

# BLAZE

*Well, my friend, so be it. If you want to seek the feathers of the blazing Firebird, I will not hold you back. But know these woods are full of dark secrets, ember... and ash. People say that this bird brings both fortune and misery. Burn brightest to gain its favor, and may you come back from that vast forest to tell your story.*

## GAME COMPONENTS

### 60 Playing cards

3 suits: red, yellow, and blue numbered 1 to 9 (2 copies of each). Each suit has 2 Firebird cards.



### 15 Betting cards

3 cards each: 0, 1, and 1 in 5 player colors



### 8 Feather cards

4 cards for 1<sup>st</sup> round (back **A**) and 4 cards for 2<sup>nd</sup> round (back **B**)



HOW TO PLAY

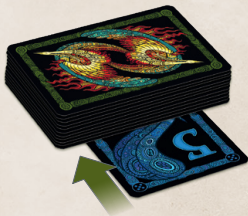
# SETUP

1. Separate the Feather cards into **A** and **B**. Arrange both in descending values in facedown stacks. Thus:  
Deck **A** (read as “deck A”) is ordered, from top to bottom: 4, 3, 2, 1.  
Deck **B** (read as “deck B”) is ordered: 5, 4, 3, 2.  
For games of 3 players, discard the top card of both decks (**A** 4 and **B** 5) back to the box.



Set both stacks aside for now – you will need them later for scoring.

2. Shuffle the Playing cards and deal 5 cards to each player.  
For 3 players, first remove all the 1s from the deck.
3. Split the rest of the deck into two roughly equal facedown decks. Put one deck in the middle area as the first draw deck and set the other deck aside for now.
4. Flip the top card of the draw deck and place it faceup under the deck, rotated and sticking out. This shows the trump suit (the strongest suit) for the 1<sup>st</sup> round.
5. The youngest player will be the first **FIRE** player.



## Setup Example for 3 Players



## PLAY

Based on the Russian classic *Durak*, **Blaze** is played in rounds of 3-way challenges. A round consists of the **KINDLING PHASE**, in which players strive to build the best hand with fewer cards; and the **BURN PHASE**, where players compete to be the first to empty their hand!

In both phases players take on specific roles to engage each other in **challenges**. The first player is the **FIRE** player. To their left is the **ASH** player. To Ash's left is the **EMBER** player. Depending on the result of the challenge, afterwards roles move one or two places clockwise and a new challenge begins.



After both the Kindling and Burn phase are complete, use the second deck to play again. The player with the most points after the 2<sup>nd</sup> round wins!

## ~ KINDLING PHASE ~

### A CHALLENGE

You play multiple challenges, one after another.

1. The **FIRE** player starts the **challenge**: They play up to five cards with the same number (or Firebirds), in any variety of suits, faceup in front of the Ash player.

**FIRE tip:** *Your goal is not to win the challenge, but to get rid of weak cards!*

2. The **ASH** player must either **beat** each of these cards or pass. You may beat the cards at any time in any order as long as you have not declared to pass – no need to beat a card as soon as it was played. To beat a card, play a card from your hand across from it. Your card must be in the same suit (trump exception below) and show the same or a higher number.

**ASH tip:** *Try to use as few new card values as possible. This will make it harder for your rivals to keep up the challenge.*

Alternatively, you may beat any non-trump number card by playing any card of the trump suit! But if there is already a trump, only a trump will beat it.



**FIRE begins:** *Fire starts the challenge by playing two 2s.*



**ASH reacts:** *Ash plays a yellow 2 to beat the yellow 2 (same suit, same number), and a red 4 to beat the red 2 (same suit, higher number).*

- At any time during a challenge, the **FIRE** player and the **EMBER** player may add cards in support of the Fire player. These must show the same value as any card already played this round by any player (the suits may be different).

The total count of Fire and Ember's played cards may not exceed the challenge limit of five cards. If both want to play the fifth card, the Fire player takes priority.

Fire and Ember may play cards both before and after Ash has beaten the current cards.

**EMBER tip:** *If the Ash player passes, you are the next Fire player. Support the challenge with your cards!*

If Fire and Ember's total count of cards on the table is five, they must pass.

Continue the challenge until either the Ash player has passed, or both Fire and Ember passed after the Ash player beat all their cards.



***FIRE raises the beat:***

*Fire plays a yellow 4.*



***EMBER raises the beat:***

*Ash takes their time and waits if Fire or Ember play more cards. And indeed, Ember supports Fire with a red 4.*

*Turn the page to find out what can happen next ...*

## RESOLVE A CHALLENGE

**If the Ash player passed:** Fire and Ember created overwhelming heat! As a **reward**, first the Fire player and then Ember may freely play additional cards, up to the challenge limit of 5 total cards on the board. They may only play cards with values matching ones already on the table (the suits may be different).

Then the Ash player must take all cards that were played by any player during the challenge into their hand. All players involved draw back up to a hand size of 5, clockwise from the Fire player. Ash may not need to draw, as they are likely to have 5 or more cards in hand.

The Ash player lost the challenge, and the Ember player becomes the next Fire player, following the same role order of Fire-Ash-Ember.

*Tip: Picking up cards as the Ash player is not so bad, especially if you get many cards of the same number. Use them in later challenges!*



***ASH passed:** Ash was not willing to play more cards and passed. → **ASH** takes all cards in hand, hoping to get rid of them in later challenges.*

**If the Ash player beat all cards (and Fire and Ember passed):**

The cards are reduced to ash! Place all cards played in the challenge on a faceup discard pile next to the draw deck.

Starting with the Fire player and moving clockwise, players in this challenge draw cards to restore their hand to 5 cards. Whenever drawing, each player draws all their cards before the next player does.

The Ash player won the challenge and becomes the new Fire player. The player on their left is the new Ash, and the next left is Ember.

*Tip: The Kindling phase is about making a great hand. Don't waste your best cards here, because they'll likely get turned to ash!*



**ASH beat all cards:** Ash played a yellow 9 to beat the yellow 4. Blue is trump, so they played a blue 2 to beat the red 4. The Fire and Ember players had no more 2s or 4s and were not willing to play a 9 (because it's a good card), so both decided to pass. Thus, Ash beat all the cards and the challenge is ended. → All cards played in the challenge are discarded, and **all** players refill their hand to 5 cards.

## END OF KINDLING

The Kindling phase ends as soon as the facedown draw deck is empty. (Players are allowed to count the cards remaining in the deck.)

Now the faceup card at the bottom of the deck is placed to the side as a reminder of the trump suit. Some players may have fewer than 5 cards at the end of Kindling. This is fine, and in fact it's the goal!



## FIREBIRD CARDS

*It brings both fortune and misery...*

**Firebird** cards have a value of 10 when played by Fire or Ember, but a value of 0 when played by Ash.

This means the Ash player cannot beat any card with their own non-Trump Firebird (0 vs 10).

However, since Trump cards always beat non-Trumps, Ash's Trump Firebird CAN beat a non-Trump Firebird (as well as any other non-Trump card).

If Fire/Ember's Firebird is a Trump, it is unbeatable (as a 10 in the Trump suit).



**ASH:**  
Firebird = 0

**FIRE/EMBER:**  
Firebird = 10



**Trump vs. non-Trump:**  
*Blue is trump. So the firebird played by Ash (as a 0) still beats any non-trump card.*

## ~ BURN PHASE ~

In the Burn phase, players try to empty their hand of cards the quickest! Play starts again with the current Fire player. Continue play in the same way as the Kindling phase, with these changes:

- ☞ Do not redraw cards at the end of a challenge. The Ash player still takes any gained cards after failing to beat all cards.
- ☞ The challenge (and reward) limit of 5 cards between the Fire and Ember player is reduced to the number of cards the Ash player has (if fewer than 5).
- ☞ Move the Feather deck showing **A** at the top to the center area. If this is the second round, move the **B** deck over.

When you have **no cards** at the end of a challenge (or start the Burn phase with no cards), draw the top card from this round's Feather deck. Look at it, then place it facedown in your Victory Points stack. If you were meant to be the next Fire player, the Ash player becomes the Fire player instead. If multiple players finish a challenge with no cards, draw Feather cards in clockwise order, starting from the Fire player.

Players who earned a Feather card are out of this round; they no longer play cards or take roles. This can make it such that the roles of Fire, Ash, and Ember go to players who were not previously neighbors.

Once only two players remain, the Ember role is no longer given out. Fire and Ash continue. However, the roles only swap if Ash beat all cards. Otherwise, start a new challenge using the same roles.

The round ends immediately after all but ONE player has taken a Feather card. Now, this last player takes a Feather card to end the round. In a 5 Player game, there will not be a card for the final player.



## THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND


The 2<sup>nd</sup> round is played the same as the 1<sup>st</sup> round.  
Prepare as follows:

- Collect **all** Playing cards used in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and shuffle them. Deal 5 cards to each player. Put the rest back in the box.
- Place the 2<sup>nd</sup> draw deck, made during setup, in the middle as this round's draw deck.
- Flip the top card and place it faceup under the deck, rotated and sticking out, as this round's trump suit.
- The player who was the last to have cards in hand at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> round becomes the first Fire player.



## GAME END

The game ends after resolving the Burn Phase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. Now add up the values of your Feather cards in your Victory Points stack. The player with the highest score wins!

In case of a tie, the tied player who won the highest  Feather card (2<sup>nd</sup> round) wins.



*Add up your total:  
You have 7 points!*

## BETTING VARIANT

This variant adds some more heat to the game! During Setup, each player takes 3 Betting cards in one color and places them facedown nearby. Then, just before beginning the Burn phase, all players bet on who they think will be the last player to still have cards by round end.



*Tip: Observe during the Kindling phase who has the most cards and who seemed to get the lowest values!*



To bet, all players place a Betting card facedown in front of anyone else (but not on yourself). If you place a '1' on a player, it means you think they will be the last to have cards. If correct, you will earn 1 point. If you think you will be the last player, place a '0' on any other player.

### BETTING RESULTS

At the end of the Burn phase, reveal the Betting cards in front of you:

-  If you were not the last player with cards, you win all the '1' cards in front of you. Add them to your Victory Points pile.
-  If you were the last player with cards, everyone who placed a '1' in front of you adds it to their own Victory Points pile.

Return any '0' cards to their owners to use again. Keep all earned Feather cards and Betting cards facedown in your Victory Points pile.

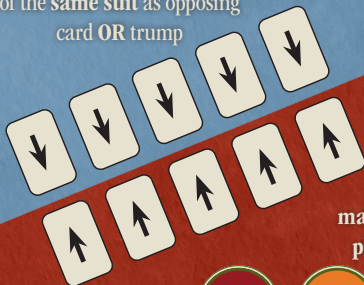
### ENDGAME SCORING

Add your earned Betting points to your total score. In case of a tie, a new first tiebreaker now exists: The player who earned the most Betting points wins! If still a tie, the original tiebreaker of highest B Feather card declares the winner.

# CHALLENGE CHART

ASH  
player

ASH may play:  
cards of same or higher value  
of the same suit as opposing  
card **OR** trump



*Firebird*

ASH = 0

**FIRE /  
EMBER**  
= 10

**FIRE and EMBER**  
may play: cards of already  
played value of any suit  
(first card = any)

FIRE  
player

EMBER  
player

## CREDITS

**Game Design:** HeidelBÄR Games Team

**Development:** Roland Goslar

**Artwork:** Nadezhda Mikryukova –  
greenpengua

**Graphic Design:** Marina Fahrenbach,  
Sabine Machaczek

**Editing:** Matthias Wagner, Don Eskridge

**Producer:** Heiko Eller-Bilz

**Additional Support:** Bianca Dietrich,  
Nicole Höfler, Michael Kränzle, Erik  
Macht

**Proofreading:** Autumn Collier

**Special thanks to:** Chris Baylis, Ashley  
Crawford, Johannes Frank, Johannes  
Goslar, Marc Konermann, Tim Leuftink

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