

DUAL PLAYER DUNE

DUNE Two-Player Variant with Allies

By Paul Snow

The first time I ever played *DUNE*, there were five other players besides myself and it was the most exciting game ever played. Afterwards though, I could never get enough players together to have another game like the first. Most of the time I could muster one or two other players to play along. With this limited number of players, the game tends to lose some of its excitement and challenge. To make up for this deficiency I devised a variant in which all of the characters are used by two or three players (a game with four or more players makes for an exciting game by itself and the system does not fit in with more than three players). The system is based on having one or two allies, depending on whether there are two or three players. The allies are the unused characters. The allies are played as if they were normal characters except that the allies are not always played by the same player. The exact use and disposition of the allies is explained in the following paragraphs.

The main characters are picked by the players as in the regular game. The allies are chosen in one of three ways. The allies are exchanged at the nexus in one of two ways. These methods are presented in the following set of rules.

1.0 Choosing of the Allies

1.1 *Player Determination* – The player who picked his main character last picks his first ally first and then the pick rotates until the allies are distributed. If you are using the rotational method of exchanging allies, the first ally picked is designated as the first ally.

1.2 *Random Determination* – The characters not picked for main characters are chosen randomly by writing the name of the characters on slips of paper and picking them out of a bowl or some such method. The slips of paper should be saved if the random method of exchanging allies is used.

1.3 *Combination Player / Random Determination* – A combination of the two above methods may also be used, picking the first ally and determining randomly the second. The ally picked will be designated as the first ally if the rotational method of exchanging allies is used.

2.0 Exchanging Allies

2.1 *Rotational Method* – The allies are rotated in a set pattern at each and every worm card appearance. For three players the pattern of the rotation is agreed upon before the allies are chosen. For two players, the allies are designated as first and second allies. At the first worm card the first allies are exchanged. At the second, the second allies are exchanged, and so forth.

2.2 *Random Method* – The allies are rotated in a random fashion by writing down the names of the allies and rechoosing the allies at each worm card.

3.0 Traitors

3.1 *Player Character Traitors* – Four Leader disks are drawn as usual and one traitor is chosen (except for Harkonnen of course). These disks are now set aside.

3.2 *Allied Traitors* – Five Leader disks are drawn and two traitors are chosen. One is designated as the first ally traitor, and the other is the second ally traitor. If there has been no prior designation of first or second allies the first ally drawn becomes the designated first ally, etc. For three players only three leader disks are drawn, and only one traitor is chosen.

3.3 *Special Traitors* – If the Harkonnen is not a player character then each player must draw an additional three leader disks. These become the additional Harkonnen traitors when the player is in possession of the Harkonnen ally.

4.0 Playing the Allies

4.1 *Limitations* – The player character and the allies of that character can not occupy the same territory. The allies of a character can pay for the character's expanses except for battle costs in the advanced combat, and leader and token revival. The Guild character cannot pay for passage to the planet or across the planet, but it does give the lower rates. The Emperor cannot pay for the treachery cards but can loan or give money to other characters.

4.2 *Order of Movement* – Player characters are set up next to a circle on the board as usual. The allies are situated so that they are not next to either the player character whom it belongs to or another ally of that player.

4.3 *Miscellaneous* – The player makes the decisions for their allies including battle plans, spice collection, the buying of treachery cards, etc.

This variant provides an extra dimension to make up for the absence of an abundance of players. Depending on which options are used, the game becomes unpredictable or gets an additional dimension in strategy using the allies to their fullest extent. Using this variant can open up this game to enjoyable play for people like myself who play with only a few players at a time. I know that my friends and I have enjoyed this game much more since I created this variant and I hope other players will likewise share in our enjoyment. This variant also is conducive to PBM systems which were impractical previously.

