

Wilcox War

Single Deck/Single Pass Rules v5

By Jeff Wilcox

A game of strategy, deterrents, and bluffing.

Overview

Wilcox War updates the (frustrating and not-great) game War to add in strategy, deterrents, and bluffing - slight changes to make a much better game - without changing its essence! Enjoy!



Rules

Components

One standard 52-card playing card deck

Set-up

1. The deck is split evenly between players – one receiving all the red cards, the other all the black.
2. Players shuffle their cards.
3. Players place them **face up** on the table, slightly to their left.
This is their *Draw pile*.
4. Players draw three cards into their hand, creating their starting hand. This hand is briefly shown to the other player.

NOTE: Cards won during game play are placed **face down** next to the winner's Draw pile. This is that player's *Spoils pile*.



A Standard Round

Each round, players simultaneously:

1. Choose a card from their hand to play.
2. Reveal their card. The player of the highest ranked card wins and places both cards face down into their Spoils pile. [If cards shown are of equal rank, see “Fighting a Battle” section.] The ranks are: (highest) Ace, King, Queen, Jack, then 10 down to 2 (lowest).
3. Draw the top card of their Draw pile into their hand. (**Opponents must have time to review the new card going into a player's hand.**)

Repeat these steps.

If there are no cards left in the Draw pile at any time, see “Ending the Game” section.

Fighting a Battle

If both cards played in a round have the same rank (both are 5s, or Jacks, or 10s, etc.) then the players are in a battle. To fight the battle, players set aside their hand (for now) and *turn their Draw pile face down* and briefly shuffle it, then players:

1. Deal **one** card from the top of their Draw pile and place it, overlapping, on their battle card.
This is the prize card.

2. Deal **one** card from the top of the Draw pile and place it **face up** on their prize card.
Highest ranked battle card between these final cards wins the battle. The winner places all battle and prize cards into their Spoils pile after revealing the hidden prize cards to both players. (See “Larger Battles” section if both final battle cards have the same rank as well.)

If there is only 1 card in players’ Draw piles at the start of Battle, no prize card is played. The one card is used as the final battle card.

If there are no cards left in the Draw pile at any time, see “Ending the Game” section.

After the battle is over, players:

- Turn the Draw pile **face up**.
- Fill their hand to three cards. **Then players show their hand to each other** and continue playing.



Larger Battles

If the battle cards at the end of any battle have the same rank, repeat the Fighting a Battle steps. Repeat this as many times as the ending battle cards have the same rank.

If there are no cards left in the Draw pile at any time, see “Ending the Game” section.

Ending the Game

Once there are no cards left in the Draw piles, each player places **all their cards from the battle (if any)**, along with their hand, into their own Spoils pile. See “Who Wins” section.

Who Wins?

The player with the most cards in their Spoils pile wins. If both players have the same number of cards, they tie.



2-Deck Variation

These are the adjustments to the above rules when each player has their own 52-card deck.

Setup: Each player uses their own full deck, instead of having the red or black cards within one deck. For ease of sorting cards after the game, it is recommended you use decks with two different back colors/patterns/pictures on them.

Fighting a Battle: Players place down 2 prize cards per battle, instead of 1.

If there are only 2 cards in players' Draw piles at the start of the Battle, one prize card is played in the battle. The last card is the final battle card.

If there is only 1 card in players' Draw piles at the start of the Battle, no prize card is played. That one card is the final battle card.

Version	Cards per Player	Prize Cards
1 Deck	26 Each (split red/black)	1 face down card
2 Decks	Full Deck Each (each with different backs)	2 face down cards

Other Options

Here are some nifty, small variants you can add to your game. Both players must agree to any of these prior to start of play.

Chosen Prize Card(s): Players can choose to draw each prize card(s) from the Draw pile OR their hand. Players fill their hand after all prize card(s) are played. Note: prize card quantity is still limited by the quantity of cards in the Draw pile. And the game ends when either player's Draw pile is empty.

Mulligan: Once a game, when NOT in a Battle, each player can declare a mulligan and shuffle their hand into their Draw pile and redraw a full hand. This hand is shown to their opponent once drawn.

Reset: After a Battle is resolved, each player shuffles their hand into their Draw pile and redraw a new hand. This hand is shown to their opponent once drawn.

Strong 2: A "2" defeats an "Ace".

