



Rulebook



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

Fantasy Strike is an Olympic-style tournament that takes place in a fantasy martial arts world fractured by political conflict. Stone golem *Garus Rook* founded the tournament series to bring together the many provinces of the authoritarian Flagstone Kingdom and plant the idea of a different way of life.

NEXT
PIECE

1

PUZZLE
STRIKE
BAG of CHIPS

Valerie



Meanwhile, *Grave Stormborne* has gained notoriety throughout the kingdom as the only fighter to defeat Rook in a tournament match. Though *Grave* has no interest in matters of state, his fighting skills have piqued the interests of several factions.



And this is them playing a puzzle game!

PUZZLE STRIKE
BAG of CHIPS

NEXT PIECE

1

Geiger



vs.



The puzzle board features a grid of pieces. A red box highlights a purple 'COMBINE' piece (value 4) with two green '1' pieces below it. A red arrow points from the top row of two '1' pieces down to the 'COMBINE' piece. Another red arrow points from the 'COMBINE' piece to a green '2' piece (value 3) on the right. A third red arrow points from the 'COMBINE' piece down to a green '1' piece (value 1) in the bottom row.



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

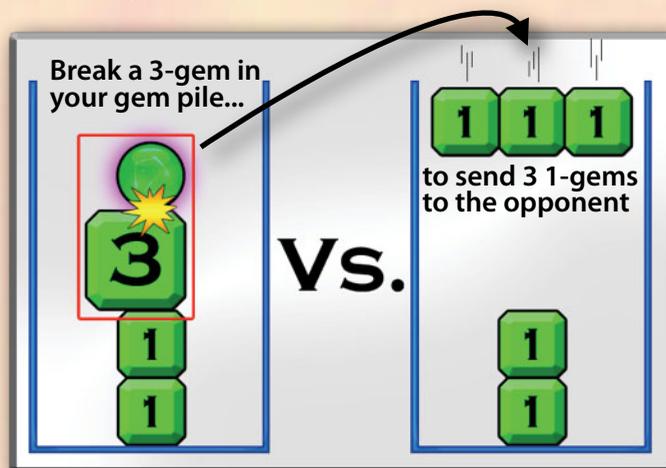
Rules version 7.3

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!
- 4 game boards

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.

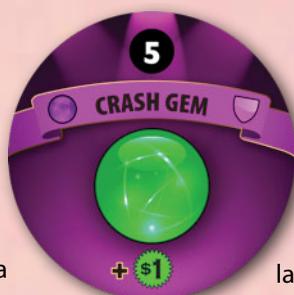


Crash Gem

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.

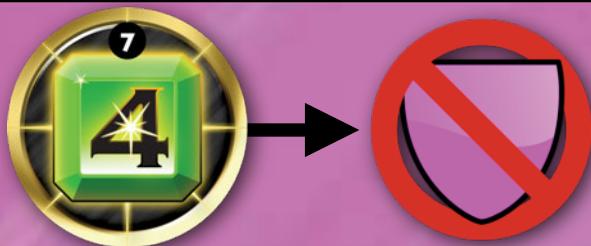
If you have only one gem in your gem pile, it's still legal to play a Double Crash Gem, though it would do nothing more than playing a regular Crash Gem in that case. You get \$1 for each gem you break (normally that's +\$2 total).



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*				
<p>6c Combos Are Hard If this is the only action you play this turn, gain any two different non-0 chips from the bank, end your action phase, then trash this chip.</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>3c Draw Three + [Three chips]</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>3c Gem Essence Trash a [Gem] from your hand. If you do, + [Yellow] + [Purple] + [Red] + [Blue]</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>2c Knockdown + [Purple] → Chosen opponent discards a chip and can't play reactions this turn.</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>5c One of Each + [Yellow] + [Purple] + [Red] + [Blue] + [Gem]</p> <p>x5</p>
<p>4c One-Two Punch + [Yellow] → [Yellow]</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>1c Risky Move Put a [Gem] from your hand into your gem pile. If you do, gain a [Gem] of 1 higher value and +\$3</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>2c Sale Prices + \$1 Chips in the bank cost \$1 less this turn, to a minimum of 0.</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>4c Self-Improvement Main: Trash a chip from your hand or discard pile. Reaction: After you're attacked, + [Three chips]</p> <p>x5</p>	<p>3c Sneak Attack + [Yellow] → Ante a [Gem] into each opposing gem pile.</p> <p>x5</p>

Gems, Purples & Wound -- Same 8 Stacks Every Game			
<p>1 1</p> <p>x64**</p>	<p>3 2</p> <p>x20</p>	<p>5 3</p> <p>x16</p>	<p>7 4</p> <p>x12</p>
<p>4 COMBINE [Gem] + [Gem] → [Gem] + [Gem] - \$1 + [Chip]</p> <p>x20</p>	<p>5 CRASH GEM + \$1</p> <p>x16**</p>	<p>9 DOUBLE CRASH GEM + \$2</p> <p>x10</p>	<p>0 WOUND This chip does nothing.</p> <p>x24</p>



*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.

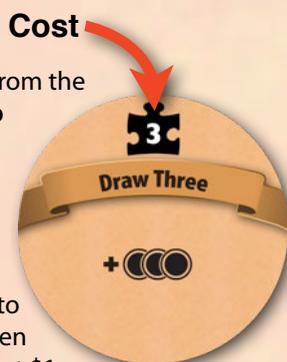
Buy Phase

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 a Secret Move on the table and your teammate buys a purple chip, it doesn't get rid of your Secret Move 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 Roundhouse (and draw from it), then your teammate could play something, then you use Roundhouse's +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.

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.

Floating Gems

In an 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.

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. 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

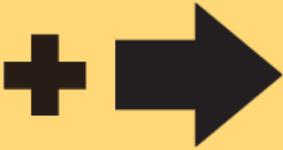
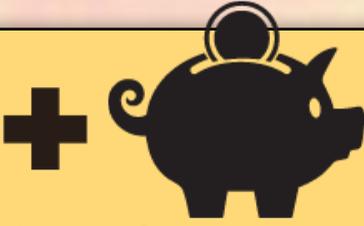
4-player game: 123443211234

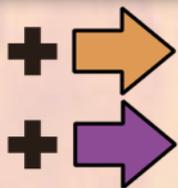
2v2 game: same as 4p where teams are player 1&4 vs. 2&3.

Caution: this mode is wild!

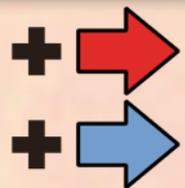
Stuff on the Chips You Need to Know

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>
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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 a chip</i> 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>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

Combos Are Hard, Draw Three, Gem Essence, Knockdown, One of Each, One-Two Punch, Risky Move, Sale Prices, Self-Improvement, Sneak Attack.

Lots of Attacks

Chip Damage, It's a Trap, Knockdown, Mix-Master, Really Annoying, Recklessness, Self-Improvement, Sneak Attack, Stolen Purples, Thinking Ahead.

No Attacks

Draw Three, Gems to Gemonade, Iron Defense, One of Each, One-Two Punch, Recklessness, Roundhouse, Sale Prices, Secret Move, Training Day.

Combo Crazy

Chip Damage, Draw Three, Master Puzzler, It's Combo Time, One of Each, One-Two Punch, Recklessness, Roundhouse, Sale Prices, Sneak Attack.

Master Puzzler

Combos are Hard, Draw Three, Gems to Gemonade, Knockdown, Master Puzzler, Mix-Master, Risky Move, Roundhouse, Self-Improvement, Training Day.

More Rules

Banner Colors

These are all the colors of the banners across the tops of chips: brown, red, blue, purple, gray (wound), 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

Chip Damage

If a player discards a Purple Orb chip instead of two chips, that chip must literally have a purple orb printed in the banner. Players can choose to "discard two chips" even if they have just 1 or 0 chips in hand.

Combos Are Hard

The bank contains Puzzle chips, Gem chips, Purple chips, and Wounds. Remember that "gain" means to put the chips in the discard pile. You can't gain Master Puzzler with this.

Draw Three

So yeah ... you draw three chips.

Gem Essence

The trashed gem chip goes back to the bank. You can use either the red arrow OR the blue arrow to play Really Annoying.

Gems to Gemonade

This only works when gems are "sent" to you. Crashing or counter-crashing gems in a gem pile "sends" gems but other operations like the ante from Sneak Attack do not.

You can't counter crash AND play this chip as a reaction to the same "send" because you can only play one reaction per event.

It's a Trap

You can trap any kind of stack in the bank: a

puzzle, gem, purple, or wound stack. For the trap token, use a spare coin or any other object you have laying around.

It's Combo Time

You pretty much just read the chip.

Iron Defense

You can use the Crash Gem on your own turns or use it to counter-crash when an opponent sends gems to you. After you use the Crash Gem, it goes to your discard pile as usual. It costs an action to use the Crash Gem. You can use the Crash Gem the same turn you get it if you have the arrows for it.

Knockdown

The restriction about playing purple shields ends at the end of the turn you play Knockdown. If the chosen opponent has some way of playing a purple shield chip NOT as a reaction, they can still do that.

Master Puzzler

You cannot play or gain Gem chips with this. You cannot play chips from your hand in the middle of resolving Master Puzzler. Remember to put the chips you “gain” with Master Puzzler into your discard pile. You don’t gain a chip if it trashes as part of its effect, such as It’s a Trap. If the bank is out of a certain chip, you can’t use Master Puzzler to play that chip.

Mix-Master

This chip is both red and purple, so if you have either a red or purple arrow from another chip, you can play this. An example use is if an opponent’s largest gem (in his gem pile) is a 3-gem, he splits it into three 1-gems. If an opponent has more than one Gem chip tied for largest in his gem pile, he only splits one of them. You don’t have to suffer -\$1 to combine the gems. You still get to combine gems in your pile even if the opposing piles have all 1-gems, and thus nothing to split.

One of Each

One-Two Punch

Check page 11 to see what the symbols do.

Really Annoying

This chip is both red and blue, so if you have either a red or blue arrow from another chip, you can play the main action of this chip. When played as a reaction, it counts as a blue shield and a red fist, so other players can react to the reaction with Really Annoying or Self-Improvement, for example.

Recklessness

Wow, three arrows!

Risky Move

If you put a 4-gem from your hand to your gem pile, you don’t get to gain a gem from the bank. There’s no such thing as a 5-gem.

Roundhouse

Simple and good.

Sale Prices

Treat the on-sale chips in the bank as if their costs really are lower. For example, Training Day looks at the discounted cost, not the cost printed on the chip.

Secret Move

You get the +piggy-bank even on the turn you play this chip. You only get the +arrow the same turn you play it though. Only discard this from the table if you buy a Combine, Crash Gem or Double Crash Gem chip.

Self-Improvement

It can’t trash itself. You can only play one reaction to any given event. The reaction is unusual in that its effect happens *after* the attack finishes resolving.

Sneak Attack

The ante comes from the bank. In a 2v2 game, the other team only has to ante one time.

Stolen Purples

The opponent discards only the chips that actually have purple spheres printed in their banners. You must steal a purple orb chip if possible. If there aren’t any chips to steal, you don’t trash this chip, but you must trash it if you do steal a chip.

Thinking Ahead

For the main action, if you buy several chips in a turn, it’s up to you how many of them to put on top of your bag. For the reaction, you must trash Thinking Ahead.

Training Day

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

Character Chips

Grave - Reversal

This only works when gems are “sent” to you. Crashing or counter-crashing gems in a gem pile “sends” gems but other operations like Sneak Attack do not.

You can’t counter crash AND play this chip as a reaction to the same “send” because you can only play one reaction per event.

Grave - Martial Mastery

It can’t trash itself or other character chips.

Grave - Versatile Style

Enjoy.



Jaina - Playing with Fire

The ante comes from the bank.

Jaina - Burning Vigor

The ante comes from the bank.

Jaina - Unstable Power

Just like a Double Crash, this does give you money if used on your turn. If someone plays Stolen Purples and you have Unstable Power in your hand, you don’t have to discard it because it doesn’t have a purple sphere in the banner.



Midori - Dragon Form

The ante comes from the bank. If the bank is out of the gem type you need to ante, then ante a proxy gem instead.

Dragon Form does stop opponents from reacting with Crash Gems, Double Crash Gems, Gems to Gemonade, Grave’s Reversal, and Rook’s Stone Wall. During Deadly Time, you still ante a 4-gem.



Midori - Rigorous Training

“Gained” chips go to your discard pile. This chip has a shield in the banner because it’s a reaction. It’s a brown shield rather than blue because it doesn’t react to an opponent’s attack.

Midori - Purge Bad Habits

The “gained” chip comes from the bank.

Setsuki - Speed of the Fox

It’s pretty self-explanatory!

Setsuki - Bag of Tricks

Have fun.

Setsuki - Double-take

If you gain extra actions (+arrows) with this chip, you can’t actually use them because your action phase ends before you can. If you Double-take an attack, each instance requires a separate reaction.



Rook - Stone Wall

The incoming gems are negated, so put them in the bank instead of in your gem pile.

You can't counter crash AND play this chip as a reaction to the same "send" because you can only play one reaction per event.



Rook - Big Rocks

For example, you could trash a 2-gem from your hand (return it to the bank), then take a 3-gem from the bank and put it in your hand. Trashing a 4-gem would be a bad move though; you wouldn't get anything for it.

Rook - Strength of Earth

If you can legally combine, you must. If you can't legally combine, you still get the +brown arrow. You don't have to pay -\$1 to combine this way.

DeGrey - Pilebunker

If an opponent has more than one Gem chip tied for largest in his hand, he only trashes one of them.



DeGrey - No More Lies

Trashed chips go to the bank.

DeGrey - Troublesome Rhetoric

You get either the top two or bottom two things.

Valerie - Three Colors

It goes nicely with Chromatic Orb!

Valerie - Chromatic Orb

This chip is purple, brown, red, and blue, so an arrow of any of those colors will let you play it. You can't use the crash effect as a reaction, but others can react to it with a purple shield. You don't get \$1 from this.



Valerie - Creative Thoughts

Enjoy the chip.

Geiger - Research & Development

If you don't find any Purple Orb chips in your bag, you can't complete the exchange. In this case, ignore the text on the chip and just gain +action.



Geiger - Future Sight

Using the +piggy-banks are optional, so you can use neither, one or both to keep 0, 1, or 2 chips for next turn. Drawing two chips when you play Future Sight is mandatory though.

Geiger - It's Time for the Past

Puzzle chips are the chips with a black puzzle piece icon at the top.

Lum - Jackpot

You can choose a Combine, Crash Gem, or Double Crash Gem. Yeah you probably want that Double Crash Gem, huh? Play it then "gain" it by putting it in your discard pile.



Lum - Panda's Bargain

If you bought more than one puzzle chip, you only get to draw one chip total.

Lum - Living on the Edge

The check of your gem pile size only happens the moment you play this chip--if your gem pile size changes later in the turn, it doesn't matter.

Argagarg - Hex of Murkwood

Each opponent chooses whether to discard two wounds or gain a wound. If they can't discard two wounds, they must gain a wound. If there are no wounds in the bank, they don't gain one.



Argagarg - Bubble Shield

The ongoing effect of the bubble triggers only after your chance to counter-crash. It will not trigger if you counter-crash all incoming gems. If some gems are still incoming, the bubble's effect is not optional. The bubble negates only one of the 1-gems sent to you, and triggers even if the opponent crashes a powerful 4-gem at you.

You don't get to counter-crash the rest of that 4-gem though.

The reaction half of the chip can only be played when the chip is in your hand, not when it's "ongoing" on the table.

Argagarg - Protective Ward

This affects you as well as other players. This applies to any chip effect that says to "combine" gems in a gem pile, including Combine, Mix-Master, Strength of Earth and the expansion chips One True Style, Combinatorics, and Option Select (when Option Select targets any of those other chips). You must discard the puzzle chips before getting the effects of the chip saying to combine gems. If you don't discard a puzzle chip, you don't combine gems, but you do get any other effects written on that chip, like +arrows.

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