

THE

ARCADIANST

POCKET EDITION

AN ARCADE GAME BY
WALTON + TEGU

Ground Kontrol (Portland, OR)
photo by Matt pdx (CC-BY-SA)

EPIC BEATDOWN

The greatest fighters from across space and time battle in a 1-on-1 tournament.

CABINET PLAYER (1): Treat each of your hands as a puppet, representing one of the two fighters. Based on the players' shouts, move your hands around and act out a battle. There are two rounds to each battle, with a third elimination round if there's a tie after two rounds. Time each round for 20 seconds, declaring the winner after each round and then the ultimate victor.

HUMAN PLAYERS (2): Pick from the fighters below or invent one of your own. Once the battle begins, exclaim their moves.

Elsa Thrash: *thrashing kick! take that! argh! this is too easy! power slam! (laugh)!*

Ice Wolf: *wolf claw! chill out! bang-a-rang! now you're in trouble! uhhh! (howl)!*

Tenebrous: *taste the darkness! skele-punch! skele-port! shadow block! egad! (cackle)!*

THE GIFT OF DRIFT

A racing game in which you drift all sort of road vehicles: cars, trucks, buses, bikes, etc.

CABINET PLAYER (1): Set up your camera so that you can easily, rapidly, and safely angle it from side to side and up/down. A tablet or phone that you can move around might be best. Offer the players a choice of 2-3 course locations (forest, desert, snow). Set a timer for 3 minutes, shifting the screen gradually most of the time, but occasionally rapidly, to show how the road is shifting in front of the players. Call out approaching hazards from the list or describe the scenery. Say "check point!" every 20-30 seconds. Once the time is up, declare a winner.

Hazards: *sharp turn! oncoming traffic! deer! an avalanche! the bridge is out! fallen tree! take this exit! winding road! watch for cops!*

HUMAN PLAYERS (2): Select the course and a vehicle. Then, based on screen movements and instructions, mime driving the course.

TOTAL CRISIS 2

Zombie dinosaurs have taken over the city. An elite strike team fights back.

CABINET PLAYERS (2): Describe each new section of the city as the players enter it. Use both hands to randomly draw and wave playing cards to be different enemies, naming each card—see lists below—when it appears and acting as the Boss when you run out of cards. Drop cards as they are shot. Pause the action and say "insert coins to continue!" after every couple minutes.

Minions (cards A-10, take ~5 hits): *zombie scientist! flesh raptor! bone raptor! pterror-saur! chomp-sognathus! snack-iosaur!*

Tough Ones (all face cards, take ~30 hits): *dynamite-tradon! t-wrecks! tank-ylosaurus!*

Boss (you, takes ~100 hits): *apocalypticus!*

HUMAN PLAYERS (2): Mime shooting at the cards with a handgun, upgrading your weapon every ~10 kills. Insert coins or not.

PUMP UP THE JAM

Dance in sync with the high-speed techno-pop music or be graded harshly.

CABINET PLAYER (1): Find several short (roughly 2-3-minute-long) clips of high-speed dance music, preferably from Asia. Set them up to be played from the players' computer, but not so loud to drown out your voice. Once the players have selected and begun a song, shout out directions in rhythm with the music and judge how the players do, providing feedback as noted. Give commands for a measure of music and they perform it during the next measure. Once the song is over, grade them: A to F.

Dance Moves: *up! down! left! right!* (said in combos, like: *up! up! right-down-right!*)

Feedback: *excellent! keep it up! that's great! you can do it! almost! move to the beat!*

HUMAN PLAYERS (2): Select a song and then dance to the beat, following instructions.

THE GIFT OF DRIFT

SOLO MODE

The solo version is a **TIME TRIAL**, which shifts the human player's character backward or forward in time to a moment when you noticing that things were changing.

The human player skips to one moment:

- when you noticed that the way you felt about someone had changed
- when it became clear that you were the one who didn't fit in
- when this place no longer felt the same

Then, have the human player pick someone they tried to talk about it with: a friend, family member, etc. (not the character of another player). Play out a short interaction, with the cabinet player acting as the other character. Did they feel differently? Did they understand? When you leave the cabinet, play forward in time from that interaction.

EPIC BEATDOWN

SOLO MODE

The solo version is **STORY MODE**, where you explore the motivations behind the conflicts in the characters' lives.

The human player skips to one moment:

- when you kept escalating a situation
- when you just couldn't take someone's bullshit anymore
- when they went after you again, but you didn't back down this time

Then, have the human player pick someone who was either there when it happened or who you tried to talk about it with afterward: a friend, rival, family member, etc. (not the character of another player). Play out a short interaction, with the cabinet player acting as the other character. How did it go down? How did it feel? When you leave the cabinet, play forward from that interaction.

THE ARCADIAN

This game attempts to simulate a video game arcade during an unspecified period during the 1990s. It's partially about nostalgia for a time and environment that mostly doesn't exist anymore, but it's also about some of the more difficult and messed-up stuff that happened or was worked out amid the blinking lights and buzzy soundtracks.

This "Pocket Edition" was designed for Golden Cobra 2016 by J. Walton, based on conversations with and ideas from Jackson Tegu. Maybe we'll make a different version at some point.

CABINET PLAYERS

The scope of the game is set by the number of *cabinet players*, which are players who portray video game cabinets rather than people. The number of cabinets roughly suggests the kind of location simulated during the game:

- **1 CABINET:** pizza parlor, gas station, etc.
- **2 CABINETS:** movie theatre lobby, etc.
- **3 CABINETS:** mall or putt-putt arcade, etc.
- **4 CABINETS:** big stand-alone arcade, etc.

Cabinet players *participate by videochat*, joining the play space from distant locations. In a pinch, cabinet players can also be on-site, perhaps dressed differently or behind some kind of frame.

Cabinet players should prepare by researching cabinets like the one they'll portray. See if you can portray things like their music, effects, voices, visuals, and so on, including intro videos and selection screens. That said, if you feel stressed out from doing too many things at once, scale back and focus on the core things.

HUMAN PLAYERS

You'll want to have a few human players per cabinet, but the numbers are pretty flexible. Each human player portrays *someone like themselves* but not exactly themselves. Come up with a new name and the rest can develop over time.

BEGINNING THE GAME

Sometimes the internet will drop out or one or more cabinet players will have technical issues. Sometimes a cabinet player will need to pee or

take care of something. Mention this beforehand and make sure everyone knows it's not a big deal. Maybe even make some "out of order" signs to flag cabinets as needed during play.

Next, set the scene by describing the location portrayed in play: whether pizza parlor or putt-putt arcade. Then have each cabinet and human player introduce their character. Make it clear that *the game is meant to be somewhat surreal*, showing all the different moments in which the characters are in the arcade, happening out of order or simultaneously or both.

To begin, make sure the cabinet players are ready and then the human players gradually wander into the play area, spaced out a bit in time. Human players are free to interact with each other and the cabinets as follows:

VS. MODE

When two players play a cabinet together, the cabinet player leads them in simulating an arcade game. Except for *Total Crisis 2*, which isn't head-to-head, *the winner stays on* and surrounding players can step in, though make sure to give the cabinet player a break every once in a while.

SOLO MODE

When a single player plays a cabinet, they work with the cabinet player to set up a 1-on-1 conversation—or 1-on-2 for *Total Crisis 2*—as described on the back of the cabinet card. Often, this sets human characters on slightly different trajectories than they were before the interaction.

OFF CABINET

When you're not interacting with a cabinet, you have two main goals: (1) interact with the other players, either near or away from cabinets, and (2) ensuring that you and the other players get both *versus* and *solo* time on different cabinets.

TIMING THE GAME

Choose a length for the game, say 2-3 hours. Set a timer every 30 minutes; when it goes off, all the human players should gradually wander out and then back in, mixing things up a bit. After the last timer, everyone wanders out to debrief.

PUMP UP THE JAM

SOLO MODE

The solo version is where you **PERFORM FOR WHOEVER'S WATCHING**. The human player takes the risk of putting themselves out there and finds what happens.

The human player skips to one moment:

- when you let go of your inhibitions and did something daring
- when you wanted to impress someone
- when you revealed something fairly personal to someone else

Then, have the human player pick someone who was there: a friend, family member, etc. (not the character of another player). Play out a short interaction, with the cabinet player acting as the other character. How did they react? How did it change things going forward? When you leave the cabinet, play forward in time from that interaction.

TOTAL CRISIS 2

SOLO MODE

The solo version leaves it **ALL UP TO YOU** in a time of crisis, examining a moment when the human player had to make a big choice.

The human player skips to one moment:

- when you did something they totally didn't expect from you
- when there were no good options and yet you had to do something
- when someone was in real trouble

Then, have the human player pick a couple people who were there when it happened: friends, rivals, family members, etc. (not the characters of other players). Play out a short interaction, with the cabinet players acting as the other characters. What did you decide to do? How did it change things forever? When you leave the cabinet, play forward in time from that interaction.