

Bingo Adventure (July '25 revision)

A weird fantasy combat game for up to four brave adventurers

By Jonathan Leistiko and Shawn Storie

Object

Spot and spend specific patterns on your bingo card (or the team's bingo card) to trigger special abilities and defeat the monster before the monster knocks out one or more of your teammates.

You Need

- A Bingo Adventure card deck.
 - You can make a Bingo Adventure card deck out of a Poker deck. A Bingo Adventure card deck uses the Ace through 5 of each suit, and the four Queens – 25 cards total.
- Bingo Adventure character sheets
- A Bingo Adventure team sheet
- Bingo Adventure monster sheets
- Marker tokens to mark claimed spaces. Do not use a stamp or permanent marker; you'll remove these tokens during play to activate your abilities.
- Health tokens
- Damage tokens
- Generic tokens
- These rules
- A hefty tolerance for randomness

Setup

Distribute up to four characters across the players. You may play with fewer than four characters if you want to, but do not play with more than four characters. A player may play more than one character, or you can put excess characters in the middle of the table for everyone to play.

Put the team sheet in the middle of the table in easy reach and view.

Pick one monster. Put its sheet in the middle of the table in easy reach and view.

Give each character sheet and the monster sheet a bingo card, or two bingo cards if you want a quicker game. Optionally give the team sheet a bingo card if you want a slightly easier game.

Put the marker, damage, and shield tokens in easy reach of all players.

Give each character health tokens equal to its health rating; put them in their health pool. Give the monster health tokens equal to its health rating; put them in its health pool.

Put all the bingo tokens in the randomizer and put the randomizer in easy reach so you can easily remove and add tokens from/to it during play.

Name your character(s). You can give your character any name you want to, but each character's name must begin with B, I, N, G, or O and each character's name must start with a different letter.

You don't need to pick a player to go first. Everyone plays at the same time in Bingo Adventure.

Play

Each round of Bingo Adventure has five phases. Refrain from advancing to the next phase until everyone is done resolving the current phase. The phases are:

- Draw a new bingo token
- Mark cards
- Activate effects and powers
- Resolve effects and powers
- Check for end-of-game

Draw a new bingo token

Start the round by drawing a bingo token from the randomizer. Announce the token and set it aside in case you need to refer to it or return it to the randomizer later.

Mark cards

Check your card (or cards), the team card (if it has one), and the monster's card (or cards). Put a "called space" marker token on any empty bingo card space that matches the bingo token that was just drawn.

If you do not get to place a marker token on a bingo card, put a dud token in that character's or monster's dud pool. The team card does not have a dud pool and does not "create" dud tokens.

Activate powers and effects

Characters

(Note: This part of the rules assumes you're only playing one character. If you're playing multiple characters, use the same rules, running each character independently. This part of the rules also assumes you're playing with one bingo card per character. If you're playing with two or more, evaluate each bingo card independently.)

This is the fun part. Your character has several (typically four) powers and a BINGO power. Each power needs your character's bingo card to have a specific pattern of marker tokens before you can use it. If your character's bingo card has the correct pattern of marker tokens to

use a power and you want to use that power, you may remove those tokens and put them on the dot-grid to the right of that power to resolve that power during the next phase. (Ex: I activate Brilliant Maneuver. That's a two-dot power. I use I-17 and I-20. I lift those markers and put them on the 3x3 grid next to Brilliant Maneuver.) For each token you remove, you must also return the corresponding bingo token to the randomizer. (Ex, ctd,: Because I used I-17 and I-20, I also return the I-17 and I-20 bingo tokens to the randomizer.)

Orientation of the pattern does not matter (unless the power says it does), but flipping does. "L" and a mirrored "L" are not the same, but "<" "V" ">" and "^" are.

You may activate multiple powers at once if your bingo card has the markers to spend on it in the correct patterns, but you must activate each power separately. This means that if you want to use one marker in two different patterns, you can not. You must spend the marker on one power or the other, but not both. You may also activate the same power multiple times in the same round if your bingo card has enough markers to spend on it for each instance, following the same rules.

Dud Tokens and Dud Powers

You may also spend dud tokens from your dud pool to activate powers. You may activate multiple powers with dud tokens as long as you have enough dud tokens to spend. Return dud tokens you spend to the common pool

Redirect

Some effects redirect a marker (usually to the team board). You do this if the current bingo token matches your card and you would gain a bingo marker. Instead of putting that marker on your board, put it on the other board in the same space – as long as that space is empty. If the space is not empty, the effect fails.

Same Space

Note that "same space" does not mean the same number space, but the same positional space. If you would gain a marker at B13, which is the first space in your "B" column and you redirect it to the team board, it goes to the first space in the "B" column of the team board, regardless of what number is in that space.

Clone

Effects that clone a marker do the same thing as redirect, but you get the marker and a clone of it appears in the same empty space on the other board.

Take

Effects that take a marker remove a marker from one board and put it on the same empty space on the other board.

Copy

Dud powers that copy a marker target a marker on one board and put a copy of that marker in the same empty space on a different board.

The Team Board

All characters may use the team bingo board as if it was their own bingo board, following all the same rules. If more than one character needs to use one or more of the same markers, only one character may. You'll have to make some compromises and tough decisions.

Monsters

While you're figuring out what to do with your character, take a look at the monster's bingo card. If the monster can activate one or more of its powers or spend dud tokens to activate a power, it'll do so following the same rules you follow for your character, with three big exceptions:

Exception 1

The monster may use the same marker for multiple powers.

Exception 2

When the monster activates a power, put a token in the "skip" circle to the left of the power. If you resolve a power with a skip circle that says "remove all skip" do not place a token there. Instead, remove all skip tokens from that monster's sheet.

Skip tokens exist to keep monsters from only triggering their weaker powers over and over without ever building up to their bigger powers.

Exception 3

Only activate powers with "skip" tokens if they are part of a different power that's activating. Example: You're fighting Nigob the Dragon. *Fearsome Vigor* and *Claw, Claw, Bite* both have skip tokens on them. You have to activate *Terrifying Roar* because Nigob's bingo card has the tokens to activate it. The pattern for *Terrifying Roar* includes the patterns for *Fearsome Vigor* and *Claw, Claw, Bite*, so you'll activate those too. You'll spend the tokens for *Terrifying Roar* because it didn't have a skip token on it at the start of the turn, and you'll put a skip token on it this turn because you're activating it and it doesn't have a skip token.

When everyone's done activating powers and the monster's powers, proceed to...

Resolve effects and powers

All powers resolve at the same time, with effects resolving in the following order:

- Resolve and note all non-damage effects
- Heal /shield damage

- Assign damage
- Prevent damage
- Take damage

Resolve and note all non-damage effects

Leadership, Hide, Beseech, etc...

Heal/shield damage

Heal damage from previous rounds. For each point of healing, remove a health or damage token from the target's bingo card. If it's a damage token, put it in the general supply. If it's a health token, put it in their health pool.

Shield tokens

For each point of shield, give the target a shield token.

Assigning damage

Random targets

When the monster picks a random target, draw a bingo token from the randomizer. The character whose name starts with that letter is the target. If that target is invalid, draw another bingo token from the randomizer. Return all bingo tokens you drew this way when you're done selecting a target (or targets).

For each point of damage assigned to your character, move a health token from its health pool to its pending damage pool **or** return a shield token to the general supply. If your character's health pool runs out of tokens, use damage tokens from the general supply to make up the difference.

The monster follows the same rules, using tokens from its health pool (of course).

Preventing damage

Now resolve all damage prevention. For each point of damage prevented, move a health token from that target's pending damage pool to its health pool or a damage token from its pending damage pool to the general supply. You must prevent damage token damage before you prevent health token damage.

Taking damage

Characters

Move each health or damage token in your character's pending damage pool to a space on your character's bingo card that does not have a health or damage token on it. If you put a health or damage token on a space that has a marker token on it (indicating that number was pulled from the randomizer), put that marker token in your dud pool.

Health and damage tokens on your bingo card prevent you from getting markers because markers only go in empty spaces. Health and damage tokens on your bingo card also block your patterns. They do not count as empty spaces or as filled spaces for patterns. Damage is very bad and will mess up your plans. Avoid this if you can and remove those tokens as quickly as possible.

Monsters

When a monster takes damage, put the damage in the first empty space, starting in the upper-left corner and proceeding clockwise in a spiral (across the top left-to-right, down the O column, across the bottom right-to-left, up the B column, across the second row, etc...). If all spaces are full, repeat the pattern but put damage in spaces with bingo marker tokens, returning removed markers to the common pool (The monster does not get dud tokens for removed bingo marker tokens.).

Check for end-of-game

If any character has no tokens in their health pool, they've been knocked out.

If the monster has no tokens in their health pool, they've been defeated.

If neither of these conditions are true, start a new round.

Ending the Game and Winning

If one or more characters are knocked out and the monster is not defeated, you must retreat, leaving the monster undefeated and victorious.

If the monster is defeated and no characters are knocked out, you've defeated the monster and win the game. Good job!

If the monster is defeated and one or more characters are knocked out, the monster manages to escape as you tend to your fallen party member. It's not a total victory, but you've thwarted the monster for now...

Origin and Credits

2024-08-17 @ 1334: Last night Desi and I met a new friend at LFG Kalamazoo for Music Bingo. We had a great time. I really enjoyed how it took the fun parts of bingo (the randomness, the

“search your card for a match,” the social gathering, the “am I gonna get it” tension) and the fun parts of a trivia contest, while getting rid of the less fun parts (needing to pay constant attention all the time, which prevents you from socializing). As I dissected it, I realized that I hadn’t made a game with bingo as the core element. I thought of the core idea for the game there and shared it with Desi who said, “That’s neat as a designer, but I don’t think it fills a need for players.” She’s probably right, so I’m posting it as a Free Game of the Month.

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card per character. Added the option for players to play with fewer than four characters.

Bingo Adventure (Old, not-so-good version)

A weird fantasy combat game (with optional RPG rules) for up to four brave adventurers

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Object

Spot and spend specific patterns on your bingo card (or the team's bingo card) to trigger special abilities and defeat the monster before the monster knocks out one or more of your teammates.

You Need

- A 75-number (US standard) bingo set
 - If you do not have a bingo set, you can use this bingo deck and there are many websites you can go to to print random bingo cards for free.
- Bingo Adventure character sheets
- A Bingo Adventure team sheet
- Bingo Adventure monster sheets
- Marker tokens to mark claimed spaces (if the bingo set does not have them) - do not use a stamp or permanent marker; you'll remove these tokens during play to activate your abilities.
- Health tokens
- Damage tokens
- Generic tokens
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Distribute up to four characters across the players. You may play with fewer than four characters if you want to, but do not play with more than four characters. A player may play more than one character, or you can put excess characters in the middle of the table for everyone to play.

Put the team sheet in the middle of the table in easy reach and view.

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Leadership, Hide, Beseech, etc...

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Variants

As an RPG System

You could use this as an RPG system. That’s why the characters have “RPG Mundane” and Move stats.

Skill Use

Any character can spend 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 tokens from anywhere to do something mundane within their normal wheelhouse with an effect rating of 2, 3, 5, 8, or 13. Ex: A rogue can spend 3 tokens to pick a lock with an effect rating of 5.

Adding a special effect to a result drops the effect rating one step. Ex ctd: If that same rogue wanted to pick the lock twice as fast or at normal speed but with one hand behind their back, it would drop the effect rating from 5 to 3.

Adding a complication to a result bumps it one step up the effect rating: Ex ctd: If that rogue instead wanted to take twice as long to pick the lock, it would bump the effect rating up from 5 to 8.

Special effects and complications cancel each other out. Ex ctd: If that rogue wanted to pick the lock with one hand behind their back, taking twice as long, the drop and the bump cancel each other for an effect rating of 5.

Moving in combat

You may move you move rating for free once per round. You may spend a marker from your bingo card or the team card to move a second time.

Design Notes

Bingo distribution in the US is typically 75 numbers in five clusters of 1 to 15.

There's a 90-digit variant in the UK played on a 9x3 chart. There's a "speed" version that has 30 digits and plays on a 3x3 chart.

While researching this, I initially thought that the leading letter (BINGO) does not matter. It simply makes it easier to find the number. However, it also forces specific distributions – eg: a "15" can only appear the first (left-most) column.

There's a central "party" board that players can pull from. It also controls the monster. Each character has their own board that defines their character's powers, what they can spend tokens on, and their own bingo card.

Keep the shared party card, but don't make it the monster's board too. That complicates matters a lot. What if the monster's card is the master "tracking" board - the one where you put the drawn pieces? That would work ok, but it really spaces out the likelihood of a pattern, doesn't it? It's probably best if the monster just has its own card too. This means that whenever someone – character or monster – spends a space on their sheet, that drawn ball returns to the pool.

When your character takes damage, blot a space on your character's bingo card for each damage you take. ~~When your character takes damage, it's multiplied by how frail your character is – the bingo card has 25 spaces.~~ If the number of blotted spaces exceeds your character's health, your character's been knocked out. The game ends in a loss if/when a character is knocked out. When the monster takes damage, blot out spaces on the monster's bingo card (which is also the party's shared bingo card). When the number of blotted spaces on the monster's bingo card exceeds its health, the game ends in a win for the players.

Because there are lots of free 75-number bingo card generators, this game uses 75-number bingo.

When rounding, always round in favor of the players/characters.
Everything resolves simultaneously.

Classes

Any character can spend 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 tokens from anywhere to do something mundane within their normal wheelhouse with an effect rank of 2, 3, 5, 8, or 13. Ex: A rogue can spend 3 tokens to pick a lock with an effect rank of 5.

Fighter

- RPG stats - Move: 3; Health: 12

- RPG mundane: Strength or endurance feat; athletics; martial knowledge; armed and unarmed fighting
- Powers
 - Brilliant maneuver: two dots in a line, separated by one space = deal three damage & prevent one damage
 - Piercing attack: three dot triangle = deal up to 5 damage to up to two targets, ignoring armor or damage reduction
 - Leadership: four-dot "T" = boost the effect of any other characters' effect(s) by up to a total of 8 points (Ex: Boost an attack by 3 and a spell by 5.)
 - Command the field: five-dot square with diagonal "tail" = deal and prevent up to 13 total points of damage to any number of targets.

Mystic

- RPG stats - Move: 2; Health: 6
- RPG mundane: Be smart; knowledge/intelligence feat; mystic contacts
- Powers:

Note: Indicate earth, air, fire, or water for each effect. Earth x2 vs air and vice-versa. Water x2 vs fire and vice-versa. Same ½ vs same.

 - _____ blast: two-dot "-" line = deal up to 3 damage
 - _____ fan: three-dot "/" = deal up to 5 damage to up to two targets. Targets that take damage may not move this turn
 - _____ wall: four-dot "L" = prevent up to 8 damage to up to three targets
 - _____ storm: five-dot "X" = deal up to 13 damage to any number of targets

Rogue

- RPG stats - Move: 4; Health 8
- RPG mundane: Agility feat; Thief skills; hide/spot hidden; underworld contacts
- Powers:
 - Hide: two-dot diagonal with at least one space in between = You may not be targeted this round. If an effect would target you, you choose a different character for it to target.
 - Float and sting: three-dot "i" straight or diagonal = Deal 4 damage and halve any damage you take this turn
 - Distract: four-dot square with spaces = Reduce the monster's effect this turn by 8
 - Sneak attack!: five-dot "U" = Deal 13 damage to one target; doubled if you're hidden

Healer

- RPG stats - Move: 3; Health: 10
- RPG mundane: Wisdom feat; medical, herbal, religious lore
- Powers
 - Minor ward: two-dot "/" = Heal/shield up to three total on one target

- Ward: three-dot “L” = Heal/shield up to five total on up to two targets.
- Beseech: four-dot diamond = Draw three bingo tokens. Put two of them back. The one you keep is the next bingo draw during the draw phase.
- Greater ward: five-dot “+” = Heal/shield up to 13 total on any targets.

Monsters

Monsters get a one-step effect rank bump, so a one-dot effect creates 3 points of effect and a five-dot effect creates 21 points of effect (3, 5, 8, 13, 21). Typically, we’ll use that to drop the effect rank one step and add a special effect (all targets, armor piercing, etc.).

Dragon

Health: 20

Note: Randomly pick an element (B = earth, I = Air, N = Water, G = Fire, O = draw again) for the dragon to have affinity with.

- Fearsome: two-dot “\” = Reduce each incoming attack by one. Heal three.
- Claw, Claw, Bite: three-dot “V” (not an “L”) = Deal 2 damage to a target, 2 damage to a different target, and three damage to another different target.
- Terrifying roar: four-dot square = Next turn, players may only activate two- or three-dot powers.
- _____ breath: five-dot bingo = Each character takes 8 damage. This is not a targeted effect.

20204/08/25

Notes from yesterday’s chat w Shawn:

A “miss” track (call it Power) that gradually builds up to good stuff.