

SPACE DEFENDERS

A board game for 2 to 4 players by
Néstor Romeral Andrés

INTRODUCTION

Space Defenders is a tribute to the arcade games of the 70s and 80s. Up to four players must defend earth from hordes of attacking invaders from outer space by eliminating all of them before they reach the bottom row of the board.

EQUIPMENT

- Board (10×6 grid resembling an arcade game screen)
- 4 spaceships of different colours (the defenders)
- 4 tokens of the same colour as the defenders
- 4 bomb tokens
- One mine
- Carrying case
- 70 invaders (square tiles) in two types: space monsters (1 tile) and flying saucers (2 tiles). Monsters come in 5 colours depending on their value (number of eyes).



Monsters worth 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 points, and two halves of a flying saucer

SETUP

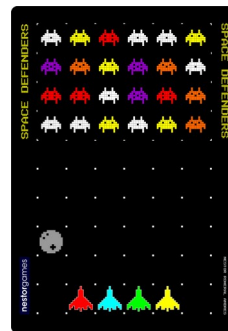
Place the board in the middle of the table. Put all the invaders in the carrying case. Randomly fill the four topmost rows of the board with face-up invader tiles; however, if you draw any half-saucer tiles, return them to the case.

Place as many bomb tokens as the number of players next to the board. Discard the rest.

Each player has an allocated colour (Yellow, Red, Blue, or Green) and takes the defender and token of her colour. Defenders' colours are not related to invaders' colours. Keep your token in front of you to remind everyone which player is which colour.

The player with the best arcade game anecdote goes first, and play goes anticlockwise from her. In turn order, place your invader on any empty space of the 1st row (bottom) of the board.

The last player also places the mine on the leftmost space of either the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th row.



Setup example

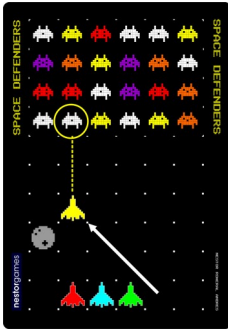
HOW TO PLAY

On your turn, do the following in order:

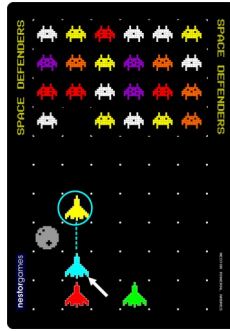
1. Optionally, you can **move** your defender in a straight line across empty spaces, either orthogonally or diagonally, ending on an empty space.
2. **Shoot** straight ahead (mandatory). Find the first thing your shot hits (only one applies):
 - **Space monster:** Take the monster and keep it face up in your reserve, for everyone to see. That tile is worth a number of points equal to its number of eyes (1 to 5).
 - **Undamaged flying saucer** (part of an intact 2-tile flying saucer — see *Flying Saucers*, page 2): Remove that tile from the game (do not put in your reserve; do not return it to the carrying case; do not put it next to the board).
 - **Damaged flying saucer** (a half saucer, no longer part of a 2-tile saucer — see *Flying Saucers*, page 2): Take the saucer half and keep it face up in your reserve. That tile is worth 10 points!¹
 - **Fellow defender:** Take the lowest-valued tile from that defender's reserve, if any, and keep it face up in yours (friendly fire, they say).
 - **Mine:** Do nothing.
3. Optionally, you can move the **mine** (see *Moving the Mine*, page 2).

In the rare case that nobody has hit anything during an entire round, the game ends (see *Game End* below).

¹ The first time a flying saucer is shot, no points are awarded. The player who shoots the second half gets the 10 points.



Example: Yellow moves diagonally and shoots a 5-point monster, taking it and placing it in her reserve. Her first monster!



Example: Blue moves diagonally and shoots the Yellow defender, stealing her 5-point monster tile and placing it in his reserve

Some things can happen at the end of your turn:

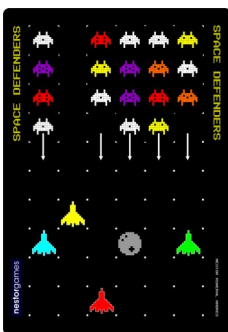
If, as a result of your action, at least one of the columns has been completely emptied of invaders, **Reinforce the Horde** (see below), if there are enough tiles in the carrying case to refill a whole row².

GAME END

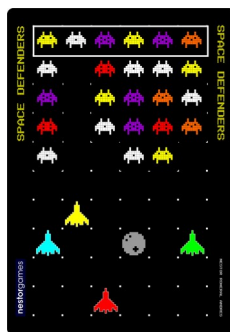
If, as a result of your action, the last invader has been removed from the board, **the game ends**. The player with most points in her reserve is the **winner**. In case of a tie, insert another coin³.

REINFORCING THE HORDE

In order to reinforce the horde, move all invaders one space downward, and fill the top row with random invaders from the carrying case, left-to-right, one space at a time. If you draw a flying saucer tile, see *Flying Saucers* below.



Example: Move all the invaders one space downward and fill the top row.



If an invader collides with a *defender* or the *mine*, **both** are removed from the game⁵. If the invader is a flying saucer, only the tile (half-saucer) that collided is removed.

If an invader reaches the bottom row of the board, Earth is invaded and **everybody loses!**⁶

Flying Saucers

If you draw a half-saucer tile from the case, there are two possibilities:

- If there is no matching tile next to the board, waiting to form the complete saucer, then place this new tile next to the board (waiting for its other half).
- If there is already a matching other-half-saucer tile next to the board from a previous draw, take both tiles, form a 2-tile saucer with them and place it in the leftmost 2 *empty* spaces of the top row. If this happens to be the last space, such that the 2-tile saucer doesn't fit, then keep the whole saucer aside for the next reinforcement, to be placed first. In the meantime, fill the last space with another monster from the carrying case, instead⁷.

MOVING THE MINE

When you move the mine, it moves 1 space to the right, wrapping from the right side of the board to the left,⁸ according to the following rules:

- It will never run into a defender.
- When it wraps from the right side to the left, you choose whether it comes in on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th row.⁹
- If it moves into an *invader*, remove both the mine and the invader from the game.⁹ If the invader is a flying saucer, the mine only destroys the tile with which it collided.

THE BOMB (optional)

On your turn, instead of moving and shooting, you can spend 10 points from your reserve (or more if your tiles can't add up to 10 exactly — you do not get any change back for overspending) to purchase a bomb: Discard the spent tiles and take a bomb token. Then pass your turn.

If you've purchased a bomb, you may use it in any subsequent turn when shooting an invader: Take all the invaders from the same row as the target, and discard the bomb token. Then push all invaders above that row one space towards the bottom of the board and **Reinforce the Horde** without moving the invaders downward again (as you've already done it).

If you hit a saucer with the bomb take 1 of its tiles and discard the other, if any.

You can't use the bomb on a row with a defender in it. You can only purchase and use 1 bomb per game.

² Four tiles will remain unused at the end of the game (70-6x11)

³ If you were born in 1990 or later, play again instead.

⁵ This rarely happens, but a combined multiplayer action (by firing in the same row and moving down invaders) can force the elimination of an excessively daring defender.

⁶ But what if I have the most points?? → You lose, too!!!

⁷ If you draw more saucer tiles during this process, keep them for later, as usual. Keep drawing tiles until you get a monster. If you exhaust the tiles without completely refilling the row just keep on playing. If this confuses players, just agree on how to deal with it. You just need to refill the last row and move on with your mission.

⁸ As if both sides of the board were connected.

⁹ Of course, you cannot start it in a space with a defender.

⁹ You do not collect the invader for points!

SPACE DEFENDERS

DEFENDER UPGRADES EXPANSION

by Néstor Romeral Andrés

INTRODUCTION

This expansion for Space Defenders allows defenders to be upgraded during play, just like in the arcade games of the 70s and 80s.

EQUIPMENT

- 4 spaceships in four colours (the defenders) with 2 cannons each (for dual fire).



- 4 spaceships in four colours (the defenders) with 3 cannons each (for triple fire).



- 4 rapid-fire tokens in four colours.



HOW TO PLAY

Keep the upgrade tokens aside.

During play, just as with the bomb, players can buy upgrade tokens as follows (remember that if your tiles can't add up to the price exactly — you do not get any change back for overspending):

Dual fire

Spend 10 points from your reserve to upgrade your defender to dual fire. Replace your defender with the dual-fire one. During play, your defender shoots twice in the shooting phase (you only move once at the start of your turn, then shoot twice). Remember to reinforce the horde if needed, after each shot.

Triple fire

If your defender has already been upgraded to dual fire, you can upgrade it again to triple fire (same procedure) by spending 10 points. During play, your defender shoots three times in the shooting phase (you only move once at the start of your turn, then shoot three times). Remember to reinforce the horde if needed, after each shot.

Rapid fire

Spend 15 points from your reserve to upgrade your defender to rapid fire. Take the rapid-fire token of your colour and place it before you. With rapid fire, you can shoot once mid-move, and then shoot again at the end. This means that your defender still moves in a straight line, but it can shoot once from any of the spaces it crosses during the move, and then shoot as normal after ending the move.

Combined

Notice that both dual fire and triple fire can be combined with rapid fire, providing the defender with massive firepower: The defender shoots two or three times mid-move, plus another two or three times after the move.