

CATACLYSM ARCADE VS CPU

SOLO MODE · PLAYTEST v0.3.1
UNOFFICIAL FAN VARIANT

GRAB TWO PACKS. ONE IS YOURS. ONE IS THE CPU'S. SHUFFLE UP. FIGHT.

1P SETUP

- ▶ Two Boss-led decks: two sealed packs, or any two legal decks. Pack play ignores faction rules.
- ▶ CPU Boss face up — its **faction** sets its **Personality** (below).
- ▶ You draw 4. CPU: deal its top 4 cards **face down in a row, left to right — the Queue**. Its Level draws go face down on the right end.
- ▶ The CPU plays by all normal rules: track its Coins openly, it pays every cost.
- ▶ You are Player 1 at Level 1; rotate first player each Level as normal. Last Boss standing wins.

THE QUEUE — THE CPU'S HAND

- ▶ Hidden, in draw order. During **DEPLOY**, scan left to right: face-up (stuck) cards first, then flip face-down cards as you reach them.
- ▶ Play the **first legally playable card** found. Fighters need level ≤ current Level.
- ▶ Weapons: wield to its highest-Attack Fighter without one; else its Boss, if legal.
- ▶ A flipped card it can't play yet (Level **or** Coins) **stays face up in place**: a telegraphed threat.
- ▶ A flipped Tactic with no legal target fizzles: discard it, keep scanning.

HURRY UP!

At the start of **Level 8** and every Level after, **both** Bosses take damage equal to **(current Level – 7)**. L8=1, L9=2, L10=3...

DIP SWITCHES — DIFFICULTY

- ▶ **EASY** — the CPU's opening Queue is 3 cards.
- ▶ **NORMAL** — as written.
- ▶ **HARD** — the CPU gains +1 Coin every Level.
- ▶ **EXPERT** — HARD, plus its Boss starts with +2 Health.
- ▶ **TURBO DRAW (mod)** — Queue empty at the start of a Level? The CPU draws 2 that Level. For low-curve or print-and-play decks.

PERSONALITIES — CPU BOSS FACTION SETS TARGETING

FACTION	PERSONALITY	ATTACKS	LADDER TWIST
Survivor	THE GANG	Your lowest-Health Fighter; your Boss once the CPU has 3+ Fighters.	—
Shifter	THE PREDATOR	Highest-Health Fighter it can kill in one attack — once per level; after its first Fighter kill, your Boss.	—
Synth	THE MACHINE	Your Boss — unless you have 3+ more Fighters than it; then your lowest-Health Fighter.	SPECIAL ungated
Mystic	THE TRICKSTER	Alternates: your Boss, then your lowest-Health Fighter, repeat.	—

ACTION LADDER — EACH CPU ACTION, FIRST LEGAL RUNG

- 1 LETHAL** — if any single affordable attack kills your Boss, it makes that attack.
- 2 DEPLOY** — re-wield a loose CPU Weapon (same targeting as new Weapons); otherwise scan the Queue and play the first playable card.
- 3 SPECIAL** — use its Boss's activated ability, if it can pay **and** still afford at least one attack this Level.
- 4 ATTACK** — its highest-Attack ready unit it can afford (ties: lowest Attack Cost). Target per **Personality**.
- 5 PASS**

Early Levels it develops for free; once its Queue jams with high-level cards, it converts Coins into attacks — same arc as a human.

★ GOLDEN RULE

Ambiguous choice — target, mode, order? The CPU picks whatever **hurts you most right now**. Still tied: lowest Health, then leftmost.

TRAPS — RESPONSES

- ▶ Scan flips a Response with **no combat relevance** (Coins, draw, buffs) → pay its cost and resolve it immediately, like a Tactic. That's the DEPLOY action.
- ▶ Combat-relevant Response → **armed Trap**: face up above the CPU Boss. Arming is **free** — the scan continues.
- ▶ Traps fire **automatically and mandatorily** at the first moment they matter: an attack they could blunt or punish (fire before damage), or a CPU unit about to die.
- ▶ If several qualify, the one preserving the most CPU Health fires first.
- ▶ Response **abilities** on CPU units (Block, etc.) are permanently armed Traps — same firing rules, CPU pays the costs. Defensive ones fire **only to prevent a death** — chip damage can't bait away its taps.

LEVEL TRACKER

VS CPU v0.3.1
PRINT ONE PER GAME

GAME PAUSED – YOUR PROGRESS IS SAFE. TOUCH NOTHING.

LEVEL START – RUN THIS EVERY LEVEL, THEN TICK SET

1 First player rotates (see 1ST). **2** Each side draws 1 — the CPU's goes face down on the Queue's right end (TURBO DRAW mod: Queue empty → it draws 2). **3** Coins: each side gains the Level number — fill bubbles as spent (HARD: CPU +1, the dashed bubble). **4** Level 8+: HURRY UP — both Bosses take (Level – 7).

LVL	1ST	SET	YOUR COINS	CPU COINS	YOU SPC	CPU SPC	NOTES – Trickster's next target, etc.
1	YOU		○	○○			
2	CPU		○○	○○○			
3	YOU		○○○	○○○○			
4	CPU		○○○○	○○○○○			
5	YOU		○○○○○	○○○○○○			
6	CPU		○○○○○○	○○○○○○○			
7	YOU		○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○			
8	CPU		○○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○○			HURRY –1
9	YOU		○○○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○○○			HURRY –2
10	CPU		○○○○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○○○○			HURRY –3
11	YOU		○○○○○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○○○○○			HURRY –4
12	CPU		○○○○○○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○○○○○○			HURRY –5

BOSS HP – CROSS OFF DAMAGE · USE PENCIL, HEALS HAPPEN

YOUR BOSS

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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CPU BOSS

20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
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PAUSED? – MARK YOUR SPOT

LVL	NEXT ACTION	PASSED SO FAR	COINS Y / C
	YOU / CPU	YOU ○ · CPU ○	
	YOU / CPU	YOU ○ · CPU ○	
	YOU / CPU	YOU ○ · CPU ○	

Fastest bookmark: drop a coin on the deck of whoever acts **next** before you walk away. Circle the rest here.

SCRATCH

RESUMING – REBUILDING STATE

- ▶ The coin (or the row above) says who acts next; SET tells you the Level ritual already ran.
- ▶ The CPU keeps no secrets: armed Traps, stuck Queue cards, and tapped units are all face up. If it's mid-scan, restart the scan — it's deterministic.
- ▶ Trickster's alternation lives in NOTES: write **B** or **F** for its next target after every CPU attack.

PATCH NOTES

VS CPU v0.3.1
VERSION HISTORY

NEW CHALLENGERS. BALANCE CHANGES. NO REFUNDS.

v0.3.1 - 2026-07-06

- ▶ Unit **Response abilities** (Block, weapon-granted Responses) are now permanently armed Traps: same timing, CPU pays all costs, and defensive ones fire only to prevent a death — chip attacks can't bait its traps away.

Driven by: a table question — the sheet covered Response cards from the Queue but not Response abilities printed on units in play.

v0.3 - 2026-07-05 · "THE ESCAPE CLAUSES"

- ▶ **THE PREDATOR** now kills at most one Fighter per level; after its first Fighter kill, it attacks your Boss.
- ▶ **THE MACHINE** now recalibrates: your Boss — unless you have 3+ more Fighters than it; then your lowest-Health Fighter.
- ▶ **THE RUSH** (Apex) benched — no Apex Boss exists in the set, so it can't be tested. It returns when one ships (targeting was: your Boss, always; ATTACK above DEPLOY).
- ▶ Tracker: Coin cells became fill-in bubbles (one per Level number; dashed bubble = the HARD extra). Boss HP columns removed — the cross-off tracks below do that job.
- ▶ Added this page.

Driven by: playtests 2–4. Target-locked personalities got cracked from both directions — THE MACHINE ignored a go-wide board (Sky vs Trapper), THE PREDATOR chaff-fed on Head Rats and never touched the Boss (17 HP blowout, 2200 pts) — while the pressure-splitters (TRICKSTER, GANG) played close every time. Every personality now splits pressure eventually.

v0.2.1 - 2026-07-05

- ▶ **ATTACK** rung: ties now break to the lowest Attack Cost — same damage, cheaper, more attacks per level.
- ▶ Tracker: added a **YOU SPC** checkbox column beside CPU SPC.

Driven by: playtest 4 (Sky mirror, won Level 9 at 4 HP — first HURRY UP firing, closest game yet). The tiebreak codifies the table's house rule; the checkbox exists because a certain player benched Sky's ability until Level 8.

v0.2 - 2026-07-04

- ▶ **DEPLOY** now re-wields a loose CPU Weapon first (a Weapon whose wielder died had no rule).
- ▶ **SPECIAL** moved above ATTACK, gated: only if the CPU can pay and still afford one attack that level. Synth's twist became "SPECIAL ungated."
- ▶ Added the **TURBO DRAW** mod for low-curve / print-and-play decks; clarified that Tactics and Responses pay their printed Coin cost; added the Level Tracker page.

Driven by: playtest 1 (Charlotte beat Eff, Level 7, 5 HP). Eff's Rat engine never ran because ATTACK starved SPECIAL; an orphaned weapon sat on the board; the Queue emptied by Level 4 against flat P&P curves.

v0.1 - 2026-07-04

- ▶ Initial release: the Queue, the five-rung action ladder, Traps, the Golden Rule, five faction Personalities, the HURRY UP timer, DIP switches, and the hi-score table.

Driven by: a brainstorm thread about making Cataclysm Arcade playable solo — two packs, no dice, no charts, and an opponent that feels like PvP rather than a dungeon.