, then you use Axe Kick's +brown arrow to play something else.

Buy Phase. Teammates share their buy phase. You can make your buys in any order. You must each buy at least one chip.

Counter-crashing. When the opposing team sends gems to your gem pile, either you or your teammate can counter-crash. You choose which, but you both can't react to the same "event."

Winning. When a team ends their turn with their gem pile totaling 10 or more, they lose the game.

Make sure you work with your teammate to cover each other's weaknesses, or amplify each other's plans!

Free-For-All (3 or 4 Players)

This mode is for 3 or 4 players. It's kind of crazy and hectic because anyone can crash gems to anyone else.

Winning the Game

Whenever a player ends his turn with his gem pile totaling 10 or more, he loses the game. The **player with the lowest gem pile total wins the game**. Yes, really! If there is a tie for lowest total, the tied players each take one more turn, check for a lowest, and repeat until there is one winner.

Crashing

Whenever you send gems to someone, if they decline to counter-crash, each other player (in turn order, starting with the player after you) gets a chance to counter-crash for them. Only one counter-crash per "send," as usual. If someone

counter-crashes and sends at least one gem (but not a 4-gem!), anyone has a chance to counter-counter-crash that, and so on. Crashes always break gems in your own gem pile, never any one else's.

Floating Gems

In a free-for-all game, you can't "send" gems (by crashing or otherwise) if your gem pile totals 10 or more. Whenever you would send gems to an opponent on your turn, if your gem pile totals 10 or more, those gems "float" in limbo. (The gems you broke in your gem pile are really gone right away though.) The first moment your pile is 9 or less, your floating gems are sent to their targets. If you had two separate crash events waiting in limbo, they each get sent one at a time, and opponents can counter-crash each one as usual. If you end your turn with your gem pile totaling 10 or more, those floating gems are destroyed and don't go to anyone.

Dynamics

Let's think about the strange dynamics that creates for a moment. If anyone is ever about to lose, there is always at least one other player who is suddenly on his side, wanting to save him. Only the player with the lowest pile actually wants the game to end. Alliances shift back and forth as the situations change, and you might even be able to convince other players to make the moves that will secretly help you, if you argue your case well enough. It's kind of wet and wild, and everyone gets to play for the entire duration of the game.

Last Man Standing Variant

If you like, you can try a last-man-standing variant. In this mode, when a player ends his turn with his gem pile totaling 10 or more, he's eliminated and the rest of the players keep playing until only one is left. Whenever a player is eliminated, increase the Panic Time level by one. (Meaning everyone antes a gem that's one larger from then on.) This mode isn't recommended because it suffers from the same problems of almost all free-for-all modes: teaming up to knock someone else out is too powerful. The official rules above with no player-elimination don't have that problem, but if you're looking for a variant, your group could try last-man-standing.

Custom Clockwork Mode

In this mode, you can build your own clockwork soldier by mixing abilities from any characters. For a 2-player game, first choose 9 character chips at random out of the entire set of 30. (Don't use the Shadow Plague chip in this mode.) For a 3 or 4 player game, choose 12 or 15 character chips, respectively. Each player will draft 3 chips from this pool. Take turns drafting one chip at a time, in the following order:

2-player game: 122112

3-player game: 123321123

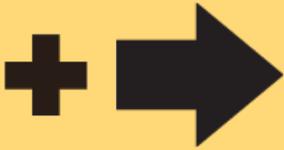
4-player game: 123443211234

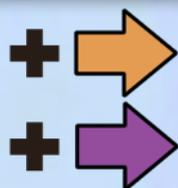
2v2 game: same as 4p where teams are player 1&4 vs. 2&3.

Caution: this mode is wild!

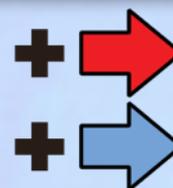
Stuff on the Chips You Need to Know

There are a lot of symbols and terms on the chips. Here's what they do:

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  <p>Action Black arrows allow you to play another Action chip of any color during the action phase this turn.</p> |  <p>Chip Draw an extra chip from your bag.</p> |  <p>Piggy Bank During the cleanup phase, you may keep a chip in your hand that you didn't play rather than discard it. If you do, draw one less chip at the end of the turn.</p> |  <p>Gem Power Get extra gem power (money) to spend during the buy phase this turn.</p> |
|---|--|---|--|



Colored arrows give you an action that you can *only* spend on chips with a banner of that same color. There are brown, purple, red, and blue arrows; each one gives an extra action just for chips that have the corresponding color of banner.



Icons in the Banners of Chips

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
|  <p>Attack Attacks cause negative effects to other players.</p> |  <p>React Each player can react once to each  that would affect him or her.</p> |  <p>Crash Sphere These appear only on Combines, Crash Gems, and Double Crash Gems.</p> |  <p>Crash React You can only play this when an opponent sends gems to a gem pile, but not if your opponent crashed a 4-gem (4-gems are too powerful!)</p> |
|  <p>Exclamation The mightiest of all chips. Look on it and despair.</p> | | | |

Some Important Terms

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Trashing a Chip To <i>trash</i> a chip means to return it to the bank. Trashing is a way to make your deck more efficient by getting rid of chips you don't need anymore.</p> | <p>Gaining a Chip To <i>gain</i> a chip means to put it in your discard pile--not your hand. You'll draw it later though, don't worry.</p> | <p>Main and Reaction <i>Main</i> refers to what the chip can do when you use it during the action phase of your own turn. <i>Reaction</i> refers to what it can do in response to something an opponent does. Reactions don't cost an action to play.</p> | <p>Ante Ante means to take a Gem chip from the bank and put it into your gem pile (or someone else's if a chip says to do that). Players can't purple shield react to this, as it's not a "send."</p> |
| <p>Once-per-turn You can't play a "once-per-turn" chip of the same name more than once per turn, even if it's another copy of that chip.</p> | <p>Ongoing It costs an action to play an "ongoing" chip to the table. Once it's there, you get the benefit each turn without paying an action.</p> | <p>You can only play one reaction to any given event and you discard a reaction on use.</p> | <p>On Top of Your Bag Chips put "on top of your bag" don't go inside it, and when you next draw chips, you draw these first.</p> |

Playing Online

Visit www.fantasystrike.com to play Puzzle Strike and other Sirlin Games online. You could even try the online tutorial for Puzzle Strike there instead of reading this rulebook. We're always looking for more players, and it's free to play, so try it out. You'll find forums, leaderboards, and a helpful community there, too.

Also you can visit the official store at sirlingames.com, find us on Facebook, and look up Puzzle Strike on boardgamegeek.com.

Tournaments

Don't be fooled by Puzzle Strike's saccharine exterior--it's a deep, complex game balanced for intense tournament play. This Third Edition is the evolution of the game after years of tournaments, refined and smoothed out. Some games are designed to be fun for the first few plays without much thought put into whether they can hold up to serious scrutiny, but this is a game you can play long-term on a competitive level if you devote yourself to it. It's difficult to create a game that meets those high standards, and substantially more difficult when it contains so many different characters who all have to be fair against each other. And hopefully you'll enjoy Puzzle Strike that much more, if you find we've met that challenge.

Tournament Rules

The 2-player game mode is usually used in tournaments.

Choosing Characters

Characters should be chosen in a double-blind fashion, meaning each player secretly chooses his character, then both players simultaneously reveal their choices. Hopefully you have enough Puzzle Strike sets on hand to play "mirror matches" of same-character versus same-character. If you don't and both players want to play the same character, flip a coin. The winner gets the character and the loser then chooses another character and whether to play first or second.

Choosing the Bank

After characters are chosen, determine the 10 puzzle chips for the bank *randomly*.

Loser's Choice

Tournament matches are usually played as the best of 2 out of 3 games. That means the first player to win two games wins the match. If you lose a game, you play first in the next game of the match and you can exercise at most one of these options:

- 1) Switch to a different character.
- 2) Remove a puzzle chip stack of your choice from the bank. Replace it with a different puzzle chip stack of your choice from outside the game. You cannot switch in a stack that was previously switched out during the match.
- 3) Create an entirely new bank randomly.

You can use option 1 if you think you can get an advantage in a particular character matchup. Be careful though, knowing how to play a character well is often more important than a theoretical advantage in matchups. Option 2 is good if there's a particular chip in the bank that your opponent's character benefits from too much, or if there's a particular chip your character really likes that isn't in the bank. It's especially good if you can pull off both of those at the same time! Option 3 is rarely used, but if you get into a situation where there are too many chips that benefit your opponent's character, sometimes it's best to try to get rid of all those chips at once by re-rolling the whole bank.

You don't have to exercise any of these options. If you want to play again with the same characters and same bank, go ahead. The winner of the last game doesn't get any of these options though, he has to go along with whatever you choose.

Puzzle Strike: simple, light game for kids? Or intense competitive game for analytical players? You decide!

Recommended Banks

These banks will work for any mode. 2p, 3p, 4p, or Team Battle.

First Game

Axe Kick, Bang then Fizzle, Blues Are Good, Button Mashing, Just a Scratch, Money for Nothing, Now or Later, Ouch!, Punch Punch Kick, Signature Move

Fists of Frenzy

Blues are Good, Button Mashing, Color Panic, Ebb or Flow, Hundred Fist Frenzy, Improvisation, One True Style, Pick your Poison, Punch Punch Kick, Repeated Jabs

No Attacks

Axe Kick, Bang then Fizzle, Button Mashing, Chips for Free, Degenerate Trasher, Improvisation, Option Select, Punch Punch Kick, Safe Keeping, X-Copy

Combo Crazy

Blues are Good, Button Mashing, Chips For Free, Color Panic, Improvisation, Option Select, Ouch!, Punch Punch Kick, Safe Keeping, X-Copy

The Hammer

Bang Then Fizzle, Button Mashing, Chips For Free, Degenerate Trasher, Ebb or Flow, Money for Nothing, One True Style, Pick Your Poison, Risk to Riskonade, The Hammer

More Rules

Banner Colors

These are all the colors of the banners across the tops of chips: brown, red, blue, purple, gray, and gold. If a chip has more than one color in the banner, such as Really Annoying's blue and red banner, then it counts as all those colors.

Do Things In Order

When a chip tells you to do more than one thing, do those things in the normal reading order: left to right, top to bottom. If a chip tells you to choose two or more things to do, first choose, then do your choices in any order.

Do Everything You Can

If it's impossible to do everything a chip tells you to do, then do as much as you can. Don't move on to playing other chips until you've done everything you can on the current chip.

Simultaneous Effects

If a chip affects multiple players and the order matters, resolve the effects in turn-order, starting with the player whose turn it is.

Reaction Timing

If an opponent plays a chip then you play a reaction, your reaction resolves first, then the opponent's effect resolves. Some reactions say "After you're attacked..." which means the attack resolves first.

Discard Piles are Public

All discard piles are public information and any player may look through any other player's discard pile at any time.

Running Out of Chips

If a stack in the bank runs out of chips, tough luck, you can't buy any more of them and effects that would let you gain those chips don't do anything. If you would ever ante a gem when the bank is out of that kind of gem, ante a stand-in gem instead. If there are no wounds left in the bank and you can't afford to buy any other chips, you don't have to buy a chip at all that turn.

Notes on Specific Chips

Puzzle Chips

Axe Kick

This is an easy one.

Bang then Fizzle

You add up the numbers on the gems in your gem pile to see if it's 4 or fewer (don't just count how many gems you have). The once-per-turn means you can't even play separate copies of this chip during the same turn.

Blues are Good

If a chip has a multicolor banner that contains blue, it's ok to search for it. The blue arrows mean you can play the blues you searched for right away.

Button Mashing

Enjoy!

Chips for Free

It can't trash itself or a character chip. The chip you gain can't cost less than the trashed chip.

Color Panic

A multicolor banner that contains the named color counts. If more than one opponent fails the test, you still only get a total of one +arrow.

Degenerate Trasher

It can't trash itself or a character chip. The trashed chips go back to the bank.

Ebb or Flow

You can play this as a reaction if a red fist would affect you. Note that the trashed 1-gems go back to the bank. The ante comes from the bank.

Hundred-Fist Frenzy

Hundred-Fist-Frenzy activates and crashes after your red fist attack happens. Even if your red fist didn't end up affecting other players, HFF still activates. When you crash using this chip, you don't get any +gem power (money) for it. If you have multiple copies of this chip in play, they all trigger whenever you play a red fist. If any opponent ends his action phase without doing anything, you discard all the copies of this chip you have in play. If there is a timing overlap with a blue saying it also happens "after you are fist attacked" then the blue happens after Hundred-Fist Frenzy.

Improvisation

For the main action, you draw and reveal two chips. If one or both are gems, you have to discard those without any benefit. For non-gems drawn this way, you must play them and playing them doesn't cost an action. You play them one at a time,

in the order they were drawn. If you would play a once-per-turn chip (of the same name) a second time, it has no effect. If a chip says to end your action phase, you don't get to keep going and play the other chip. Note that when you play Improvisation as a reaction on another player's turn though, ending your action phase doesn't actually do anything (it wasn't your action phase anyway!) so you can keep going in that case.

When you play the reaction and it's not your turn, any +gem power (money), +arrows, or +pigs you get don't do anything.

Just a Scratch

Gaining a wound means putting a wound chip from the bank into your discard pile.

Money for Nothing

When you use this on your turn, you'll be able to use the new gem for money on that same turn. To play it as a reaction, you must be affected by an opponent's red fist attack.

Now or Later

The second option means that you look at the set of all chips in your hand and discard pile, then trash a gem, wound, or both from that set. You can't, for example, trash a wound from your hand and a wound from your discard pile.

One True Style

You don't have to pay -\$1 to combine the gems.

Option Select

This chip has a gray banner until the moment it's actually played, at which point it copies the banner and everything else about the chip it targets. So you can't use a +brown arrow to play this, even if you want to copy a brown-banner chip with it. You can use a +black arrow to play it though. You can't Option Select an empty bank stack.

This chip CAN copy the reaction shields on other chips, so it can be played as any reaction chip in the bank (of cost 5 or less).

If you copy a Combine, then other chips that check if you played a Combine really will trigger.

Option Selecting a chip with "ongoing" is probably not useful, but you do get whatever benefit it would immediately grant when played. For example, Option Selecting Secret Move from the base set would give you +arrow and +piggy-bank (that turn only). Option Selecting Hundred-Fist-Frenzy does nothing useful though. Option Selecting a red fist would let you trigger a Hundred-Fist Frenzy you had in play, by the way.

Option Select is trashed on use no matter what any other chip says. So Repeated Jabs doesn't really put it on top of your bag if you Option Select it.

Ouch!

The ante comes from the bank. The once-per-turn means you can't even play separate copies of this chip during the same turn.

Pick Your Poison

The ante comes from the bank.

Punch, Punch, Kick

This is a simple one.

Repeated Jabs

The ante comes from the bank.

Risk to Riskonade

The ante comes from the bank. You get to draw two chips too!

Safe Keeping

Putting the 1-gem from your gem pile into your bag can keep your gem pile low if you're in danger of losing. It's optional to do this part and even if you don't, you still get the +black arrow and +piggy-bank.

Signature Move

If there aren't any character chips in your discard pile, you can choose to skip the first sentence of the chip. If there is a character chip in your discard pile, you can't choose to put no character chip in your hand (either choose that one or get a different one from your bag if you prefer). The last sentence lets you play any character chip in your hand, whether it's the one you just searched or not.

The Hammer

You can ante one 4-gem, get the +chip, then decide if you want to keep going. Hopefully you can win the game with this by using the +arrows to crash somehow. Remember that when you crash those 4-gems, no one can counter-crash, and they can't even react with any purple shields.

X-Copy

Resolve each of the two "plays" of an X-Copy one at a time. If a play would end your action phase (such as Master Puzzler from the base set), it really does end it and you can't continue.

It can't copy itself but can copy another copy of itself. When you X-Copy (#1) another X-Copy (#2), you must target two separate hand chips for the two resolutions of the second X-Copy. For example, if your hand is X-Copy, X-Copy, Crash Gem, 1-gem, 1-gem, you cannot crash 4 gems. But if it's X-Copy, X-Copy, Crash Gem, Crash Gem, 1-gem, then you can crash 4 gems.

If you X-Copy an Ongoing chip, such as Secret Move from the base set, you get the non-ongoing effect twice (the +arrow), but don't get anything after "Ongoing" twice.

You can't X-Copy the Crash Gem in your gem pile from the base set's Iron Defense chip (it's not in your hand).

The copied chip is really "played" twice, even if it's a self-trashing chip like Button Mashing or Option Select. If you would play a once-per-turn chip twice in a turn, the second time doesn't do anything. When you X-Copy an attack, the victims can blue-shield react to each instance of the attack.

When you X-Copy a chip that gives you a choice, such as Color Panic or Now or Later, you can make different choices for each play.

Character Chips

Quince - Flagstone Tax

You add up the numbers on the gems in your gem pile to see if it's 3 or fewer (don't just count how many gems you have).



Quince - Patriot Mirror

You add up the numbers on the gems in your gem pile to see if it's odd (you don't simply count the number of gems in your gem pile). You get the +arrow and +pig on the turn you play this, and you get them on a turn where you must discard it for having an odd gem pile total.

Quince - Two Truths

If you have only one chip in your discard pile, or two copies of the same chip, that doesn't count as "two different chips" so you don't get the effect at all. "You may play it" means you don't have to spend an action to play it.

Onimaru - Riposte

Can't return itself.

Onimaru - Double Slash

This crashes gems in your own gem pile only.



Onimaru - Wartime Tactics

You get a one-time use of a bank chip with Wartime Tactics. That bank chip then goes back to the bank (trashes) even if the chip itself says that it would go somewhere else. You can't target an empty bank stack with Wartime Tactics.

Bal-Bas-Beta - Upgrade

Can't trash itself or character chips.

Bal-Bas-Beta - Cog Engine

You get the +\$1 and the +piggy-bank even on the turn you play this.



Bal-Bas-Beta - Rocket Punch

You can only crash a 1-gem from your own gem pile. You don't get +gem power (money) for doing so. Your opponent can counter-crash or purple shield the sent gem. After that, the gems from the opponent's original send go wherever he sent them. Rocket Punch can't reduce the amount that would be sent to you.

Troq - Giant Growth

You only get the +brown arrow the turn you play this.



Troq - More Shiny

The gained 2-gem comes from the bank and goes to your discard pile.

Troq - Beast Unleashed

You add up the numbers on the gems in your gem pile to see if it's 6 or more (don't just count how many gems you have).

Menelker - Bonecracker

If a player has more than one gem tied for the largest, he only discards one of them.



Menelker - Into Oblivion

The removed stack counts as empty for Panic Time purposes. If a chip in someone's hand or another zone gets trashed and would go to a removed stack, it doesn't go back to the regular bank; it goes to the Oblivion'd stack outside of the game. If Into Oblivion later returns that stack, it returns those extra trashed chips too. If the Oblivion'd stack has trap tokens on it from the base set's A Trap, those persist and get returned later too. In a game with multiple Menelkers, one Menelker can return to play a stack that the other Menelker removed.

Menelker - Deathstrike Dragon

The trashed 1-gems go to the bank. The gems you send can be counter-crashed or purple shield reacted to. Even though character chips can't be trashed in general, this really can trash itself. Set it aside for the rest of the game.

Persephone - Pleasure & Pain

Each opponent chooses whether to discard a wound or put one from the bank into his bag (not your choice). For the last sentence on the chip, you can choose your own discard pile.



Persephone - Always in Control

You don't draw chips for using +piggy-banks you got from other chips.

Persephone - Mistress's Command

You add up the numbers on the gems in their gem pile to see if it's 6 or 9 (don't just count how many gems they have). If their gem pile no longer has the right total when this resolves (because they

reacted with Ebb or Flow, for example) then the rest of the text doesn't trigger. You must put a bank chip into their hand (not a ! chip though). That chip can be a wound, but you might also want to put a different chip in their hand that you can use against them. You make them play 0, 1, or 2 chips from their hand, and one of those can be the chip you just gave them. (You can't choose a wound as a chip they play and you can't make them play reactions.) When you make them play a chip, you resolve it completely then you can choose a second chip to make them play if you want.

You make all decisions about how that chip is played. For example, if it says to trash a gem in their gem pile, you choose which gem. They are playing that chip, not you, so if it's a Crash Gem it can only break gems in their gem pile, for example. Any +arrows, +money, or +pig they get will be wasted because it's your turn when you play Mistress's Command (unless you somehow played it off Improvisation). Try to trash their chips or biggest gems in their gem piles, or try to fill their gem pile, or waste their +arrows if you can.

Gloria - Radiant Healing

Players can't trash the wound or 1-gem unless they discard a puzzle chip. "Each player" includes you, so you get this effect too.



Gloria - Saving Grace

You get to draw a chip, too. Putting Saving Grace on top of your bag is optional.

Gloria - Healing Touch

In a 3p or 4p game, the player the gems are sent to gets the first chance to react with a purple shield. If he doesn't, then you can react with this. The +chip in the reaction let's you draw a chip, not other players.

Gwen - Shadow Plague

Discarding this during the cleanup phase really does give you a wound. Using a +piggy-bank on it would prevent the wound. The last sentence on the chip lets you spend an action (meaning a black arrow) to avoid getting a wound. You can use the one natural action you get each turn to avoid the wound.



Gwen - Burnbarrow

Pretty simple!

Gwen - Shadowswarm

The "you may" clause lets you choose if you want opponents to discard or not. You must choose to

make all opponents discard or no opponents. You might not want opponents to discard if you're afraid of them playing a blue shield as a response. They can't react to an attack that doesn't affect them.

Vendetta - Stunlock

This applies to any chip effect that says to "combine" gems in a gem pile, including Combine, Mix-Master (base set), Strength of Earth (base set), One True Style, Combinatorics, and Option Select targeting any of those. The opponent must discard the puzzle chips before getting the effects of the chip saying to combine gems. If they don't discard a puzzle chip, they don't combine gems, but they do get any other effects written on that chip, like +arrows.



Vendetta - Acrobatics

Obviously you can't choose the same arrow twice.

Vendetta - Surgical Strike

Simple and powerful.

Zane - Crash Bomb

The trashed Crash Gem goes to the bank.

Zane - Crash Potato

You don't get +gem power (money) for crashing the 1-gem. You can't exchange this for a Double Crash Gem, only a Crash Gem. You can exchange it with a Crash Gem in your own discard pile.



Zane - Maximum Anarchy

The "Draw a chip" sentence applies to you, not to other players. You get the 4 arrows on your turn the same turn you play Maximum Anarchy. Each other player also gets the 4 arrows on his next turn.

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