# The ScoreBack for more.

# Expansion Rules

Everything you need to know to play the Score is in the core rules – that's the other piece of paper in the box. But here are some ways to play it differently and get even more from the game. Plus some tips to make it even better and smoother every time you play.

## THE MINI EXPANSION:

This set of extra Talent cards was unlocked as a stretch goal in our crowdfunding. You can add these cards to the deck whenever you want, but remember that the game structure is designed around 18 cards. Before you start play choose or randomly deal out the 18 cards you wish to play with. Cycling in new cards will keep your heists fresh!

## PLAYER TIPS & ADVICE:

### Teach As You Go.

Explain the basics of what Talents are but just deal them out and get people making the crew before you start explaining how the Acts work. Explain Act 2's reversal of play when it happens and not before, and explain the Final Card rule only in Act 5. (People actually learn more easily this way!)

### Make Sure Everyone Feels Safe.

The game can gallop along really quickly and people can feel confused and unmoored by the amount of creativity they are allowed (or just not be sure how much they are permitted to do and say). Reassure them that, no matter how they feel, they're doing great (and that it's okay to be confused). Tell them they only have to say a few things. Some folks think they have to talk for several minutes, so be sure to manage expectations. You might like to spin long flowery scenes but for new players say "just a sentence or two" or "just thirty seconds" so they don't feel like they have to fill empty air. And always, always stop play to answer any questions or concerns they have.

### Slow Down to Stay Clear.

Although the game can be played in very little time and the fast pace helps players stop feeling self-conscious, players can get overwhelmed and lose track of things. A good game is always better than a fast game. Pump the brakes, take stock, let everyone catch their breath. Remind everyone (or ask them) what's going on. Clarity is everyone's friend, and that means making sure everyone knows what's happening, even while the story is spinning wildly out of control (in a good way)!

### Attention & Praise.

Players are often shy, especially in the early rounds. It's everyone else's job to pay attention to them, listen actively and praise the things they present. Be both general ("That was cool!") and specific ("Oh wow I love the idea of throwing ninjas at people") because we need both kinds of feedback. Never, ever give negative feedback of any kind. Come back to feedback later too: at the end of the game, go around the table and mention something someone else added to the game that you loved. People do what is rewarded and if they feel like others loved their story ideas, they will tell more stories.

### Scaffolding & Encouragement.

'Scaffolding' is a word they use in education and game design for the things that help people learn the rules and participate fully. In early games, players will be unsure what they can and cannot say. They may be worried about saying too much, because they feel they are 'stealing' the story. Remind them the rules won't let them steal anything, because they're only talking for one scene and there's always more cards to come. They may feel like they aren't saying enough because they think they should talk for a significant amount of time or lay out an entire scene. Remind them that just a sentence or two is all we need, just so we know how it went down. People forget things too, so don't be afraid to repeat the rules and the task at hand at any moment. If they seem unsure or confused, be ready to step in and provide these kinds of scaffolding and encouragement that they are doing it right!

### Linking Acts to Stages.

One way to provide narrative scaffolding is to suggest to the table what part of the heist each Act might involve. Act 1 is about setting up the heist, casing the joint, ruling out possible approaches and the first infiltration. By Act 3, the crew should be very close to grabbing their target, leaving Act 5 for them to escape. However, don't be afraid to abandon this structure if the game is going its own way. Heist movies can always telescope final acts to tie up all the loose ends in a few lines of dialogue.

### Helping with Roadblocks.

Sometimes players will have their brains go blank and they won't know what to say, either because they just can't think of anything or because the situation seems impossible to resolve. Players can then ask "Would you like suggestions?" and if the current player says yes, offer some ideas. Try to keep your ideas general if you can, so the player can add their own spice!

*Example: Joshua has just drawn the card Gunplay but the crew are currently drowning in the ocean after their submarine exploded. He asks for suggestions. Someone says "Oh maybe you can have some oxygen left in like a gun cartridge?" That's too specific, it answers the whole question. Someone else says "Can we shoot the ocean somehow?". Joshua snaps his fingers: "I draw my gun and shoot a bunch of the bad guys who were also expelled by the explosion. When the sharks are drawn to the blood, we ride them to the surface."*

## GAME MODES:

### Length

Want a shorter game because you're even more pressed for time? Cut the deck down to 15 cards and deal out 9 at the start for building the crew. Want a longer game? Include 24 cards (requires the mini-expansion) and deal out 16 to generate your crew. You may like to fudge these numbers up or down to make everyone have the same number of Talents e.g. in a three player short game deal three Talents to each player.

Either way, remember to remove four cards from the smaller/larger deck and replace them with the Act cards. Place the Act cards in roughly the one fifth, two fifths, three fifths and four fifths positions. The 4/2/4/2/2 split only works for 18 cards!

### TextBox: SPEED RUNS

Some of our playtests have been about trying to see how fast we can run the whole heist while still explaining each scene clearly and not cutting each other off short. So far our best is seven minutes (including crew and target generation). If you can beat that, let us know! Maybe film it or record it? Post it online using **#thescorerpg** and **#fastestrpgintheworld**.

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### Textbox: BIG BLOCKS

Sometimes the cards don't make sense. You're inside a coffin and now you're supposed to use your Traversing. You're underwater and Hacking comes up. How do you deal with this?

Firstly, you can always flashback to how that skill was used to set you up for this scenario. You can also jump forward, explaining what you do after you get out of that situation and let someone else fill in the blanks later. It's also cool to call in another player's Talent as how you get out of the situation, as long as you make sure they look cool and the player is okay with it.

Finally, you can improvise. One of the great tropes of heist films is Macgyvering up an unexpected makeshift solution. The demolition guy makes a bomb out of cheesecake. The hacker hacks into a mushroom. In The A-Team, the Driver 'drives' a tank that's falling from the sky. You can always find a way.

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### 7, 8 or 9 Players.

You can add more players to the game by increasing the number of cards in the deck. Use 21/24/27 cards for 7/8/9 players, dealing out 14/16/18 cards to players to generate the crew. See the rules above for longer games. Playing with more than 9 is possible but we leave that up to you and Danny Ocean.

### Solo Play.

Use the shorter game with 15 cards and deal out 9 to yourself. A good Act split here is just three acts split 4/4/3. This emulates the trope of two legendary foes racing to the target and constantly trying to outdo each other. Should the final card not be one you possess, then this time your arch rival takes the bounty, and the chase begins once again.

### Pacing.

Maybe you don't want your game to flip back and forth between acts so fast. Some heist stories only have things go Off the Rails once, right near the end. You can easily strip the deck down to just three acts. Try putting the Act 2 card about two thirds of the way down the deck, and the Act 3 card about halfway between there and the end of the deck. This can be particularly good for a shorter game. You can also adjust your tempo by changing where your act breaks fall. An Act 2 that comes very early feels like the crew have been set up to take a fall right from the start. If Act 4 and Act 5 are close together, the end is like a rollercoaster. Force Act 2 and 4 to be shorter and your crew will feel cleverer... or if they are longer you can have more fun explaining how all the 'mistakes' were intentional. A long Act 1 lets you take your time describing recruiting everyone and scoping out the location; a more cinematic style would be a short Act 1 and 2 followed by much longer later acts. Experiment with all sorts of pre-planned structures – or just go with random placing and let your pacing be decided by fate!

### Grittiness.

How much the team fails or appears to fail in a game is always semi-random because you don't know which cards are going to be removed. However, you can shift the odds. Want a game where you're much more likely to appear totally in control, having fun making the bad guys look like fools? Deal out 15 or 16 Talent cards to build your crew (12 in a short game, 20 in a long game). Want things to be hard and gritty with your crew always getting captured and beat? Deal out 9 Talent Cards (7 in a short game, 12 in a long game). You can also force things so that the cards taken out of the deck contain more or fewer crew Talents. This ensures every crew member gets full chance to shine, which some players may prefer.

### Meet the Team.

A fun way to add to your game is for the players to explain how they recruited each other and why they are pulling the job. After making the crew, the first player can introduce themselves to the table, and then explain how their job needs someone else. The next player to the left can then explain how they were recruited for their unique skills, and so on until everyone has joined.

**No Guaranteed Happy Ending.**

Some players really like a sense of risk in their stories. For this mode, before you add the Act cards, shuffle those cards and insert them face down. Now you don't know when things will go All to Plan or Off the Rails. If the last act is Off the Rails, then the heist spirals down into abject failure and the crew get captured and killed. This is often great fodder for a sequel or reprise, bringing us to our next mode.

### Legacy.

Even though the games are short, players often get attached to their characters and want to play again and again with the same crew. This is especially true if the heist didn't quite succeed! To keep things fresh in a sequel, remove one of your Talents and draw a new one. If you get a Talent still on your list, it can get a tick (see Rules Variants, below). If you end up with a Talent someone else has, just draw again until there are no duplicates. Tell the players why you moved away from your previous area of expertise and how you gained your new one.

### The *Leverage* Option.

In the TV show *Leverage*, the crew have clear areas of focus and ability. You can model this by letting players choose their Talents from the deck. You can also flag Talents you won't pick to show off your style or your moral choices (e.g. "No guns! We don't use them!" or "We don't have any Contacts – we were burned by the agency.") You might also want to use the Ticks and Crosses variant below. For Legacy games, you can just deal new Talents to the table equal to the number of players and discuss which one each crew member should take.

### Textbox: MASH 'EM UP

Don't forget when generating your heist you can always mash two things together. A casino on a plane. A laboratory underground. A historical relic that's also a secret code (paging Dan Brown). You can also turn over two Talents at once and jam them together to get some really crazy fun!

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### The *Mission Impossible* Option.

To model stories like the Mission: Impossible or James Bond movies you can deal out Talents as usual then give two more to one player who plays the central hero. The other players get to make wisecracks and if they fail at things, demand the central hero come rescue them. Make sure to share who gets to be the central hero: this isn't an exercise in ego-stroking.

### The *Die Hard* Option.

Sometimes, the bad guys are as cool as the good guys. In this mode, one player takes on the role of the bad guys and/or cruel fate. They don't get a crew sheet or any Talents. They are the 'Hans Gruber' player. Whenever a card comes up that the other players don't have, the Hans Gruber steps in and explains the bad things that happen to them. You can take this one step further by writing down the missing Talents and distributing them between more than one player, having several Hans Grubers ready to step in. These options are great for large player counts. You can even model two rival crews like this, or a vast army of bad guys (each with just one or two Talents) against just one or two heroes. Playing the opposing forces or fate can also be combined with being the game facilitator (see sidebar).

## RULES VARIANTS:

### Ticks, Crosses & Skulls.

Sometimes we want our crew member to be so good at something they always succeed. To use this variant, choose one of your Talents after you've built them and put a tick next to it. If that Talent comes up in a scene, it always succeeds no matter which Act the story is in. To balance this out, put a cross next to another Talent. If that Talent comes up in Acts 1, 3 and 5, it fails anyway. And if it comes up in Acts 2 and 4, it fails enormously.

A more gritty version of the cross is the skull. You can use this variant to model war movies or stories with high casualties, like Rogue One. If a Talent with a skull next to it comes up in Acts 4 or 5, the character with that ability dies. They succeed or fail based on the Act as usual before they check out. They're still part of the game even if they're dead though! If one of their Talents comes up after they died, they can narrate how they left a failsafe behind, or passed on their knowledge, or how the crew wishes they still had their friend to help.

### A Visual Story.

One way to help keep track of the story is to lay the cards not out in front of each player but in the center of the table, under each Act card. This helps everyone know not just the previous scene but the whole flow of the narrative. You can turn Talent cards which no player has sideways relative to the other cards so you can see when there were holes in the plan or things went off script. For this variant, you have to remember who has spoken the least when the narration needs to pass but this is easier than it seems. You can even take a picture at the end to show off the story you told (see example layout).

### A Tale Told To Others.

In this variant, everyone explains the story of the heist as if it is after the fact, in the past tense, being told to someone not present. Or indeed, you can have some people be the audience, listening in and asking questions!

### Dialogue Only.

This is the reverse of the one above: everyone has to talk entirely in dialogue, as if on comms to all the other players. This means you don't describe your action in the third person but in the first person. For example instead of saying "I crawl in through the heating ducts and cut the power" you might say "Okay, team, I've made it through the ducts. I'm gonna cut the power in three, two, one...go!"

### Textbox: THE GAME FACILITATOR

For players new to the game or if you have a lot of folks, one player can act as the game facilitator. They explain the rules, turn the cards and distribute them to the correct players. They don't tell any part of the story but they can suggest ideas, support theories and answer or ask questions. This is good for players who know the game well, when everyone else is new. The expert player can then be sure their stronger improv skills won't lead to their crew member seeming cooler than everyone else.

**End of Textbox**

Questions? Comments? Feel free to contact us at **tinstargames@gmail.com**

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