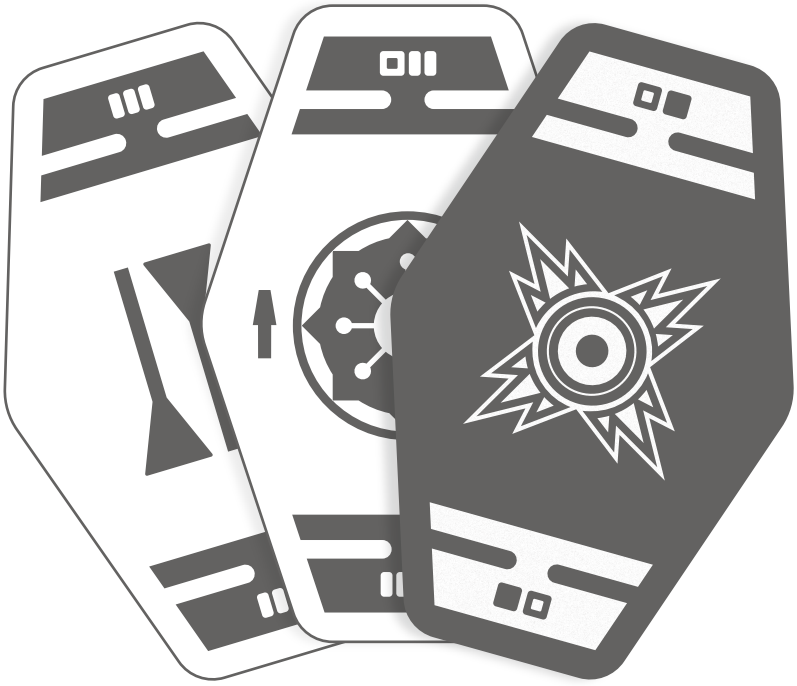


CLASSIC SABACC

ᗺᒧꓤꓤᗺ ᒥᒧᒥ 76 Card Deck Rules ᗺᒧꓤꓤᗺ ᒥᒧᒥ

Ver. 1.00

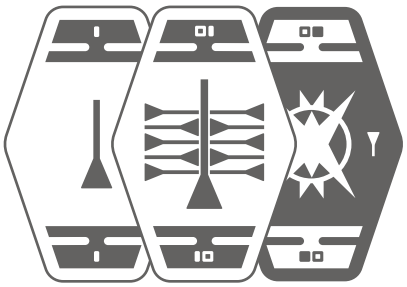
More than eighty variant forms of Sabacc are said to exist throughout the Star Wars galaxy. This rule set collects the first published forms of Sabacc in the Legends continuity, with rule clarifications and variants. Sabacc first appeared in the Legends novel **Lando Calrissian and the Mindharp of Sharu**, based on the mention of a '**sabacca game**' in an early draft of the script for **The Empire Strikes Back**. The first rules for Sabacc were published in **Crisis on Cloud City (1989)** as part of the Star Wars Roleplaying Game by West End Games

The rules presented here are provisional and may be subject to revision with further play-testing and discussion by the sabacc-playing community. If you have any suggestions for augmenting these rules, then feel free to e-mail me at Rick Scott <theartfulstoryteller@gmail.com>.

THANKS TO The Outer Rim Sabacc League on Facebook; Ender Smith (AurekFonts.com) for fonts and his Corellian Spike Rules, which served as the model for this document; Ryan Brockey for allowing me to include his rule set; Michael and Emily Hyde at Hyperspace Props for producing the Corellian Classic Sabacc deck.

The Suites

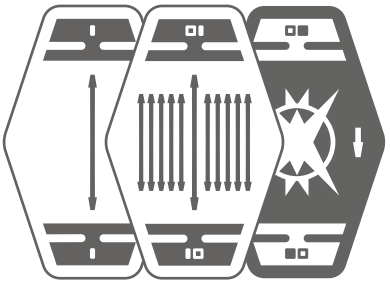
Classic Sabacc uses a deck of 76 cards, with four suits of 15 cards, with 11 numbered cards and four face cards. In Classic Sabacc, all Suit cards have a positive value. The values of the face cards are 12 (Commander), 13 (Mistress) 14 (Master) and15 (Ace).



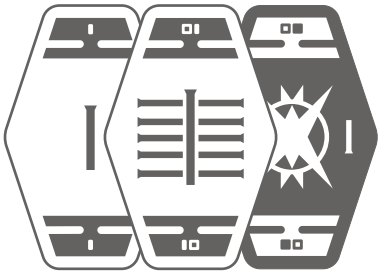
Flasks

The suit of flasks contains the One of Flasks to Eleven of Flasks and four face cards, the Commander, Mistress, Master and Ace of Flasks. The Flasks suit is typically represented by any number of liquid containers identifiable as a flask, whether a drinking vessel, hip flask or measuring beaker.

Staves



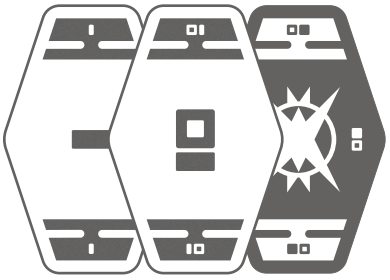
The suit of Staves contains the One of Staves to Eleven of Staves and four face cards, the Commander, Mistress, Master and Ace of Staves. The Staves suit, sometimes also called Staffs or Pikes, is represented by a quarterstaff of practical or ceremonial design.



Sabers

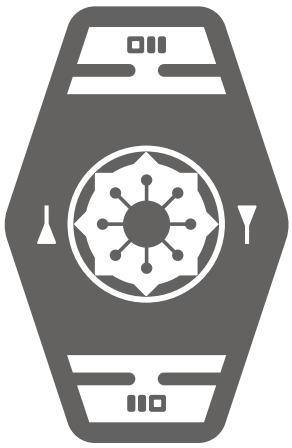
The suit of Sabers contains the One of Sabers to Eleven of Sabers and four face cards, the Commander, Mistress, Master and Ace of Sabers. The Sabers suit is typically represented by a lightsaber, an arcane weapon used by the legendary religious order known as the Jedi.

Coins

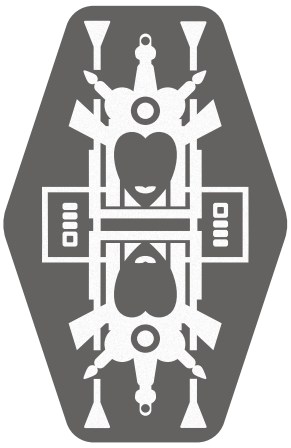


The suit of Coins contains the One of coins to Eleven of coins and four face cards, the Commander, Mistress, Master and Ace of Coins. The Coins suit is typically represented by depictions of the varied currencies in use throughout the galaxy. In this set, the bars and medallions of the Coins suit mirror the numeral code for this deck.

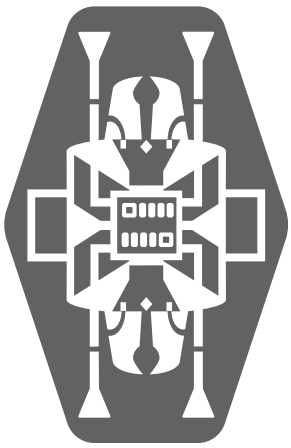
Ranked Cards



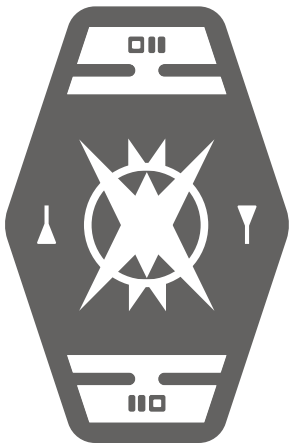
THE COMMANDER
12



THE MISTRESS
13



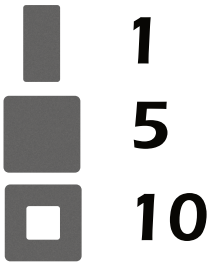
THE MASTER
14



THE ACE
15

In this Corellian edition of the classic Sabacc deck, the designs above are associated with the indicated cards and values. This differs from the design, value and card order of the Corellian Spike deck, which is not compatible with the traditional sabacc order. Luckily, unlike the Spike deck, these cards are marked with their values for easy reference.

Numbering



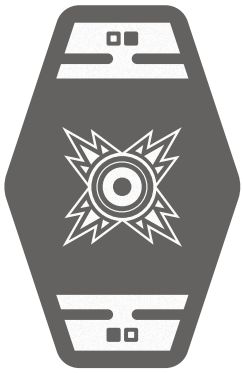
The values of all the cards in the Classic Sabacc deck are printed on the top and bottom edges, with numbers denoted by a simple geometrical system (see left). It is not dissimilar to the Roman numeral system; the Aurebesh numerals were considered, but can be confusing because of how they include the number zero, which is not helpful during a game. This system is also used by the Coins suit as a visual depiction of a growing value of coins that was simpler and more interesting than grids of 1 to 11 coins. Remember that the values of all Arcana cards are Negative.

Face Cards (16)

A classical Sabacc deck includes 16 Arcana cards with 8 face designs. They are closely related to more ancient forms of the deck used for divination. In Classic Sabacc, the values of all Arcana cards are negative.

Demise

The Demise card has a value of -13. This card represents Death and Extinction. Traditionally, the card is represented by cultural symbols of death and predation, such as the Mythosaur. The design here evokes the battle visor employed by the galaxy's most feared hunters and warriors, including the Mandalorians, the Senatorial Guard, the Republic's Clone Army and the Imperial Royal Guard.

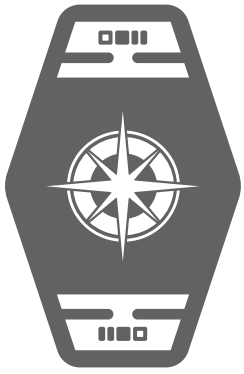


The Evil One

The Evil One has a value of -15. This card represents great metaphysical evil. Designs typically draw from mythical avatars of evil in different galactic cultures, and the concept of 'the evil eye'. This design hearkens back to glyphs and symbols alleged to have been the marks of ancient Sith masters like Naga Sadow and the early Sith Empire.

The Balance

The Balance has a value of -11. This card represents the doctrine of balance, a foundational principle in a number of galactic religious and spiritual belief systems. The design of this card symbolises a balance or tipping point on a scale, also known as the fulcrum.



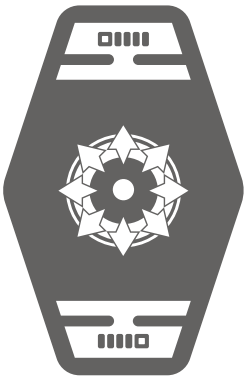
The Star

"The strongest stars have hearts of Kyber."

The Star or Kyber card has a value of either -17 or -10, depending upon variations between local decks and rules. This deck uses the traditional value of -17. It is sometimes thought to symbolise an individual's destiny or fate, and is depicted with a bright star -flare or supernova design.

Endurance

The Endurance card has a value of -8. It has also been known as the Strength or Spirit card, and represents resilience and fortitude in all its physical and spiritual forms. Endurance is here represented by the universal symbol for medical aid, employed by emergency medical services and combat medics throughout the former Republic, and honouring the culture of care, compassion and resilience in the face of destruction.



Moderation

The Moderation card has a value of -13. The Moderation card has its roots in the concept of Justice as a moderating force, and as a guiding principal in politics and one's own spirituality. It was commonly associated with the Jedi and with their spiritual code, so that many traditional Moderation cards depict a Jedi Knight. The Wheel of Moderation used here, apart from showing the equal action of different forces in concert, is sometimes thought to evoke a council of wisdom, such as the Jedi's own Council of Masters.

The Nightsister

The Nightsister, often known as **The Queen of Air and Darkness**, has a value of -2. This card represents the presence of a mysterious third force in galactic and metaphysical affairs. It depicts the crown of this mysterious force, which is believed to be benign or malignant according to one's own certain point of view.

The Sylop

The Sylop or **The Idiot** card has a value of 0. This card represents a Fool or Jester, and other archetypical characters from galactic cultures which may appear as simpletons, but also hide the cunning of a trickster. Depictions of the Idiot vary widely. The Kowakian Monkey Lizard is a widely recognized figure of fun used on many cards. The Sylop is a Corellian language version of the Idiot, and it's symbol may depict a traditional 'Sylop's cap'—a comical item of headgear in Corellian folklore. The card has no numeric value, but may nonetheless contribute to a winning hand. It has particular power in the classic trick hand known as the 'Idiot's Array'.

Cloud City Royal Rules

The following is based on the earliest rules published for Sabacc by West End Games for the **Crisis on Cloud City** roleplaying game supplement.

The game of sabacc uses a deck of seventy-six cards featuring sixty numbered cards divided into four suits, and two copies of eight 'arcana' cards. The game can have between 2 and 8 players. A typical game or hand of sabacc is composed of several sequential rounds, and officially ends when a player wins with one of three special winning hands.

The object of Sabacc is to have the highest card total which is less than or equal to 23. A total which is over 23, under negative 23, or exactly zero is a bomb out, and requires the holder of the hand to pay a penalty (see below).

There are two pots to be won in the game of sabacc. A pot is the total amount of credits (Star Wars money) staked by all the players in one hand of the card game. Each pot should be set apart from the other in neat piles some- where on the table. The first of the two pots is the **Hand Pot**, which is taken by the player who wins the hand. The second is the **Sabacc Pot**, which continually builds, and can only be won with a special hand (see below).

ORDER OF PLAY

ANTE

Choose one player to be dealer.

Players wishing to be dealt into a hand must first ante by placing at least one credit into both the Main Pot and the Sabacc Pot. The ante for the two pots must be equal.

Subsequent bets during the hand will be placed only into the Main Pot.

According to the stakes of your game, you may set limits on the minimum and maximum ante as well as the bets and raise (for instance, 3/5/10 credits in a low stakes game, 20/50/100 in a mid-stakes games, or 200/500/1000 in a high stakes game).

DEALING ROUND

Each player is dealt two cards by the Dealer.

After every hand, the player to the left of the dealer becomes the new dealer.

PLAYER ROUNDS

Each game of sabacc consists of a minimum of 1-4 rounds.

In one round each player takes a turn in order, beginning with the player to the dealer's left.

Once a player has completed all the phases in the turn, it becomes the turn of the player on his or her left.

No one may call the hand until every player has had at least one turn, including the dealer.

Note: You may wish to increase the minimum number of turns before the hand may be called, especially when playing with fewer than four players. The first through fourth rounds of play and betting are usually considered the pot-building phase. This allows for more interesting hands to develop.

PLAYER TURN

A turn proceeds through the 4 following phases: Bet, Roll, Call, and Draw.

1. BET

The player whose turn it is may do one of the following:

Check the Bet: If no player has raised the bet, you may pass without betting.
Call the Bet: Match the current bet by paying sufficient credits into the Pot.
Raise the Bet: Increase the current bet by paying more than enough credits to match the current bet into the Pot.

Fold: Forfeit and place your hand in the Junk pile, then pay a 1 credit penalty into the pot. If you are unable to call the bet, you must fold or create a side pot (see below).

The player whose turn it is must ask each player if they wish to fold (drop out of the hand). A player may only fold during the betting phase, and must pay one credit to the sabacc pot to do so.

2. ROLL

The player whose turn it is then rolls the Sabacc dice. If the result is a double, a Sabacc Shift occurs. If a player folds on his own turn, he must still make the roll, but his cards are not included in the shift.

SABACC SHIFT:

Roll the Dice. If the dice roll comes up doubles, a Sabacc shift occurs. Players discard their hand and are dealt a new hand of the same size from the deck. See Rule Variants for alternative ways of implementing a sabacc shift.

STATIC FIELD:

At any time players can place a card into the Static Field to prevent them from being discarded should a Shift occur. Players do this simply by placing their cards face-up in front of them.

3. CALL

The player whose turn it is must invite players to call. If the hand is called, each player must immediately place their cards face-up on the table in front of them and declare what they have. See "Winning a Hand" for victory conditions and penalties.

- A player may only call the hand during another player's turn, never during their own turn.

- No one may call the hand until every player has had at least one turn, including the dealer.

- You may wish to increase the minimum number of turns before the hand may be called, especially when playing with fewer than four players. The first through fourth rounds of play and betting are usually considered the pot-building phase. This allows for more interesting hands to develop.

- Once called, cards are laid face down in the static field and cannot be subject to a sabacc shift.

4. DRAW

The player whose turn it is may do One of the following:

Gain: Draw one card from the deck
Trade: Discard one (of two or more) cards in his hand. Draw a card from the deck.
Stand: Do nothing this turn.

- There is no limit to the amount of cards that a player may hold in his or her hand, but he must always have at least two cards.

- Cards discarded during this phase are junked and removed from play.

TURN END

The player to the left then proceeds with their turn.

WINNING A HAND

When a hand is called, the player with the highest card total which is 23 or less wins the hand. A player also wins the hand if everyone else folds. **The winning player wins the Hand Pot only.**

If two or more players are tied, they must participate in a **Sudden Demise** (see Below)

If any player has a total which is over 23, less than negative 23, or exactly zero when the hand is called, he or she has **bombed out**. In this circumstance, the bombed-out player must match the exact amount of credits which are currently in the hand pot, and pay it to the sabacc pot.

In addition to this, if the player who called the hand does not win it, he or she must also pay the sabacc pot as if they had bombed-out.

In the event that all players bomb out, no Sudden Demise takes place. Instead, the Hand Pot is moved into the Sabacc Pot and a new hand begins, with no winner declared for the previous hand.

Sudden Demise: In a sudden demise, the dealer deals each participating player one card from the deck which the players must add to their hands. The best modified hand takes the pot. If there is still a tie; the pot is split.

If all players involved in a Sudden Demise bomb out they do not have to pay into the Sabacc pot, but none are then eligible to win the Main Pot. The Main Pot in that case goes to the player with the best hand who is not bombed out.

SABACC!

To win the Hand Pot <u>and</u> the Sabacc Pot, a player must have one of two special hands. The first is when a player has a card total of exactly 23. This is called a **Pure Sabacc**, and is usually accompanied by an enthusiastic cry of "Sabacc!" when the cards are turned over.

The other Sabacc Pot-winning hand is called an **Idiot's Array**. To achieve this, a player must have an Idiot face card, a two card and a three card (a literal 23). The cards do not need to be of the same suit. An Idiot's Array beats a Pure Sabacc, but if two or more players have the same special hand in contention for the Sabacc Pot, a Sudden Demise is held as usual.

Mid Rim Standard Rules

The following rules are based on those by Ryan Brockley <shamed_jedi@yahoo.com> and available on pagat.com. Game-Play proceeds in the following way:

Ante

Each play pays the Ante into the Sabacc Pot and the Hand Pot.

Dealing Round:

Two cards are dealt to each player.
Each player declares the total value of their beginning hand.

Play Round:

Each player takes a turn in the play round. During their turn a player may:

Gain: Draw one card from the deck,

Trade: Trade a card from their hand for a card from the deck

Stand: Do nothing this turn.

- Players cannot discard cards. Drawing too many cards can be risky.

- Upon completing their turn, the player must roll the sabacc dice.

Static Field: During this round players can place cards into the Static Field to prevent them from being Shifted should a Shift occur. Players do this simply by placing their cards face-up in front of them. Players may only place one card per turn in the static field, but may have as many cards total in the Field as they desire. The downside is that they may only remove one card per turn from the Field as well. Players may do both, though, remove one card from and place one card into the Field per turn.

Betting Round:

Each player takes a turn in the betting round. During their Turn a player may:

Check the Bet: If no player has raised the bet, you may pass without betting.
Call the Bet: Match the current bet by paying sufficient credits into the Pot.
Raise the Bet: Increase the current bet by paying more than enough credits to match the current bet into the Pot.
Fold: Forfeit and place your hand in the Junk pile, then pay a 1 credit penalty into the pot. If you are unable to call the bet, you must fold or create a side pot.

Players may take as many turns to raise the bet as they see fit. The Betting Round ends when every player has either called the bet or folded.

CALLING

A hand can be called during any Betting Round after the third. After a player Calls the Hand, the Betting Round proceeds just like normal. After the final Betting Round is concluded, the dice are rolled one last time, and a Sabacc Shift occurs should they match. Then players reveal their cards.

House Rules

THE PLUTT

The Plutt is an adjudicator. He will assign monetary values to stakes and trade items introduced to the pot outside of standard galactic credit currencies and exchange rates.

He also enforces the house rules and variants in effect, and is responsible for monitoring fair play. The disposition of the Plutt and the House rules he enforced determines whether questionable devices such as clone cards and skifters are allowed to pass at the table.

HOUSE DEALER

During house games, the status of the Dealer or Plutt is often indicated by their possession of a Dealer's Block. In these cases, the dealer remains the same throughout the game, but the dealer's token continues to move left at the start of every hand, indicating which player should be dealt to.

SIDE POTS

If a player has insufficient credits to match the current bet, they must fold or create a side pot with their maximum bet. If that player wins, they do not win the full hand pot; he wins only the stake of the side pot, which the other players must match. The remaining players then compare hands, either to contest the next largest side pot, or the hand pot.

It is possible that the side pots are bigger than the main pot. Side pots can be won by hands that are weaker than the hand winning the main pot because the player winning the main pot had less chips and did not qualify for any side pots.

A side pot is necessary when three or more players are all-in with different amounts of credits. A player can only win an amount of credits equal to their starting stack from any other player. All of the chips that can be won by the player with the lowest starting stack make up the main pot. Credits bet by other players are put into one or more side pots.

Say there are three players left in a hand with stacks as follows:

- **Player A:** ₹25
- **Player B:** ₹50
- **Player C:** ₹100

If **Player A** has the best hand, he wins the main pot and the main pot only. **Players B** and C then compare their hands. The best hand between those two then takes the $50 side pot. If **Player B** or **C** has the best hand between all three players, that player takes the money in both the main pot and the side pot. If more than three players go All-In during a hand side pots are contested between individual players based on the exact same formula.

PAYING THE POT

- Instead of matching the Hand Pot when a player Bombs Out (which can be quite expensive) a value can be agreed upon before play begins as to how much the Bomb Out Penalty is.

- A maximum bet/raise can be set before play begins.

- The number or rounds in the Pot Building Phase can be increased or decreased.

TRADE AND DISCARD RULES

- Some rules for the Corellian Spike version of sabacc collects cards discarded from the player's hand in a discard pile, which you may wish to incorporate into your Classic game. During the Play phase of their round, players are able to trade one of the cards in their hand for the top card of the discard pile. Sometimes a fee must be paid to the pot in order to trade from the discard pile.

TRIGGERING A SABACC SHIFT

- The dice employed in sabacc are typically six-sided dice, and rolling a double of any number or symbol triggers a shift. If it seems as though Sabacc Shifts are occurring too often, you may wish to employ one of the following changes:

- For a 1/36 chance of triggering a shift using the official sabacc dice, you may rule that only the (1 or 'Spike' symbol) triggers a shift.

- A single d12 or d20 may be used. A single number such as 1 or 20 is chosen before play begins to signal a Shift.

- Instead of dice, a **Randomiser** may be employed. Random timer apps are available for most phones and tablets. You can program these to go off at random intervals during play. Once the timer goes off, a Sabacc Shift occurs.

RESOLVING A SABACC SHIFT

A sabacc shift may be dealt with in any of the following ways:

Core Spike: Players discard their hand and are dealt a new hand of the same size from the deck.

Rim Spike: Players discard one card, chosen randomly by the player to their right. The discarded cards are shuffled by the dealer. The dealer displays the discarded cards face down on the table, and each player starting with the player to the dealer's left, picks one of the discarded cards and adds it to his hand.

Wild Spike: Players discard all cards not in the static field The dealer then shuffles all cards not in the static field, including junked cards, and players are dealt a new hand of the same size.

You may choose one type of shift to employ in your game, or assign different shift types to dice symbols, such as the following:

Core Spike

Rim Spike

Wild Spike

STATIC FIELD

- You may specify that players may only place one card per turn in the static field, but may have as many cards total in the Field as they desire. The downside is that they may only remove one card per turn from the Field as well. Players may do both, though, remove one card from and place one card into the Field per turn.

- For a Hold 'Em variant, cards placed in the Static Field can be considered optional community cards. That is, any player may choose to use any of the cards in the Field in addition to their own cards. This adds another risk to locking the value of a card.

VARIANT GAMES

FORCE SABACC

In the classic game of sabacc, players may claim victory by achieving either negative or positive 23. While positive 23 trumps negative 23, a player may claim victory for scores either side of zero. In Force Sabacc, players declare at the start of the game either for the Light side, and must aim for positive 23, or the Dark side, and aim for Negative 23.

In Force Sabacc, Flasks and Staves are Dark (negative value) while Sabers and Coins are Light (positive value).

When playing with a standard deck of sabacc cards, the value of the Arcana cards is the opposite of your declared alignment (I.e. Arcana card values are negative for Light side players, Positive for Dark Side players). This may vary with specially designed Force decks.