

THE RECKONERS

A Complete Guide for New Players

1–6 Players • 120–180 Minutes • Ages 14+

Based on The Reckoners novels by Brandon Sanderson. This guide rewritten for clarity.

Part One

The World and the Stakes

Before you learn a single rule, you need to understand what you're up against.

Ten Years Ago, Everything Changed

A mysterious burst of light in the sky gave ordinary people extraordinary powers. The public called them Epics. Everyone assumed they'd be heroes.

They were wrong. Every Epic turned out to be corrupt — cruel, territorial, and unstoppable. They carved up the cities and ruled them as tyrants. Nobody fights back.

Nobody but the Reckoners.

You and your team are the Reckoners: a small, shadowy group of ordinary humans who have devoted their lives to studying Epics, finding their weaknesses, and assassinating them one by one.

Your target is Newcago — formerly Chicago, now a vast city of steel. Steelheart rules here. He is the most powerful Epic alive. His enforcers patrol every district. His lieutenant Epics have carved the city into fiefdoms.

You've seen Steelheart bleed. And you will see him bleed again.

How You Win. How You Lose.

VICTORY

Defeat Steelheart by reducing his Health to zero. To do that, you must first research him — reduce his Research to zero to discover his weakness and make him vulnerable.

DEFEAT

The Population Track reaches zero. Too many civilians die and the Reckoners lose everything they were fighting for. All players lose immediately.

The Three Pressures You'll Fight Every Turn


This is what nobody tells you in the original rulebook: every single turn, your dice are pulled in three directions at once. Name these tensions before anything else — the rules will make more sense when you know what problem they're solving.

Pressure 1 — Kill Epics (but you can't rush it)


Each district has an Epic. You need to Research them first to discover their weakness,

then Attack them. But Epics get stronger every round you wait. Kill them too slow and they'll overwhelm you. Kill them too fast without researching and you can't damage them.

Pressure 2 — Contain Steelheart (or he becomes unstoppable)

 Steelheart has four power tracks. Every time an Epic does certain actions, those tracks advance — adding more Enforcement, more Barricades, more chaos every round. He snowballs fast if you ignore him. But containing him costs dice you need for Epics.

Pressure 3 — Control Enforcement (or Epics spiral out of control)

 Enforcement are Steelheart's police. They don't attack you directly — but every Enforcer in a district makes that district's Epic power up FASTER each round. Ignore Enforcement and every Epic in the city becomes a ticking bomb.

Every die you spend is a vote for one of those three pressures. The Reckoners is a game about resource allocation under escalating threat. The team that communicates and coordinates wins. The team that plays solo loses.

Part Two

Tour of the Table

What everything is, what it does, and why you care about it.

The City of Newcago

The board is formed by arranging City District Trays in a ring. Each tray holds a District Board (showing the neighborhood) and an Epic Card (showing who rules it). Steelheart moves around this ring every round like a patrol.

Why the ring matters

Districts are adjacent to exactly two others. Steelheart moves clockwise.

Epics can't directly attack other districts — but some actions affect neighbors.

Your miniature must be IN a district to act there (except removing Barricades).

The Epic Cards and the Action Bracket

This is the most important thing to understand before anything else. Every Epic in the game has an Action Track — a row of action symbols showing what that Epic can do to you.

The Action Bracket is a physical clip that sits somewhere in that row. It divides the track into two zones:

- Everything to the LEFT of the bracket — fires every round when the Epic activates.
- Everything to the RIGHT of the bracket — not yet active. The Epic isn't powerful enough yet.

ACTION TRACK EXAMPLE — Bracket at position 2 (Epic is still manageable)

★	👤👤	[]	🏠	★★	💣	💣💣
FIRES	FIRES	BRACKET	not yet	not yet	not yet	not yet

Two actions fire this round. After activating, the bracket slides right — next round, more fires.

The bracket is a threat meter

Bracket slides RIGHT — Epic gets more dangerous (more actions fire each round).

▶ Bracket slides LEFT — Epic is contained (fewer actions fire).

How fast does it slide right? 1 space + 1 per Enforcement in that district.

This is why Enforcement matters: more cops = Epic powers up faster.

The Reckoners' Resource Tray

This shared tray tracks two numbers the entire team shares:

40

Share
d

Population Track

Starts at 40. If it reaches 0, everyone loses instantly.

This IS your loss condition. Every time a civilian dies, it ticks down. Protect it.

\$4

Share
d

Money Track

Starts at \$4. Spend it to buy Equipment Cards for the team.

Equipment upgrades your dice, gives new powers, adds extra dice. Budget matters.

Your Player Setup



1 per
player

Player Board & Tray

Tracks your character's identity. Shows which dice you have and your special ability.

Each character plays differently. Your board tells you exactly what you do.



3 per
player

Special Dice

Color-coded to your character. Show unique symbol combinations.

Your character's personality lives in the dice. David's blue dice lean toward containment. Abraham's green lean toward attack.



3 per
player

Basic Dice

White dice. Every player has the same 3 basic dice.

Reliable, flexible. Cover the actions your special dice don't.



20
total

Plan Tokens

Black tokens stored on your Player Tray.

Wild cards. Act as any single die symbol. Powerful — but earned tokens can't be used the same round they're gained.



29
total

Equipment Cards

Purchased during the game from a shared market of 4 face-up cards.

Permanent upgrades that stay with one player all game. Can add dice, boost symbols, or give new abilities.

Steelheart's Setup

Steelheart has his own tray, separate from the city. He has FOUR Action Tracks (versus one for normal Epics). His tracks are driven by what other Epics do to him — not by his own activation.

Steelheart's brackets only grow from other Epics' actions

When Epics on the board fire 'Increase Steelheart Powers' actions, his brackets advance.



Steelheart's own activation does NOT advance his brackets.

This means killing Epics fast isn't just about removing threats — it stops Steelheart from getting stronger too.



8 total

Barricades

Black barriers placed on districts.

Block all player movement into or out of that district until removed. Remove with any die.



25
total

Enforcement Miniatures

Red soldiers placed in districts.

Don't attack you directly — but make every Epic in their district power up faster.

Part Three

Meet the Reckoners

Your team. Their personalities. Their mechanics.

Each Reckoner has a character backstory AND a distinct mechanical role. Understanding both before you play makes every decision feel intentional. Your special dice are tuned to your role — trust them.

DAVID CHARLESTON

"I've seen Steelheart bleed. And I will see him bleed again."

Role: Point man — intel and improvisation

Mechanic: Blue dice favor Contain and Research. Excels at slowing Epics and building toward Steelheart's weakness. Often the player who coordinates where the bracket ends up.

JONATHAN 'PROF' PHAEDRUS

"Don't just act because you can; act because it's the right thing to do."

Role: Leader — planner and coordinator

Mechanic: Gold dice provide flexible, powerful results. Prof's ability card is built around team-level coordination. Best at setting up big turns for other players.

MEGAN TARASH

"I joined the Reckoners to kill Epics who deserved it."

Role: Infiltrator — mobile and aggressive

Mechanic: Red dice lean toward Attack Enforcement and Attack Epic. Equipment card powers suit her offense-first style. She gets where she needs to be and hits hard.

CODY ARLINGTON

"I took an oath. Serve and protect. That's that."

Role: Sniper — long-range operations

Mechanic: Orange dice and the Sniper Token. Cody can place his token on a distant district and act there this turn — the only player who can regularly act outside his current location.

ABRAHAM DESJARDINS

"The heroes will come. Someday we will have Epics that do not kill."

Role: Techie — heavy attack and equipment

Mechanic: Green dice favor Attack Epic. Faith ability lets him reroll during the Roll Dice step — giving him more control over his results than anyone else on the team.

TIA REDWIN

"Usually a stint in the Reckoners ends with death, but occasionally one of us gets captured."

Role: Ops coordinator — research and planning

Mechanic: Purple dice lean toward Research and Plan tokens. Unique ability: Tia can use Plan Tokens the SAME round she earns them. This breaks the normal rule and makes her a planning engine.

First game recommendation



Start with 3–4 players: David, Megan, Abraham, and Tia work well together.

David contains, Megan and Abraham attack, Tia fuels everyone with plans.

Assign roles before the game starts. Agree on who focuses on Steelheart vs. district Epics.

Part Four

Setup

Do these steps once before the Prologue begins.

1

Build the city

Take 1 City District Tray per player plus 1 extra (e.g., 4 players = 5 trays). Arrange them in a ring. Each tray must be adjacent to exactly two others. Draw and place a random District Board into each tray.

2

Place the Epics

Shuffle the Epic Cards. Draw one and place it face-up in each District Tray. Place an Epic Action Bracket in each tray so that THREE actions are to the LEFT of the bracket. Set each Epic’s Research and Health markers to their starting values (printed on the card).

3

Set up the shared resources

Place the Reckoners Resource Tray beside the board. Set Population Track to 40 and Money Track to \$4. Place the white Resource Marker at the TOP of the Reckoner Base Track. Shuffle Equipment Cards face-down. Draw 4 face-up to form the Equipment Market.

4

Set up Steelheart

Place the Steelheart Tray beside the city (not in the ring). Choose Adjustment Board and Power Board based on difficulty and player count (see table below). Set Steelheart Research Track to starting value based on player count and difficulty. Place FOUR Action Brackets so TWO actions show to the left of each bracket. Place the Steelheart Movement Die on the tray.

5

Give each player their gear

Each player takes: 1 Player Board, 1 Player Tray, 1 Player Miniature, 1 Ability Card, 3 Special Dice (matching board color), 3 Basic Dice, 1 Player Aid Card, 1 Plan Token. Cody also receives the Sniper Token.

Difficulty and Starting Values

Players	Beginner	Standard	Hard	Sparks!	Adj. Board / Power
2	18	20	25	28	A/A
3	23	26	30	33	A/B

4	28	32	35	38	B/A
5	32	36	40	44	B/B
6	36	41	45	49	B/B

The Prologue (Play Once, Right After Setup)

Before the first real round, run this short sequence to scatter Steelheart’s forces across the city:

1. Place Steelheart’s miniature on a random City District.
2. Activate ONLY Steelheart’s Red Action Track. (This deploys Enforcement across the city — see Full Rules for how the Red Track works.)
3. Roll the Steelheart Movement Die. Move Steelheart’s miniature that many districts clockwise.
4. Spend starting money (\$4) to buy Equipment Cards if desired. (Optional but recommended.)
5. Each player places their miniature on any City District they choose.

The Prologue ends. The game begins with the first Reckoner Phase.

Part Five

Your First Round

A guided walkthrough. Every round follows this loop until someone wins or loses.

The Round Loop

Every round cycles through six steps in order — four Reckoner steps, then two Epic steps. Repeat until the game ends.

Step

1

All players,
simultaneously

Roll Dice

Everyone rolls all their dice at the same time. You get three rolls total. After each roll, you KEEP at least one die (placed in your Roll #1, #2, or #3 tray section). Kept dice are never rerolled. After three rolls, all dice are set.

“Tip: watch what your teammates are rolling. If Abraham is about to roll double Attack Epic, make sure someone has Research to weaken the target first.”

Step

2

All players,
simultaneously

Use Dice

All players discuss and use their dice together. You pick ONE die at a time and spend all its actions before touching another die. Then pick the next die. Dice are used to attack Epics, research them, kill Enforcement, contain their power, move around the city, or earn resources.

“This is the heart of the game. Talk constantly. Who’s going where? Who’s researching? Who’s attacking?”

Step

3

All players

Receive Rewards

Any Epic defeated in the previous step gives your team a reward. Rewards can be used anywhere on the board regardless of where the Epic was defeated. Collect them now.

“Don’t waste rewards. If you already cleared all Enforcement this step, a ‘Remove Enforcement’ reward does nothing.”

Step

4

All players,
collective
decision

Purchase Equipment

Spend from the shared Money Track to buy Equipment Cards. Each card goes to one player permanently — cards can’t be traded. Reveal a replacement card immediately after each purchase. Optionally spend \$1 to refresh the entire market.

“Spend \$2 here to recover any dice lost to Discover Reckoners Base actions.”

Step

5

Automatic —
no player
choice

Add Epics

Every district that had its Epic defeated this round gets a new Epic from the deck. Start with Steelheart’s district and proceed clockwise. New Epics start with their bracket between the FIRST and SECOND action (2 actions in reserve, 1 firing immediately).

“New Epics activate immediately in the same Epic Phase they arrive. They hit the ground running.”

Step

6

Automatic —
the city fights
back**Activate Epics + Steelheart**

Starting with the district where Steelheart's miniature is, activate each Epic clockwise. Each Epic fires all actions LEFT of its bracket, then slides its bracket right by (1 + Enforcement in that district). Finally, Steelheart activates his four tracks and moves.

"This is when civilians die. Watch the Population Track after every Epic activates."

Sample Turn — What a Real Round Looks Like

It's Round 3. Four players: David, Abraham, Megan, Tia. Two districts have Epics. Steelheart is in the North.

Roll Dice step — the team rolls and communicates

David: rolls Research, Contain, Money.

Abraham: rolls double Attack Epic, Attack Epic, Earn Money. He waits to see if Tia can Research.

Tia: rolls Research, Research, Plan. She'll weaken the Epic in her district.

Megan: rolls Attack Enforcement x2, Attack Epic, Move.

Team decision: Tia weakens Nightwielder. Abraham attacks him after. Megan clears Enforcement in her district.

Use Dice step — coordinated execution

Tia uses Research die twice: Nightwielder's research hits 0. He's weakened. His health drops to weakened value.

Abraham uses double Attack Epic: Nightwielder's health drops 2. Then single Attack Epic: drops to 0. Defeated.

Megan uses Attack Enforcement die: removes 2 Enforcement from her district.

David uses Contain: pushes Steelheart's red bracket left 1 space. Fewer Enforcers next round.

David uses Move: repositions to Abraham's district for next round.

Receive Rewards step — Nightwielder's defeat pays out

Nightwielder's reward: Research Steelheart x3, Plan Tokens x2.

Steelheart's research drops 3 spaces. Team distributes the Plan Tokens.

Nobody wastes the reward — Steelheart research was still above 0.

Epic Phase — the city strikes back

New Epic added to replace Nightwielder. Bracket at position 1 (1 action will fire immediately).

New Epic activates: fires Increase Enforcement. One Enforcer added to that district.

Remaining Epics activate: one Attacks Population by 1. Population drops to 37.

Steelheart activates: Red Track deploys 2 Enforcement across two districts. Then he moves.

Part Six

The Full Rules

Everything in detail. Read after playing your first round.

Roll Dice — Complete Rules

All players roll simultaneously. You have three rolls. You must keep at least one die after each of the first two rolls.

- Roll 1: Roll all dice. Keep at least 1, up to all. Kept dice go in Roll #1 section of your tray. They are never rerolled.
- Roll 2: Reroll remaining dice. Keep at least 1, up to all. Kept dice go in Roll #2 section.
- Roll 3: Reroll all remaining dice. ALL must be kept. They go in Roll #3 section.

You don't have to keep pace with each other

One player can be on Roll #3 while another is still deciding Roll #1.

This is intentional. Abraham might want to see Tia's research results before committing his attack dice. Communication IS the mechanic. Talk constantly.

Use Dice — Complete Rules

THE most important rule in the game: A die must be completely used before you pick up a different die. You cannot split one die across two actions, move to another die in the middle, and come back.

Complete one die before touching another

If your purple die shows double Research, you must use BOTH Research actions from that die before you use any other die. You cannot use one Research, move to a different die, then come back for the second Research. The whole die must resolve at once.

Plan Tokens count as a single die. Use all their actions before moving to your next die.

The Dice Faces

These are the six action symbols on your dice. Special dice favor different symbols. Basic dice have a mix.

\$
E
A
R
N
M
O
N
E
Y

Increase the shared Money Track by \$1 per \$ symbol showing.

★
ATTA
CK
ENF
ORC
EME
NT

Remove one Enforcement miniature from your district per symbol showing.

✿
CON
TAIN
EPIC

Move one Epic's Action Bracket LEFT one space per symbol showing. Must be in that district. Cannot go past the first action.

Q
RES
EAR
CH
EPIC

Reduce one Epic's Research value by 1 per symbol. When Research hits 0, the Epic is weakened — its Health drops to its Weakened Value.

☠
ATTA
CK
EPIC

Reduce one Epic's Health by 1 per symbol. Cannot attack Epics with infinite health (∞) until they are weakened.

△
PLAN

Gain one Plan Token per symbol. Place it NEXT TO your board (not on it). Cannot use this round.

Any die symbol (or Plan Token) can also:

MOVE — use any die to move your miniature to any other district (not through Barricades).

REMOVE BARRICADE — use any die to remove a Barricade from any district (the only remote action).

ACTIVATE ABILITY / EQUIPMENT CARD — if the card requires that symbol, use the die to trigger it.

Plan Tokens — Complete Rules

Plan Tokens act as a single die with any one symbol. Use one token to perform any single-symbol action: earn \$1, remove 1 Enforcement, contain 1, research 1, attack 1, move, remove barricade, or activate a card.

Plan Tokens earned this round cannot be used this round

Tokens you gain from dice (Plan symbol) go NEXT TO your board, not on it.

At the END of the Reckoner Phase, move them onto your board.

You can only spend tokens already on your board when the round started.

Exception: TIA'S ABILITY CARD lets her use Plan Tokens the same round she earns them.

Exception: Rewards that give Plan Tokens go directly onto your board and CAN be used next Use Dice step if still in progress.

Researching and Weakening Epics

Every Epic has a Research value (top-left of their card). Spend Research actions to reduce it. When it hits 0:

- The Epic is weakened. This is permanent — the research value can never go above 0 again.
- The Epic's Health marker immediately drops to its Weakened Health Value IF it's currently above that value.
- Epics with infinite (∞) health CANNOT be attacked until weakened. Research them first.

Steelheart works the same way

Steelheart cannot be attacked until his Research hits 0. Once weakened, replace his Research Track with his Health Track. His Health starts at the same value as his starting Research for your player count and difficulty.

Activating Epics — The Bracket Movement

When an Epic activates during the Epic Phase:

6. Fire every action to the LEFT of the bracket, in order left to right.
7. Count how many spaces the bracket must move: 1 + number of Enforcement in this district.
8. Slide the bracket right that many spaces.

What if the bracket hits the end of the track?

The bracket CANNOT move past the final action.

For each space it can't move, immediately fire the FINAL action one extra time.

Enforcement added by this activation DOES count toward bracket movement.

But Enforcement added by Gifted Actions from other Epics only affects those that haven't activated yet.

Activating Steelheart

Steelheart activates LAST, after all district Epics. His four Action Tracks fire top to bottom:

- Red Track: deploys a batch of Enforcement miniatures across districts starting from his district, clockwise, in groups determined by deployment group size shown on his board.
- Blue Track: places Barricades, one per district, starting from his district clockwise.
- Orange and Purple Tracks: as shown on his board (vary by difficulty).

After all Action Tracks fire, roll the Steelheart Movement Die and move his miniature that many districts clockwise. Steelheart's Action Brackets do NOT advance from his own activation. They only advance from other Epics' 'Increase Steelheart Powers' actions.

Epic Actions Reference

Epic Action	What it does
Fortify	Increase Epic’s Research AND Health by +1 each. If already weakened, only Health goes up. If neither can increase, reduce Population by 1 per Fortify that can’t resolve.
Increase Enforcement	Add 1 Enforcement miniature to this district. If all 25 are on the board, reduce Population by 1 instead.
Attack Population	Reduce Population Track by 1 per person icon in the symbol. Population hitting 0 = immediate team loss.
Add Barricade	Add 1 Barricade to this district per symbol. If all 8 are in play, reduce Population by 1 instead.
Increase Steelheart Powers	Advance the matching Steelheart Action Bracket right one space. If it can’t move, fire the final action on that track.
Discover Reckoners Base	Move the white marker down the Base Track. If already at the bottom, a base is discovered: one player loses a die (stored at bottom of Resource Tray, bought back for \$2). Reset marker to top.
Gifted Action	Perform the shown action for the Epic in EACH neighboring district (clockwise and counter-clockwise). Does not affect the performing Epic itself.

Part Seven

Reference

Keep these pages visible during play.

Common Mistakes

✗ What goes wrong	✓ The correct rule
Splitting one die between two actions	A die must be COMPLETELY used before moving to a different die. All symbols on it resolve at once.
Using Plan Tokens earned this round	Tokens earned this round sit NEXT TO your board. They move onto your board at end of Reckoner Phase.
Attacking an Epic with infinite (∞) health	Cannot attack ∞ -health Epics. Research them to 0 first. Their health then drops to Weakened Value.
Forgetting Enforcement adds to bracket movement	Bracket moves right by 1 + all Enforcement in the district (including those just added THIS activation).
Thinking Steelheart's brackets self-advance	Steelheart's brackets ONLY grow from other Epics' 'Increase Steelheart Powers' actions. Not from his own turn.
Forgetting new Epics activate immediately	Epics added in the Add Epics step still activate in that same Epic Phase. Fresh Epics hit the ground running.
Thinking Epic rewards must be used locally	Epic rewards can be used ANYWHERE on the board, regardless of where the Epic was defeated.
Removing a Barricade from your own district only	Remove Barricade is the ONLY action that works outside your current district. Use any die from anywhere.
Missing the weakened health adjustment	When an Epic is weakened, if its health is ABOVE the Weakened Value, it immediately drops to that value.

Quick Numbers

Number	What it means
40	Starting Population Track (lose if it hits 0)
\$4	Starting Money Track
25	Total Enforcement miniatures (if all deployed, extras cost Population)
8	Total Barricades (if all deployed, extras cost Population)
3	Rolls per round (must keep 1+ after each of first two)
1 + Enf	Spaces bracket moves right when Epic activates
3 left	Starting bracket position for normal Epics (3 actions fire from round 1)
2 left	Starting bracket position for Steelheart's tracks and newly added Epics
\$1	Cost to refresh the entire Equipment Market
\$2	Cost to recover a die lost to Discover Reckoners Base

Round Summary

1 — Roll Dice	All roll simultaneously. 3 rolls. Keep at least 1 die per roll. All kept dice never reroll.
2 — Use Dice	All use simultaneously. One die at a time, completely. Any die can move or remove barricade. Team decides order.
3 — Receive Rewards	Collect rewards from Epics defeated this step. Usable anywhere. Only valid THIS step.
4 — Purchase Equipment	Spend shared money to buy Equipment Cards. One card per player. Refresh costs \$1.
5 — Add Epics	Replace any defeated Epics. Start at Steelheart's district, go clockwise.
6 — Activate Epics	Each Epic fires bracket-left actions, bracket slides right. Then Steelheart fires and moves.

Strategy Principles

- Communicate before you use any dice. The whole team should know the plan before anyone acts.
- Contain Steelheart every round if you can reach him. His brackets compounding is the hardest thing to come back from.
- Kill Enforcement before they pile up. Two Enforcers in a district means a bracket moves 3 spaces per round.
- Research before you attack. Killing an Epic with infinite health costs you nothing but time — until someone researches it, your attack dice are wasted.
- Save Plan Tokens for turn 2+ use. Earn them early, spend them when they have maximum impact.
- Buy equipment early. Early gear compounds over many more rounds. A \$1 card in round 2 is worth more than a \$1 card in round 8.

- Watch the Population Track more than the Epics. Winning is about Steelheart. But losing is always about Population.