



RULEBOOK

Pick your team, choose the best strategy and roll for the win in this fast-paced football duel of tactics, pressure, and moments.

www.shortpassgame.com

Season Zero Edition • 2026

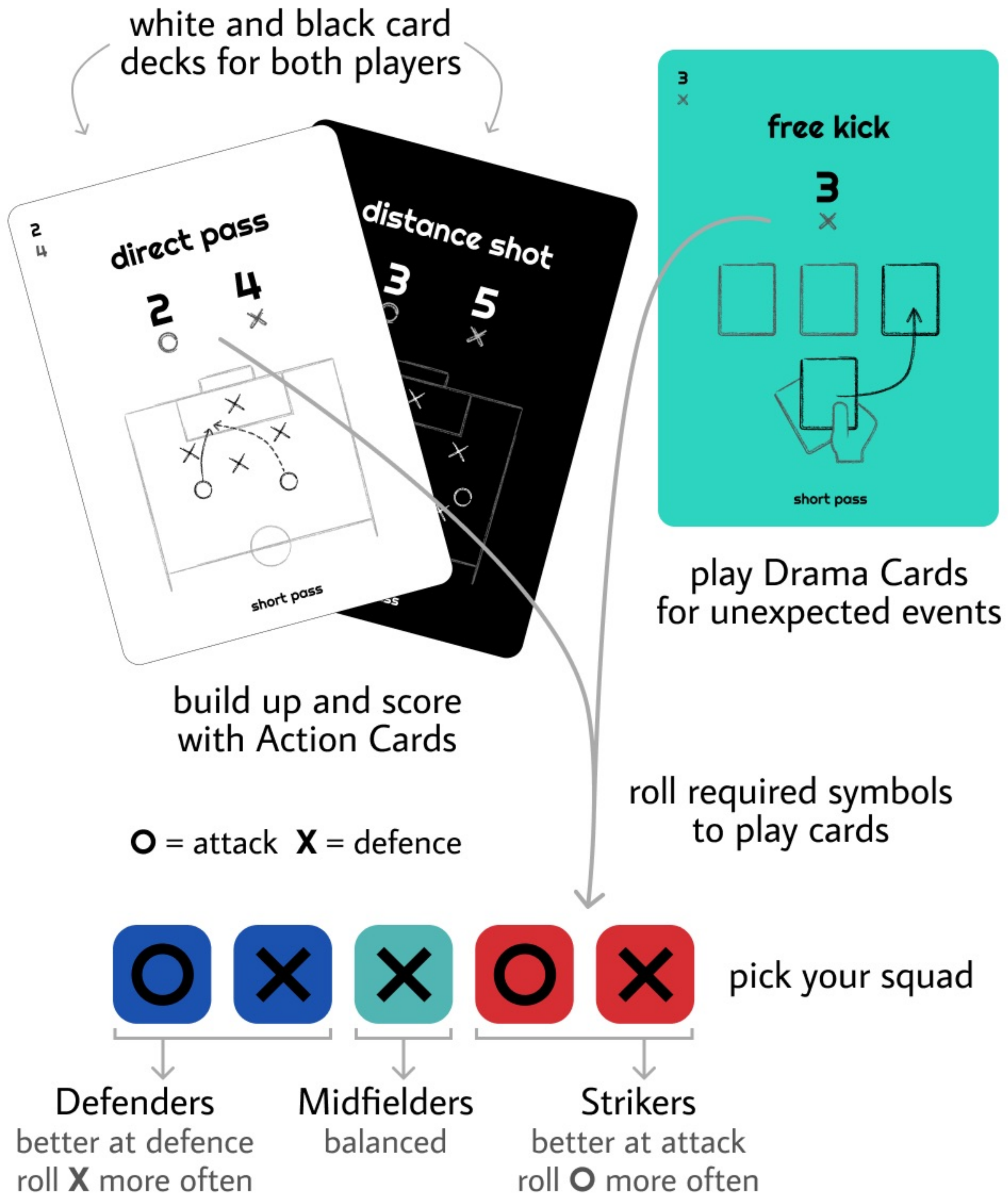
GAME OVERVIEW

Short Pass is a game for 1-4 players (and even more in specific variants!). Players take roles of football (soccer) managers. The objective is simple - score more goals than your opponent to win a match!

Playing a single match takes about 10-15 minutes.

Components (for each player)

- A deck of 10 Action Cards and 5 Drama Cards
- A set of 9 dice
 - 3 Strikers (red)
 - 3 Midfielders (green)
 - 3 Defenders (blue)



SETUP

This is the setup for a 2-player mode game. Before playing other variants (solo, campaign, league), learn the 2-player mode to understand core mechanics.

1. Each player shuffles their 15-card deck
2. Each player draws 5 cards from their decks
3. Each player chooses 5 dice for their squad
4. The remaining dice are placed on the bench, they can be used later.
5. Randomly determine the starting player

Players alternate turns as an Attacker and a Defender.

Space: During the game some cards will be placed on the table in front of the players. You also need some space to roll your dice, keep the deck and pile of discarded cards and dice.

O's AND X's

There are two types of symbols you can find on dice and cards. **O** means attack. **X** means defence.

Dice are the players. 5 of them play in the main squad, while the other 4 start on the bench.

Rolling a die moves a player between attack (when the die shows **O**) and defence (when it shows **X**). There are three types of dice. Strikers (red dice) have **OOOOO** and **XX** symbols on sides and engage more often in attack, Defenders (blue, **OOXXXX**) engage more often in defence, and Midfielders (green, **OOOXXX**) are balanced.

There's no single best squad. Picking more Strikers make your squad stronger in offence but weaker in defence. It all depends on the situation.

CARDS

Every turn, the Attacker selects a card from their hand or their build-up cards on the table. Build-up cards are previously successful attacks that remain in play.

Action Cards show 2 values: the Attacker's minimum launch requirement (●) and the Defender's minimum block requirement (X). A card succeeds if it's launched and not blocked.

To score a goal, the same Action Card must succeed twice. After the first success, the card is placed on the table. After the second success, it becomes a goal.

Drama Cards have a single target (● or X) the Attacker must roll to trigger the event. They cannot be defended. After being resolved, they are discarded regardless of success and never stay on the table.

DICE ACTIONS

When a card is selected, players use dice to meet Attacking and Defence Targets. Players perform up to three dice actions in following order:

1. Player MAY change the formation
2. Player MUST roll 5 dice
3. Player MAY adjust the roll

(1) Change the formation: You can do it only if you have at least one die on the bench. Swap any dice between squad and bench. After swapping, remove permanently one die from the bench. You always remove just one die, even if you swapped many dice.

(2) Roll 5 dice: Take your current 5-dice squad and roll. If you don't meet the Attacking/Defence Target, you have one extra step to adjust (see next page →).

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Adjust the roll: Reroll dice to adjust your players by doing one of the following:

1. Reroll all 5 dice again, or
2. Reroll 1-5 selected dice from your squad and discard 1 card (from hand or a build-up from the table - currently played card cannot be discarded.)

Selective rerolling is useful when some dice already show the symbols you need and you want to preserve them. You have higher chances to meet the target compared to full reroll, but you have to discard a card.

You may make only one adjustment roll during your dice actions. The same dice actions are available to the Attacker and the Defender.

TURN STRUCTURE

(1) DRAW

The Attacker draws a card from the deck, then selects one card:

1. a card from their hand, or
2. their build-up card from the table and discards another card (from hand or other from the table)

(2) ATTACK

The Attacker makes their dice actions. If the Attacker fails to roll the Attacking Target (○) shown on the card, they discard the played card and end the turn.

If the Attacker succeeds, and the card is

- an Action Card: proceed to (3) Defend,
- a Drama Card: execute the drama effect, discard the Drama Card, finish the turn.

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(3) DEFEND

The Defender makes their dice actions.

(4) RESOLVE

If the Defender meets the Defence Target (**X**), the Action is blocked and the card discarded. Otherwise, the Action succeeds, and if the card was:

1. played from hand: the card becomes a build-up card and stays on table
2. a build-up card from the table: score a goal (flip the card face down to mark it as a goal)

After the turn finishes, players switch sides.

To score a goal an Action Card needs to become a build-up card on the table first. Picking cards for discard is essential to convert build-up cards to goals.

DRAMA

To launch a Drama Card, the Attacker needs to meet the single target of the Drama card. The target may be defined as **O** or **X**.

When playing Drama Cards, the Attacker can change formation and adjust the roll, exactly like when playing Action Cards. However, Drama Cards cannot be defended. If successful, execute the effect and discard the card. If the card is successful, but no valid target exists, the card is discarded with no effect.

Drama Cards are always played from hand and discarded after resolving. They never become build-up cards on the table after being played and never convert to goals (though they can convert other cards to build-up cards and goals). Check all Drama Cards effects at the end of this rulebook.

END OF THE GAME

The match ends when both players cannot make more attacks (no valid moves are available).

If a player runs out of cards in hand but still has at least 2 build-up cards on the table, they must discard one of them and try to convert the other into a goal.

If a player has none or only 1 build-up card on the table and no cards in hand, they cannot attack. However, the remaining build-up card may still be discarded to perform an adjustment roll during defence.

A player who cannot attack skips their turns as the Attacker and focuses on defence, while the opposing player continues attacking until neither player can attack.

DRAWS

Extra time: If the match is tied, each player chooses exactly 5 cards from their own discard pile to form a new hand. Do not reshuffle decks and do not draw cards during extra time. Build-up cards on the table and goals scored during regular time remain in play. Players then continue taking turns until all cards are used up. Discarded dice do not return during extra time. Randomly determine the starting player

Penalty shootout: If the match is still tied after extra time, each player uses any 5 non-removed dice. For each shot, a player selects one die from their squad and rolls it: **O** scores a goal, while **X** is a miss. Players alternate shots one by one. Each die may only be used once until all 5 dice have been used. If the score is still tied after 5 shots, repeat the process.

ACTION CARDS

Each deck contains 10 Action Cards:

OOO vs **XXX**: Route One + Long Pass

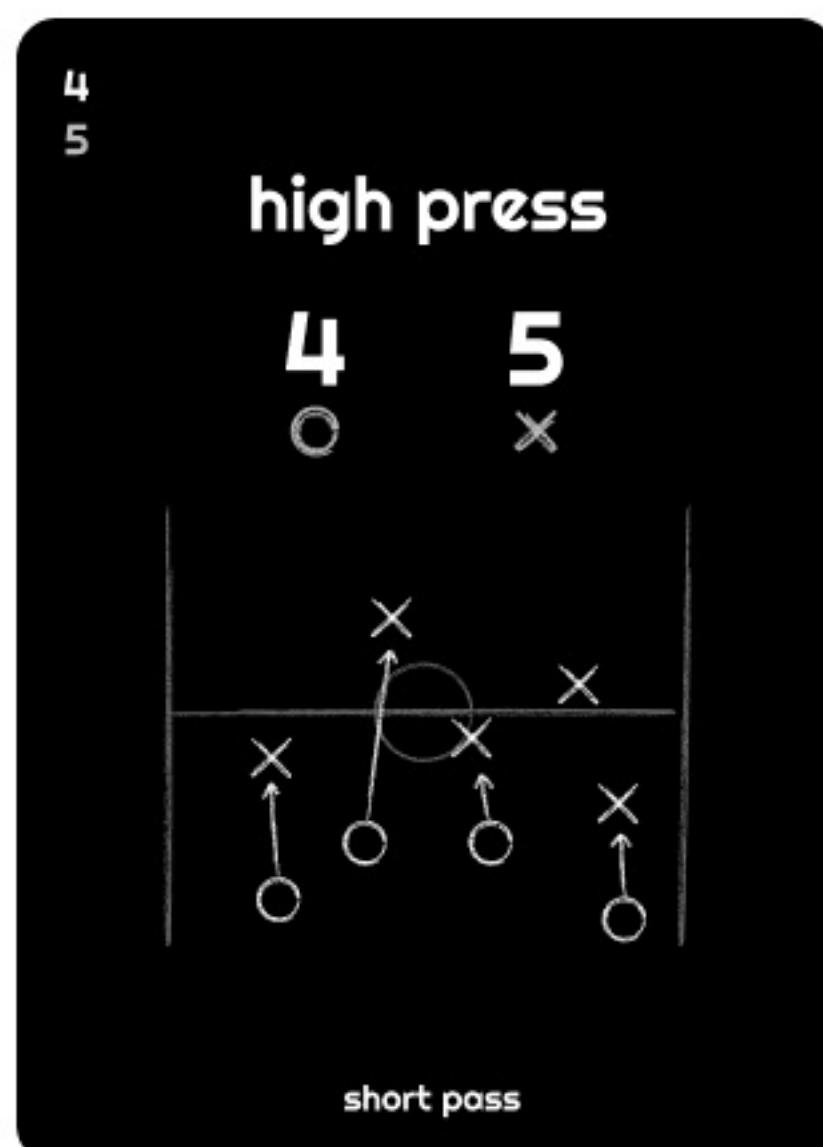
OOO vs **XXXX**: Recycling Position + Positional Play

OOO vs **XXXXX**: Distance Shot + Shot In The Box

OOOO vs **XXXXX**: High Pass + Overload

OO vs **XXXX**: Individual Action + Direct Pass

Each card has a flavour variant with identical targets.



DRAMA CARDS



Injury: OO

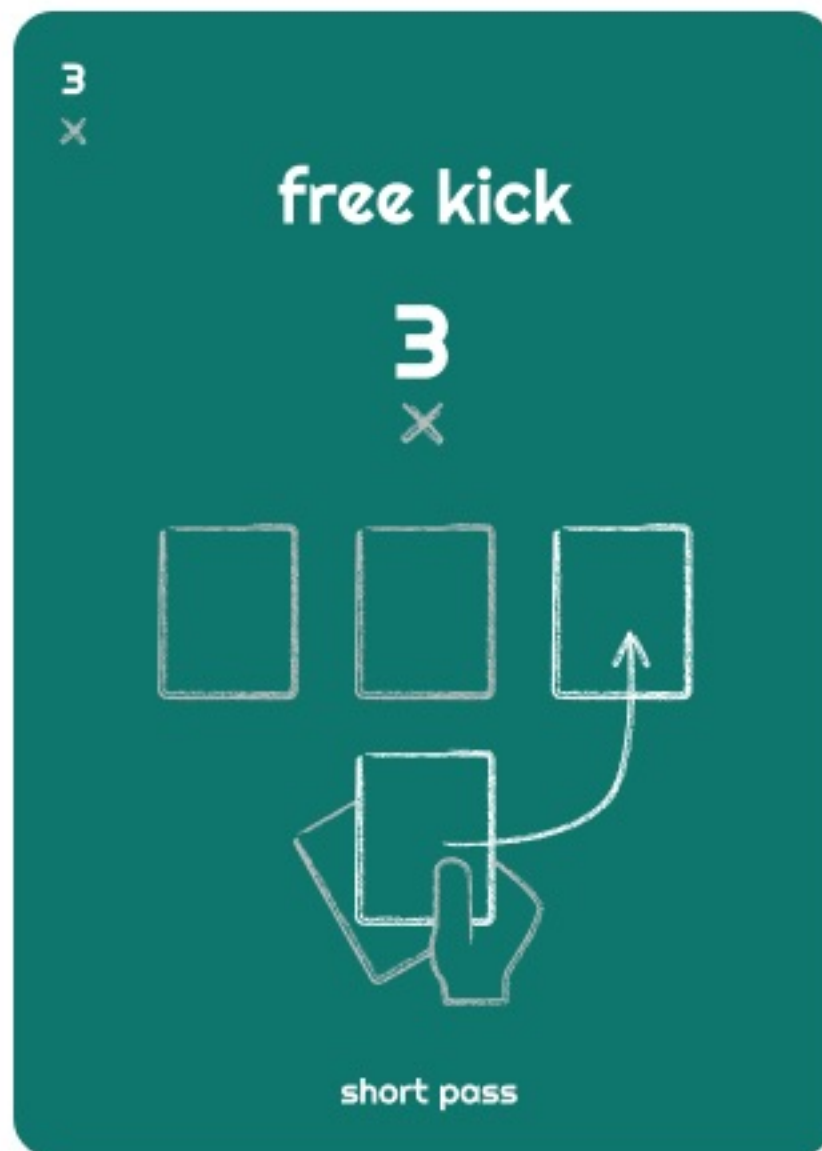
The opponent reveals their hand. The player who played the Drama Card chooses one card to discard from their hand.



Offside: OOO

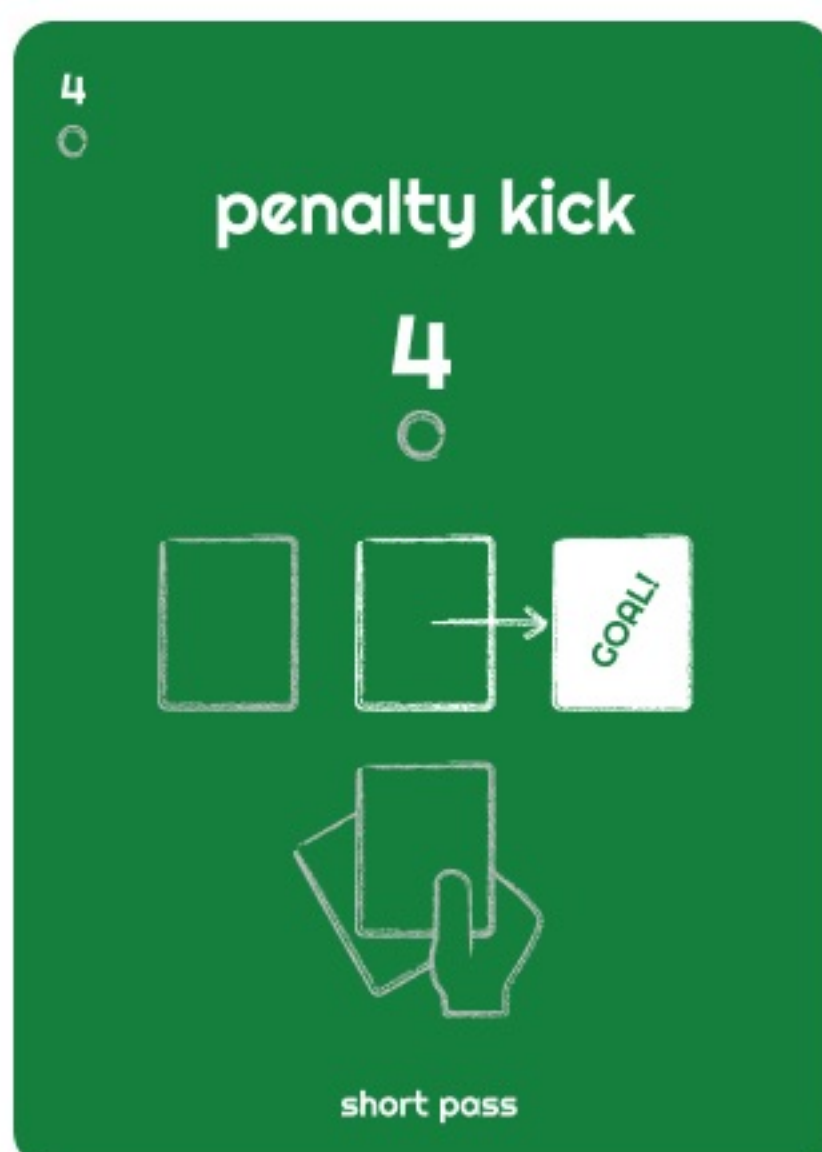
Return selected opponent's build-up card from the table to their hand.

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Free Kick: XXX

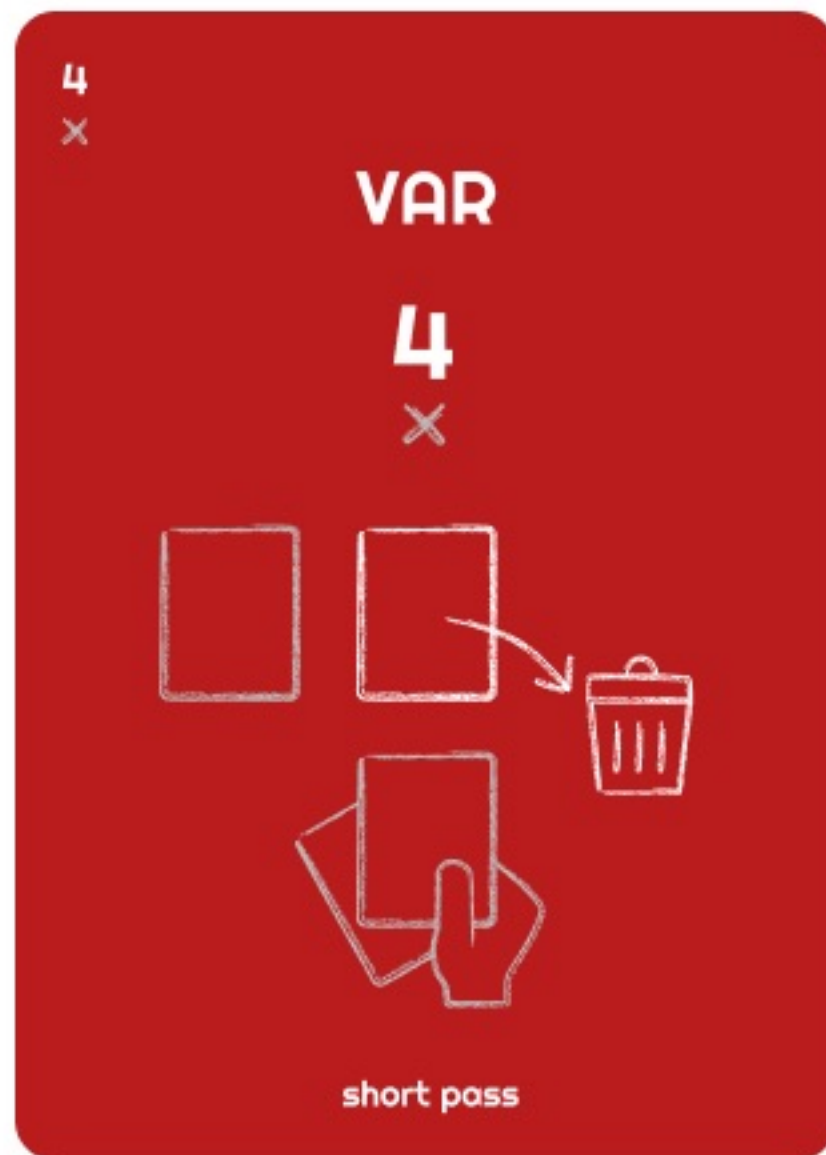
Put any Action Card from your hand on the table. This card becomes a build-up card without meeting targets. The card still needs to be converted to a goal in upcoming turns as normal.



Penalty Kick: OOOO

Convert one of your build-up cards from the table directly to a goal.

DRAMA CARDS



VAR: XXXX

Discard one card from the opponent's build-up cards on the table

You do not have to play Drama Cards. You can use them for discarding when attempting to convert build-up cards or for selective rerolls.

COOPERATIVE MODE

A team can be managed by 2 players at the same time. Instead of drawing 5 cards, each player draws 3 cards. One player acts as the Head Manager. The Head Manager controls the dice and makes all gameplay decisions.

After the opposing team finishes their turn, the Head Manager role switches to the other player on the team. This means each manager takes turns leading both attack and defence.

The Head Manager cannot use cards currently held by the other manager but can use all team's build-up cards to attempt scoring or for discarding. Managers may discuss strategy and talk about their cards, but all conversations are public and can be heard by the opposing team.

DECK PLAY MODE

In Deck Play Mode players do not have cards in hand but play cards one by one from the deck and use that card immediately - either to play from hand or discard to attempt converting a build-up card. When discarding cards for adjustment rolls they can discard a card from the top of the deck but they cannot see what card it is.

Some special rules need to be applied to some Drama Cards:

Injury: Inspect top 5 cards from the deck and pick one for discarding.

Offside: The selected card goes back to the top of the deck.

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Free Kick: Pick the next card from the deck, but if it's a Drama Card, keep picking until an Action Card is found and make it a build-up card. Put Drama Cards you found before back to the top of the deck. If you find no more Action Cards in the deck you just discard the Free Kick with no effect so pay attention to how many Action Cards are left.

Other rules remain unchanged.

Deck Play Mode can be unpredictable. If you reveal a Drama Card with no valid effect (for example, Penalty Kick while not having any build-up cards), the card is simply discarded with no effect. That's part of the game.

SOLO MODE

In solo mode you play against a Bot Manager. The bot uses random 6 (not 5!) dice in their squad. They never change the formation, never adjust their rolls, always roll once with 6 dice. The bot plays Deck Play Mode (as described before) and always makes a simple decision when the card is revealed:

1. If the card is a Drama Card, play it even if it has no effect. Human player picks affected cards.
2. If the bot has a build-up card on the table, discard the revealed card and attempt to convert.
3. If the bot has no build-up cards, play the revealed Action Card.

Bot uses random 5 cards for extra time and top offensive 5 dice for the penalty shootout, starting from Strikers, then Midfielders and Defenders.

KIDS MODE

Both managers pick 6 dice for their squad (like the Bot Manager in Solo Mode). Use Deck Play Mode with the following simplifications: no formation changing, no adjustment rolls. Just one roll. Exactly like a Bot in Solo Mode.

In this mode there's no hand management, no formation changes, no roll adjustment. Pick a card and make one simple decision: play it or discard it to attempt a conversion of a build-up card.

Other rules remain the same.

CAMPAIGN MODE

Play multiple matches in any mode, but after each match, players can remove 1 card from the opponents' discard pile before the next game. You discard from the opponent's deck, so try to make their game harder for them! Removed dice come back to play, and new squads are picked in the next game. The first player to win 4 games wins the campaign.

LEAGUE MODE

Play against multiple players in league mode, with each-vs-each mode, knock-out or a round robin style. This mode is easiest to play with multiple decks and dice, so bring your own deck and dice set!