



Pirates of the Spanish Main – Alternate Rules

Produced by WizKidz Inc., “Pirates of the Spanish MainTM” (along with the expansions) is an extremely novel age-of-sail skirmish game, featuring attractive, collectible plasticard ship models. The rules are kept relatively light and fun, making it suitable for young and old alike whilst still offering scope for tactical and strategic play. This does however mean that the original rules did not encompass any effect of the wind and so the bulk of the rules offered here attempt to address that, whilst still keeping to the game concepts and mechanics.

Section 1 – Wind and Movement

These rules for using wind speed and direction in PotSM are based upon several simple ideas it is useful to keep in mind:

- ☒ Lighter winds favour smaller, lighter vessels. The reason being a lighter wind may not be powerful enough to propel a heavier ship efficiently, despite its greater sail.
- ☒ Stronger winds favour larger, heavier vessels. The reason being larger vessels with more sail can take greater advantage and ride rougher seas better than a smaller vessel.
- ☒ Lighter vessels are more maneuverable and therefore able to sail closer to the wind – larger, heavier ships are less maneuverable and are less efficient at tacking across the wind.

Move Ranking (MR)

Each vessel has a basic starting move profile, as listed on its card. The ranking of these profiles, along with any intermediates is listed below. The basic Movement Ranking may be modified by crew or other effects.

Movement Ranking Table

Rank	Move	Representative Move Distance
0	-	
1	L-S	
2	S	
3	L	
4	S+S	
5	L+S	
6	L+L	
7	L+S+S	
8	L+L+S	
9	L+L+L	
10	L+L+S+S	
11	L+L+L+S	
12	L+L+L+L	

In the following rules, when a shift in a ships move ranking is called for refer to this table.

Masts and Move Ranking

- ☒ If a ship loses half or more its normal number of masts, reduce its basic Move Ranking by 1.
 - ☒ If a ship loses three quarters or more its normal number of masts then reduce its basic Move Ranking by 2.
- The minimum Movement Ranking a ship with at least 1 intact sail will ever have is 1, no matter how many modifiers are applied.

Derelicts will always have a Move Ranking of 0 unless an Oarsman is on board or some other modifier is applicable.

Ships and Movement

A ship may not turn by more than a right angle for any 1 movement – ie the movement card may not be placed at an angle of more than 90° to the ship's current direction.

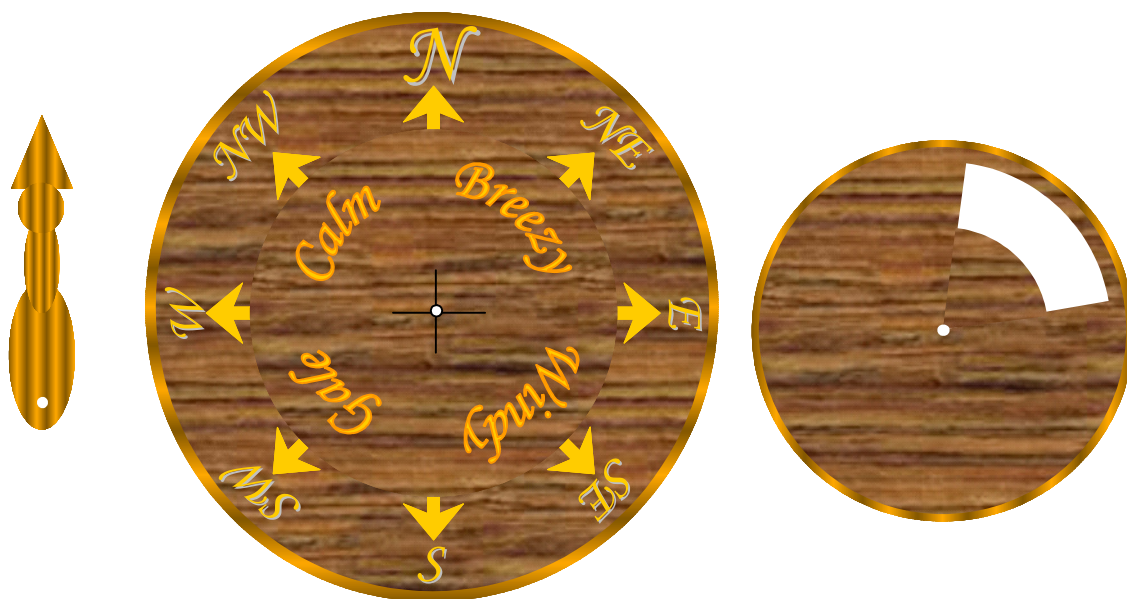
There is no 'Come about' action. A ship wishing to turn around must take at least 2 movements to do so.

Eg. A ship with a Move Ranking of **S+S** may turn a maximum of 90° with it's first **S** and then by a maximum of another 90° again for its second **S**.

Any vessel that elects not to move at all that is not docked or Anchored is considered as Drifting and will move at the current Move Ranking Wind Speed in the direction of the wind.

The Binnacle

Before playing PotSM and incorporating these rules you will need to construct a 'Binnacle'. This device remains fixed in position on the playing surface during play and allows you to keep track of the current wind speed and direction.



Cut out the above Binnacle parts, including the white space on the smaller dial and glue each of them to card. Then mount the smaller dial on the larger, and finally the arrow on top, all held together with a bent-over drawing pin through the centre (white) spot. The smaller dial is then used to track wind speed (Calm, Breezy, Windy, Gale) whilst the large arrow is used to track wind direction.

In play, place the Binnacle in an out-of-the-way place on the game board. Orientate it so 'North' is in an easily remembered direction – this position should not change during the game. It is a good idea to fix the Binnacle down during play.

After islands have been laid out and home islands chosen, but before ships are placed, determine the wind direction and speed at the start of play by rolling d6 for each (roll for direction first):

Wind Direction/Speed Table

Value	Initial Wind		D6, roll of 6=Wind Changes	
	Direction Result	Speed Result	Direction Result	Speed Result
0 or less	-	Calm	-	-
1	Roll again and minus 1 from the Wind Speed roll.	Breezy	Shift d3 degrees to Port.	Wind drops by 1 – shift dial 1 place left.
2	North	Breezy	Shift 1 degree to Port.	Wind drops by 1 – shift dial 1 place left.
3	East	Windy	Remain Steady.	Remain Steady
4	South	Windy	Remain Steady.	Remain Steady
5	West	Windy	Shift 1 degree to Starboard.	Wind increases by 1 – shift dial 1 place right.
6	Roll again and add 1 to the Wind Speed roll.	Windy	Shift d3 degrees to Starboard	Wind increases by 1 – shift dial 1 place right.
7 or more	-	Gale	-	-

Roll for direction until a result of 2-5 is obtained. All modifiers to the Speed roll are cumulative.

Wind direction is the direction the wind is blowing to – ie a Wind direction of North means the wind is blowing from South to North.

At the start of each turn, or start of the first player's turn, roll a D6. If the result is a 6 then roll for 'Wind Changes' for both wind speed and direction by rolling a D6 for each.

A shift of 1 degree is one section of the compass – Eg. 1 degree to Port would be from West to South East.

Although 1 is 'Wind drops' and 6 is 'Wind increases' it is possible to go from 'Calm' to 'Gale' for the former and 'Gale' to 'Calm' for the latter.

Wind and Move Ranking

Each turn, before each ship is moved, check its current direction relative to the current direction the wind is blowing. Then compare the number of masts the ship has with the current wind speed and the relative wind direction on the Wind Table to work out any Move Rank adjustment to the ship for this turn.

Wind Table

Ship # of Masts	Wind Conditions and Relative Direction											
	Calm – MR 0			Breezy – MR 1			Windy – MR 2			Gale – MR 3		
	Astern	Abeam	Against	Astern	Abeam	Against	Astern	Abeam	Against	Astern	Abeam	Against
1	-2	-3	-6	+2	-	-	+3	-	-	+1	-	-2
2	-2	-4	-6	+1	-	-1	+2	-	-1	+1	-	-2
3	-3	-4	-6	+1	-1	-1	+1	-	-1	+2	+1	-3
4	-3	-4	-6	-	-1	-2	+1	-	-2	+2	+1	-3
5	-4	-4	-6	-	-1	-2	+1	-	-2	+3	+1	-3

- ✖ When the wind is Calm there is little even to stir the lightest sail and all ships are slowed. Lighter ships may be able to make the most of whatever air currents there are, but these will not be enough to make a difference to the heavier ships.
- ✖ In light, breezy conditions the smaller, lighter ships are able to make the most of the wind available, but heavier ships will not be able to make their best speed.
- ✖ Windy conditions with a good, strong wind are optimal for most ships. Lighter ships will skim across the waves with a favourable wind behind them.
- ✖ When a gale is blowing, lighter ships will have a hard time in the rougher seas and will be forced to reef their sails to avoid damage. The larger, heavier ships can weather these conditions much better and are able to fully utilize their greater extent of canvas.

Wind Astern means the current direction of the wind in relation to the ships heading (direction of intended movement) at the start of the turn is in its rear, Stern quarter. A ship with the wind in this direction is able to make top speed. The Stern Quarter of a ship is determined by a 45° line from either side of the ships centre line extending from the rear of the ship.

Wind Abeam means the current direction of the wind in relation to the ships heading (intended direction of movement) at the start of the turn is in its Port (left) or Starboard (right) quarter. The Port Quarter of a ship is determined by a 45° line from either side of the ships centre line extending from the front and rear of the ship on the Port (left) side. Reverse this for the Starboard Quarter.

Wind Against means the current direction of the wind in relation to the ships heading (intended direction of movement) at the start of the turn is from it's front, Bow quarter. The ship does not actually sail directly into the wind, but is forced to tack back and forth across it. Conditions that allow a ship to sail 'closer to the wind' mean its does not have to take as wide a tack and will slow it less. The Bow Quarter of a ship is determined by a 45° line from either side of the ships centre line extending from the front of the ship.

Move Rank modifiers for Wind Speed and relative direction only affect ships with 1 or more masts intact.

Each level of Wind Speed has its own associated Move Ranking – this is used to move derelicts and drifting vessels. Move them at the Move Ranking of the current Wind Speed in the current wind Direction. Any vessel that elects not to move at all that is not docked or Anchored is considered as Drifting.

Vessels with Oarsmen on board are still subject to this enforced movement, but may also move with their own Move Ranking due to the Oarsman. In this case always make the enforced movement last.

Anchoring

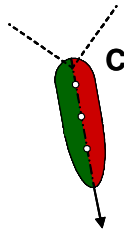
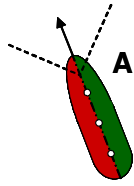
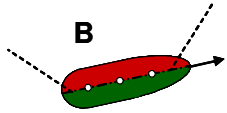
A ship may, instead of a taking a Move action, decide to drop anchor. If it does this then it will no longer be able to move at all until it performs a 'Weigh Anchor' action – it will not even drift due to wind.

An anchored vessel is always positioned so that its Bow faces into the current wind direction.

An Anchored ship must spend a turn making a 'Weigh Anchor' action before it may move.

Example of the Binnacle and the Effect of Wind Speed/Direction on Movement Ranking

3 Ships, 'A', 'B', and 'C' are all in play and about to move.



The current Wind speed is Breezy, and it is blowing from the North West to South East. Note that the ship's heading in all cases is the direction the ship intends to move, not the direction it is heading at the start of the turn.

Ship 'A' is currently heading Against the wind, since the Wind Direction is across its Bow Quarter.

Ship 'B' currently has the wind across its Port Quarter, and is therefore Abeam to the wind.

Ship 'C' is has the Wind blowing into its Stern Quarter and is therefore has the wind Astern.

Ship 'A' is a 3-masted ship with a basic Move Ranking of **L**.

Checking the table we find that sailing Against Breezy conditions for a 3-masted ship will drop its Move Ranking by 1, and so this turn it will move only **S** instead.

Ship 'B' is a 3-masted ship with a basic Move Ranking of **L+S**.

Checking the table we find that sailing with the wind Abeam in Breezy conditions for a 3-masted ship it will drop the ship's Move Ranking by 1, and so this turn it will move only **S+S**.

Ship 'C' is a 3-masted ship with a basic Move Ranking of **S+S**.

With the wind Astern in Breezy conditions we find that for a 3-masted ship its

Move Ranking will be increased by 1 and so this turn it will also be move **L+S**.

Move Ranking and Player Turn

Instead of allowing a player to move all their ships on their turn, you may instead decide to move ships by their Move Ranking score.

Ships with a higher Move Ranking move first, no matter who the controlling player is. A ship must move during its Move Ranking slot, it cannot defer.

It is easiest to use a ship's basic Movement Ranking, as printed on the ship's deck plate, without any modifiers for this, but you may include modifiers if you wish and all player's agree.

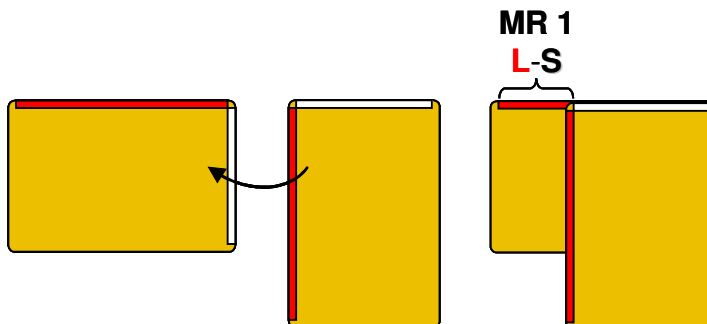
Where there is a tie for Move Ranking, Ships with a Captain may get priority and may decide to move before or after those without a Captain. Likewise, ships with a Helmsman may elect to move before or after other ships with the same MR ships that do not have a Helmsman.

If ships are still tied for MR, then they are considered to move simultaneously.

A turn is over once all players have moved all their ships.

Move Ranking 1

To determine the distance of a Move Rank of 1 (**L-S**) you will need 2 deck plate cards. Position the cards so the long red (**L**) and short (**S**) overlap, starting from the same corner. The small line of red that is left is the distance for a Move Rank of 1.



Section 2 – Canon Fire

Shooting

Firing and Movement

A ship may both move and fire its canons as part of a Move action – there is no separate Shoot action.

However, if a ship does not have a Captain on board (or similar ability allowing Move & Shoot as one action) then it must fire its Canons either at the very beginning of its turn, before any movement is made, or at the very end of its turn, after all movement has been made. Note that a ship may fire at both the beginning and end of its move if targets become eligible from different quarters.

Holding Fire

Any ship with a Captain on board may elect to fire any eligible canons at a target ship out of turn, during the target's movement. Waiting for the opportune moment to fire like this is called 'Holding Fire'.

Range

A player must declare that a ship is firing on a target before measuring the range or checking target eligibility. If the target proves to be out of range or otherwise obscured the canons are still deemed to have fired, the shots falling short, and as such Reload markers are still gained.

Canon range is independent, so if a target is at a range of **L** canon, but out of range of a **S**, then all canons would fire but only make rolls for the **L** canons.

Canon Positions

Canons may fire from Port, Starboard, Bow or Stern all in the same turn as long there is an eligible enemy in range.

Eg. A 3-masted ship is surrounded on all sides with an enemy ship to Port, Starboard, Bow and Stern.

The front mast may make a Canon shot against the enemy ship to Port, Starboard and Bow. The rear mast may make a canon shot against the enemy to Port, Starboard and Stern. The centre Mast may make a shot against both the Port and Starboard enemies. In total the ship would make 8 Shooting rolls: 3 to Port; 3 to Starboard; 1 to Stern; 1 to Bows.

When canons from a particular ship's quarter fire, all canons from that quarter fire. Note that all canons from a ship's quarter must fire at the same target.

Eg. A 3-masted ship with 2 potential target vessels to the Port quarter may only fire all 3 available canons at either vessel, (not 1 at 1 and 2 at the other, etc).

Reloading

After a ship has fired any of its canons, place a 'Reload' marker by that ship, against the side that fired. Print these Reload markers, glue to card and cut out.

Eg. If the ship fired any canons from the Port side then place the 'Reload' marker on the Port side of the ship.

If the ship fired from the Bow, place a 'Reload' marker by the Bow.

If a ship fired any canons from the Port, Starboard and Bow sections then place a 'Reload' marker by all 3 sections.

Note that a ship must place a 'Reload' marker by the appropriate section even if all the canons from that section could not actually fire at the target that turn.

Any 'Reload' markers are removed from a ship at the end of the player's next turn for that ship.

A ship may not fire canons from any section of a ship that has a 'Reload' marker by it.

Long Range

A player may decide to fire a ship's canons at Long Range.

If a canon has a White, **S** rating dice, then for a Long Range shot this is increased to **L**.

If a canon has a Red, **L** rating dice, then for a Long Range shot this is increased to **S+S**. This must be in a straight line from the mast to the target.

Increase the target number for all Long Range shots by 1.

Eg. If a canon has a rating of White Dice 3, then a Long Range shot would be up to **L** at 4.



Chainshot

Any shot from a canon may be declared as 'Chainshot' before the shot is made. If the Canon hits then the target ship's Move Ranking is reduced by 1, as well as being considered to have lost a Mast, for the purposes of calculating the Movement Ranking only.

The best way to signify this is to remove a mast from the target ship and then replace it but at an angle - the mast may still fire in subsequent turns when eligible to do so.

This damage may be repaired with a Repair action – return the mast to its normal, upright position – and the Move Ranking is returned to normal.

Chainshot will not sink a derelict.

*Eg. A 3-masted ship with a basic Move Ranking of **L+S** has already lost a single mast when it is hit by Chainshot. It is now considered to have lost a mast for the purposes of calculating Move Ranking and so as it will now have lost 2 masts its Move Ranking is reduced by 1. In addition, the hit by Chainshot also means another Move Ranking is lost. So until it is repaired, the ships basic Move Ranking drops by 2 to **L**.*

Grapeshot

Any shot from a canon may be declared as 'Grapeshot' before the shot is made. If the canon hits then no masts are destroyed on the target ship who must instead lose 1 Crew. A 'Grapeshot' hit will not sink a derelict.

Section 3 – Crew

Crew

These rules are suggested as balanced alternatives to replace the original rules.

Captains

A ship with a captain on board may fire its canons at any time during it's turn – before movement, after movement or during movement.

A ship with a Captain on board may 'Hold Fire'.

A ship with a Captain on board may make a 'Way Anchor' action before any Move action as part of the same action.

Oarsmen

The lowest Move Ranking a ship with an Oarsman on board may ever have is 2 (**S**).

Helmsmen

A ship with a Helmsman on board increases its basic Movement Ranking by 1 as long as the ship still has a mast intact.

Canoneers

Each Canoneer on board a ship allows 1 re-roll of a missed canon shot per turn. However, no canon shot roll may be re-rolled more than once.

Musketeers

These crew members are adept at shipboard hand-to-hand fighting, the equivalent of experienced marines. If you have a Musketeer on board a ship, then you may make one re-roll per turn for each and any Boarding Action dice – you must abide by the second roll, even if the first roll was better – for each Musketeer. You may wait to make the re-roll until after your opponent has rolled. You may only re-roll a Boarding Action dice once, no matter how many Musketeer Crew members are on board.

Musketeers may fire at **S**, value 3 (as originally stated), but if they score a hit on an enemy ship then they may only remove any Crew from that ship and do not destroy a mast.

Crib Card

The Crib Card details all the necessary information for including Wind in PotSM, as well as other useful facts and a ruler. Print out and glue the 2 sides back to back on a piece of card.