

Starstead

a game by Dan Cunningham

*Explore distant systems, lay claim to groups,
settle them and utilize their abilities!*

Starstead is a 2-3 player card game employing a novel card-drafting mechanic that lets players claim and settle in star systems of different types and sizes. Once enough of a type have been settled, players can utilize each system's special abilities on every future turn to advance their positions, scoring more points and further expanding their empire.

Objective

Mechanically, players will be collecting groups of System cards and playing sets of cards in front of them. A player's final score is equal to the *lowest* value of the four scoring System types, so an even balance of development is key. However if a player has settled more than a certain value of any System type, he can utilize that type's special ability every turn for the rest of the game!

Components



Starstead contains the following:

- 3 Player Aids (Setup / Turn Order on front, Utilization Abilities on back)
- 70 System cards, 15 each of four scoring types (**Hydrogen**, **Magnesium**, **Oxygen**, **Sodium**) and 10 of one non-scoring type (**Nitrogen**):
 - 6x Stars (value 2) [4x Nitrogen]
 - 4x Cluster (value 3) [3x Nitrogen]
 - 3x Cloud (value 4) [2x Nitrogen]
 - 2x Galaxy (value 5) [1x Nitrogen]

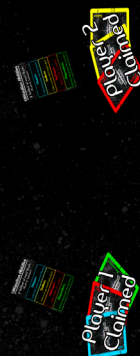
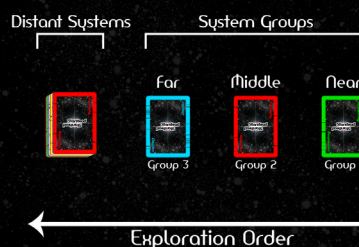
Setup

System Deck: Shuffle all System cards together, value-side (face) down. The System types (colors) will always and everywhere be visible to long-range scans (from the back), even when Distant. If playing with 2 players, take the top 10 cards and set them aside face-down; they will not be used this game (players can look at these cards' types, but not values, at any time).

System Layout: Place three Systems onto the table face-down in a line between all players; and place the remaining Systems in a face-down pile at the end of that line. This line will be the players' draft order, and the end stack of Systems are called "Distant".

Player Area: Players will be playing Systems face-up in front of them, so leave room. Next all players should take a Player Aid and place it in front of themselves. Now one player deals three Systems value-side-down to each player from the top of the Dis-

tant Systems (these will be players' starting hands). Finally, the player with the lowest numbered Player Aid (as shown on the turn sequence side) will take the first turn, with play continuing clockwise from that player.



Playing the Game

Each player's turn consists of four phases (sometimes five), as shown on the Player Aid. They are always performed in order, and cannot be skipped. Those steps are summarized here, and detailed on later pages.

(Utilize) (details on back)

You may use each System type's Ability if you've Settled enough of that type.

Explore (details on back)

Starting with near Systems, look at entire groups in order from nearest to farthest (but you can't look at previous groups).

Claim (details on back)

At any point while Exploring, choose to take the entire group into your hand (or take the top Distant).

Settle (details on back)

Play one Meld (one Claimed System and other same-value/type Systems, and/or same-value Nitrogen Systems).

Restock (details on back)

Up to the System group you Claimed, add a Distant System to each group.

(Utilize)

Counting all Systems the player has Settled for each System type (adding Nitrogen as the type with which it was played), if that player has Settled at least 18 points (15 if playing with 3-players), that player may Utilize that System type:

Oxygen: Look at all groups

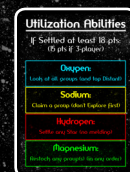
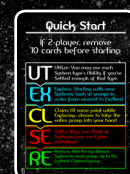
To Utilize, you may look at all three System groups and the top Distant System. *Note: Do this before you Explore/Claim.*

Sodium: Claim a group

To Utilize, you may Claim a group or the top Distant System. *Note: Don't Explore any groups before choosing.*

Hydrogen: Settle any Star

To Utilize, you may Settle ONE previously-Claimed Star (value 2, of any type except Nitrogen). *Note: You cannot create a Meld when Utilizing Hydrogen.*



Magnesium: Explore & Claim

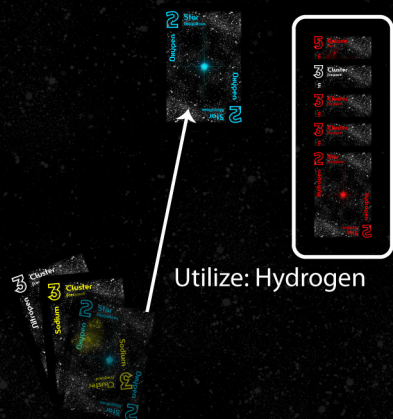
To Utilize, you may add the top Distant Systems (up to three) to different groups. *Note: You can add to one, two or three groups and add to groups in any order.*

The Utilization Number of Settled System value depends on the number of players in the game:

2 Players: 18 or greater

3 Players: 15 or greater

A player may Utilize more than one System type (given that he has Settled enough value of each type) and in any order, but all Utilizations are optional and may be deliberately skipped or forgotten.



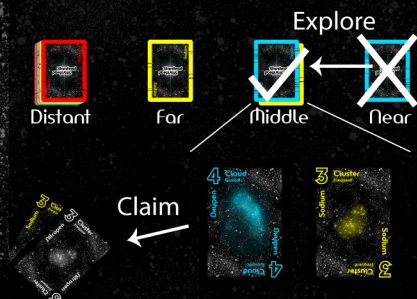
*Example: Jane counts her Systems and she has 16 points in **Hydrogen**. Because she is playing with 3 players, she now can Utilize **Hydrogen**. She Settles a previously-Claimed **Oxygen Star** (value 2). Even if she had another identical system Claimed, Utilizing **Hydrogen** only allows Settling a single System (not a full Meld).*

Explore/Claim

After Utilizing (or not), a player will **Explore** System groups in order. They will look at the first group of Systems (furthest from the Distant Systems). That player decides whether to Claim that entire group, or return it to the table and continue to the next group of Systems, looking at it.

While Exploring, if the player sees a group of Systems he would like to have, the player will **Claim** that entire group by placing it into his hand. If a player Explores all the way to the furthest System group and doesn't want it, that player returns it and Claims the top Distant System. If there are no Distant Systems remaining, that player must take the furthest System group.

*Example: Jane Explores the first group. It contains only an **Oxygen Star** (value 2). She does not want to Claim it, so returns it to the table.*



*The next group contains a **Sodium Cluster** (value 3) and a **Oxygen Cloud** (value 4). She Claims this group by taking both cards into her hand.*

Settle

After a player has Claimed a System group, that player will choose and play one Meld from their hand. A Meld consists of:

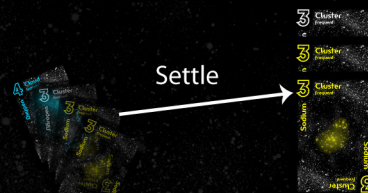
Any one System card AND

Any number of system cards with matching type and value AND

Any number of **Nitrogen** systems with matching value.

These Systems are placed face-up onto the table. That player has now **Settled** those Systems. If other Systems of the same type have been played previously, that player may place all Systems of the same type into one pile (for easier organization and counting).

*Example: In her hand, Jane now has the recently claimed **Sodium Cluster** (value 3) and the **Oxygen Cloud** (value 4) as well as another **Sodium Cluster** (value 3) and a **Nitrogen Cluster** (value 3) from previous turns.*



*She could Settle the **Cloud** (a higher individual System value), but she chooses to Settle the Meld of two **Sodium Clusters** instead (she can do this because both are identical), as well as the **Nitrogen Cluster** (because it matches the value). She Settles these by placing them face-up in front of her in her pile of previously-Settled **Sodium** Systems.*

Restock

After the player has Settled, he/she will **Refresh** the System groups that were Explored. This means that starting with the furthest group, the top Distant System is added to that group. This is done for all System groups that were seen or taken.

After Refreshing, that player's turn is over and the next player continues.

Example: Susie takes the top Distant System and adds it to the furthest System group, then the next Distant System to the middle System group. It is now the end of her turn.



The End Game

Eventually, the pile of Distant Systems will empty. When this happens, no more Systems can be added to near groups when Restocking, and so nothing is done during that phase. Play continues until all Systems in the game have been Claimed. The player who Claimed the last System group finishes his turn (by Settling).

Winning the Game

Once the last turn has finished, all players total the values of each of the four scoring System types (whereas **Nitrogen** is counted with whatever type it was originally played). Each player's score is equal to the *lowest* of all the System type totals. In the case of a tie, the player with the fewest total Claimed but Unsettled Systems (cards in hand) wins. If still tied, the player with the fewest total Settled Systems (cards played) wins.