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(54) **BOARD GAMES WITH SELECTED PLAYER MOVERS AND METHODS FOR PLAYING SAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Board game components include first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, or alpha and beta movers, each mover including a base portion with differentiable character indicia, each beta mover further including a cover to selectively conceal the character indicia. A reference element for each player mover identifiably corresponds to the mover and includes a unique set of game attribute value indicia associated with the mover. Methods of game play provide that a group of movers is selected for each player for game play, of one alpha mover and a plurality of beta movers, the number and nature of which determined by a game attribute of the alpha mover. Another game attribute of the alpha mover may determine the number and nature of the game actions each player may perform during a turn. Covers may be used to conceal beta movers prior to their use in game play.
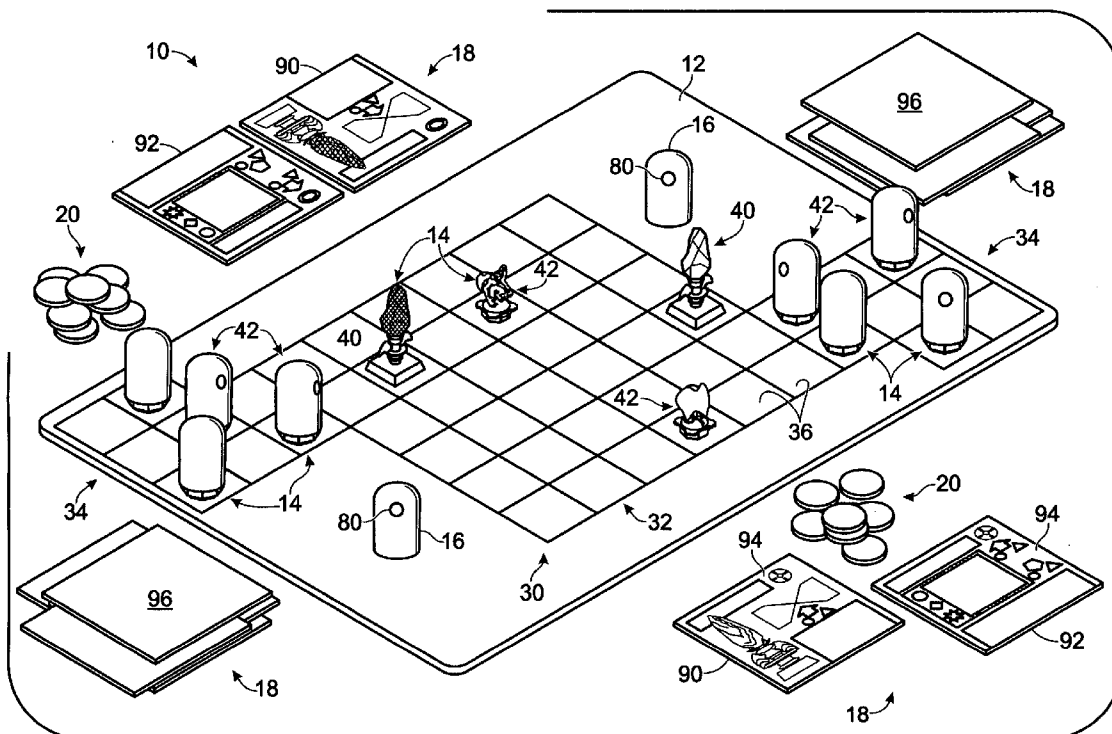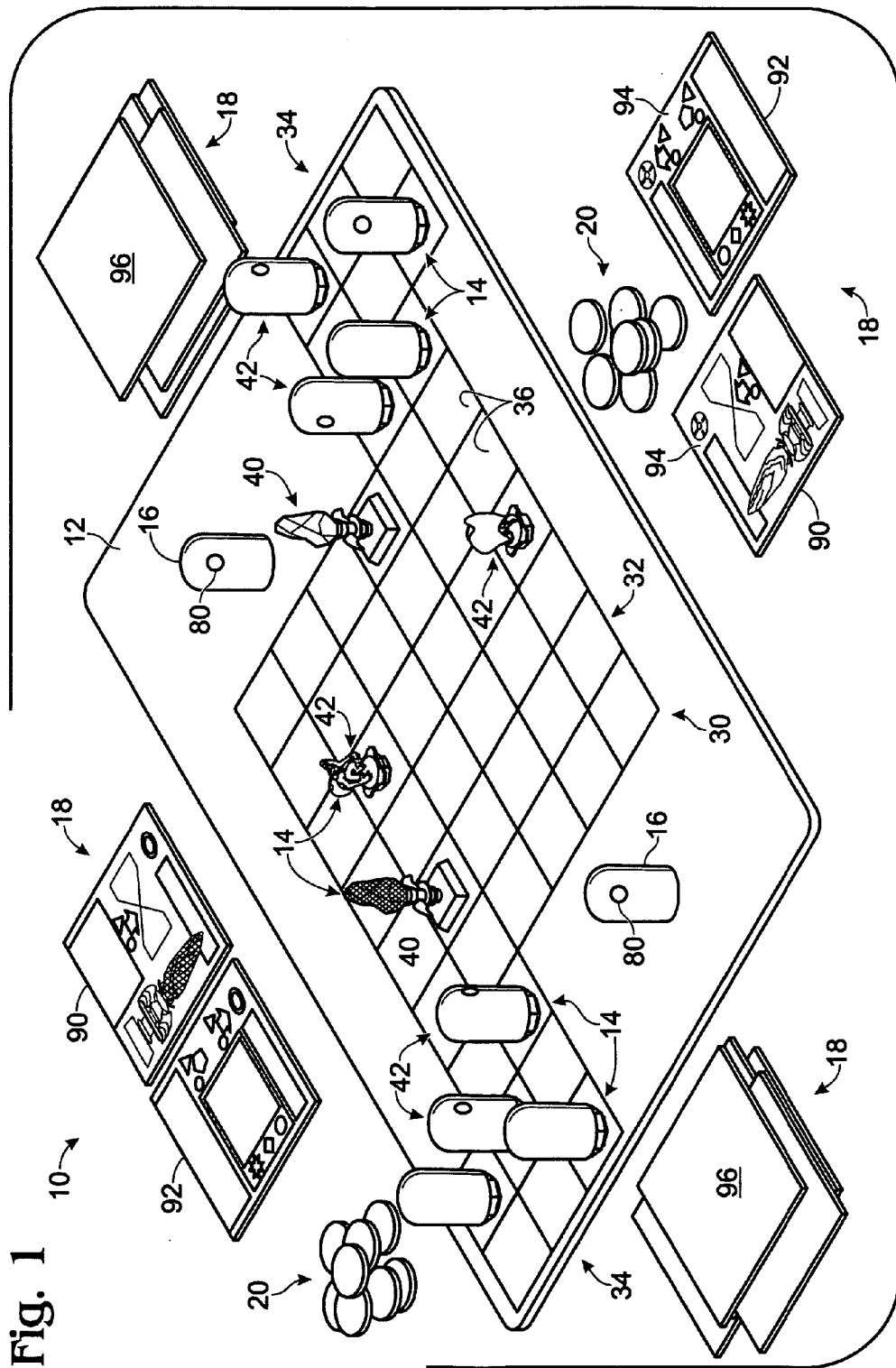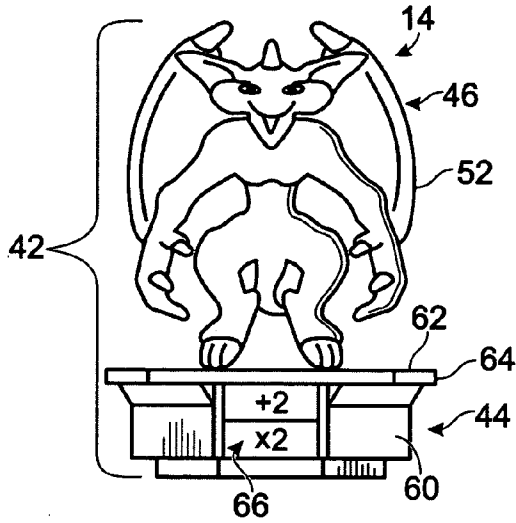
Fig. 1

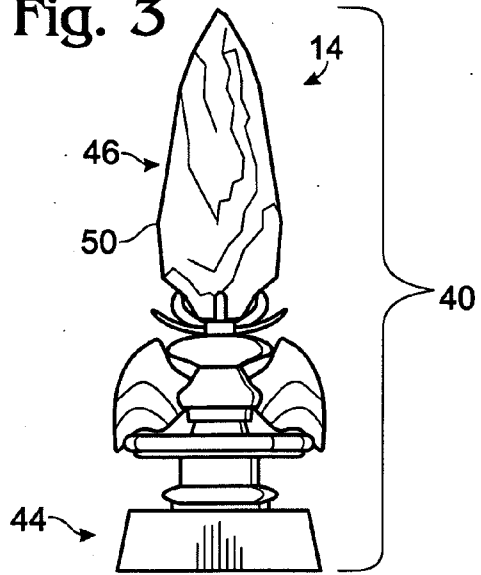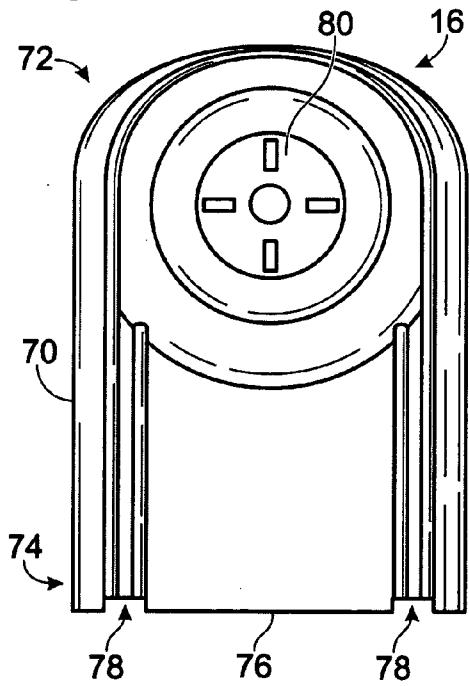Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

80

16

70

78

64

+2

x2

44

66

60

Fig. 7

80

16

70

44

Fig. 8

18

102

116

92

94

FERAL IMP

80

110 ③

112 ⑤

114 ☆3

100

①

120

△2

118

122

⊗

①

△2

126 124

128

Fig. 9

18

102

90 94

LIGHT KING
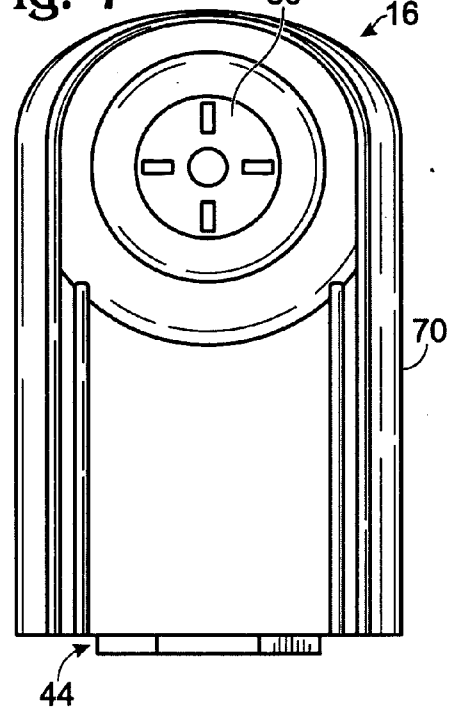
80
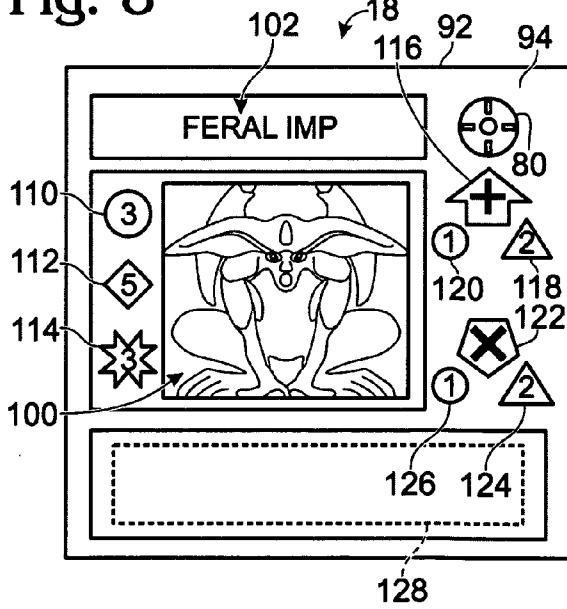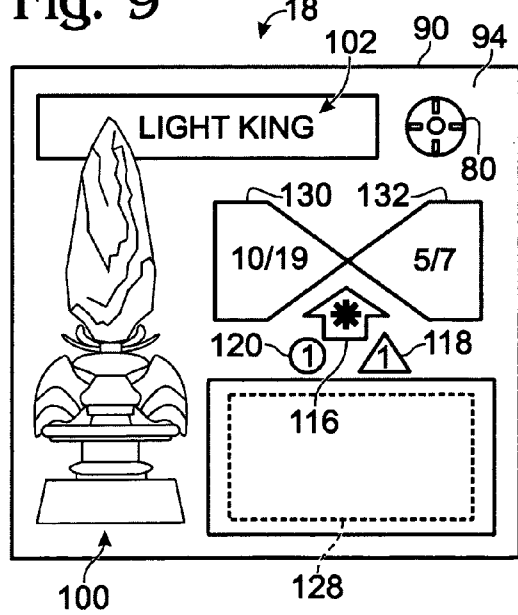
130 132

10/19 5/7

120 ① ✳ △1 118

116

100

128
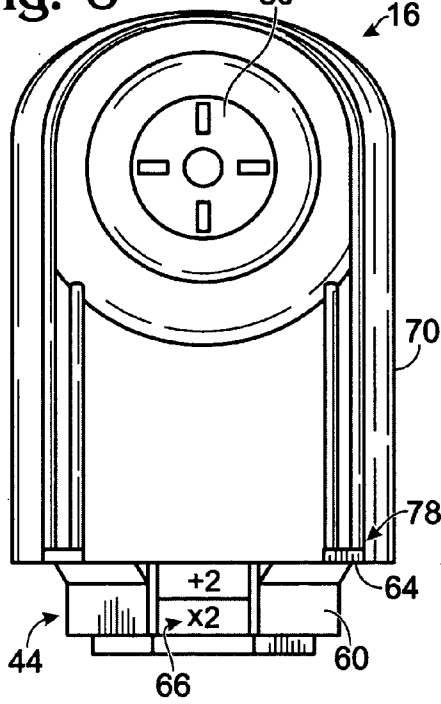
BOARD GAMES WITH SELECTED PLAYER MOVERS AND METHODS FOR PLAYING SAME

RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is based upon and claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) to the U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/687,368 entitled "Chess-Like Game" and filed on Jun. 3, 2005, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety for all purposes.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure is directed to board games, and more particularly to board games in which groups or teams of player movers are used for movement and simulated combat on a game board. Player movers may be provided in visually distinguishable sets, such as an alpha set and a beta set, each player mover of each set including a base portion having differentiable indicia, such as character indicia, game attribute indicia, and so forth. Game attribute indicia may optionally be represented on a reference element, such as a game card, for each player mover. Some player movers may further include removable covers each configured to selectively conceal indicia of the player mover, such as character indicia.

[0003] Some methods of game play may provide that a group of player movers is selected for each player prior to game play, composed of one mover from the alpha set (or "alpha mover") and a plurality of movers from the beta set (or "beta movers"). The number and nature of the beta movers may be determined by one or more game attributes of the selected alpha mover. In some methods, each player may use removable covers to conceal some player movers of the player's selected group, such as the beta player movers, prior to their use in game play. In some methods, a game attribute of the selected alpha mover may determine the number and nature of the game actions each player may perform during a turn. In some methods, the goal of game play may be to defeat an opponent's alpha mover. Such methods may provide that a player's alpha mover may be defeated either as a result of combat or as a result of defeating a number of the player's beta movers.

BACKGROUND

[0004] Examples of games wherein players use groups of player movers with different movement and/or combat capabilities on a game board include the traditional game of chess and chess variants, the Milton Bradley game Stratego, and also the disclosures of U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,322,077; 6,561,513; and 6,601,851; and U.S. Patent App. Pub. Nos. 2004/0090002, 2004/0239032, and 2005/0167914. Examples of games in which players select groups of player movers for game play can be found in collectible card games including the TALISMAN card game produced by Games Workshop, Inc., first introduced in 1983, and the MAGIC: THE GATHERING game produced by Wizards of the Coast, Inc., later described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,662,332 and U.S. Reissue Patent No. RE37,957. All of the aforementioned disclosures are incorporated herein by reference.

SUMMARY

[0005] Various embodiments of board games in which groups of player movers are used for movement and simulated combat on a game board are presented herein.

[0006] In some embodiments, a set of game components may include two visually distinguishable sets of player movers, such as a first set and a second set, each player mover of each set (alternatively referred to herein as alpha and beta player movers, or alpha and beta movers) including a base portion having differentiable indicia such as character indicia, game attribute indicia, and so forth.

[0007] In some embodiments, character indicia may consist of a sculpted figurine mounted to the base portion.

[0008] Game attribute indicia may represent a unique set of game attribute values associated with each player mover, and may be represented as numerical values, each value representing a different attribute of the player mover in game play. Game attributes may include movement attributes such as movement pattern, movement range, movement cost, and so forth; combat attributes such as attack pattern, attack range, damage and defense capabilities, and so forth; special abilities and/or rules specific to the player mover; and/or other attributes or characteristics relating to game play.

[0009] The number and nature of game attributes may differ by set; for example, alpha movers may have some game attributes that beta movers do not, and vice versa. Also, the values corresponding to each attribute may differ among player movers of a set, such that each player mover may have a unique set of game attribute value indicia.

[0010] Game attribute value indicia for each player mover may be represented on the player mover, and/or on a reference element, such as a game card, that identifiably corresponds to the player mover. In some embodiments, the reference element corresponding to each player mover is a game card that includes a representation of the player mover and the unique set of game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover. In such embodiments, each beta player mover also includes some game attribute value indicia, represented by a small group of numbers and symbols located on the base portion of the beta mover.

[0011] Some player movers may further include covers, each cover configured to selectively conceal indicia of the player mover, such as character indicia. In some embodiments, each beta player mover may include a cover configured to be removably attachable to the base portion of the player mover, concealing the character indicia when attached. In such embodiments, the removable cover of each beta mover may be removably attachable to the base portion of any beta mover, rendering a group of covered beta player movers substantially indistinguishable from each other. In embodiments in which the base portion of the beta player mover includes game attribute indicia, such indicia may be visible when the character indicia of the player mover is concealed.

[0012] In some embodiments, each player mover may be associated with a category or suit. The reference element for the player mover may include categorizational indicia indicating the category of the player mover. In such embodiments, the removable covers for the beta player movers may also include such categorizational indicia, such that a group of covered player movers may be distinguishable from each other only by the categorizational indicia of the covers.

[0013] A game board suitable for use with the player movers may include an array of movement spaces, which may be arranged in any configuration suitable for movement

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of, and simulated combat among, the player movers. For example, movement spaces may be arranged in a checkerboard-like grid, upon which each player's group of pieces may be placed in an initial configuration. In some embodiments, a game board may include a grid of movement spaces representing a common area, and adjacent groups of movement spaces representing starting areas for each player. In such embodiments, each player may initially place his or her group of player movers in a designated starting area.

[0014] Some methods of game play may provide that a group of player movers is selected for each player prior to game play, the group consisting of one alpha player mover and a plurality of beta player movers, the number and nature of the beta movers determined by one or more game attributes of the selected alpha mover. For example, the set of game attribute value indicia for each alpha mover may include a numerical value representing a "selection value" for the alpha mover. The set of game attribute value indicia for each beta mover may include a numerical value representing a "selection cost" for the beta mover. Thus, the group of player movers may be selected such that the selection costs of the beta movers may sum to the selection value of the alpha mover.

[0015] In some embodiments, the available pool of player movers from which a group of player movers is selected for game play may be as provided with a preassembled game set, such that a group of player movers may be preselected for each of a number of players of the game, according to the selection technique described above. Optionally, sets of one or more player movers may be made available for purchase separately from those available in a preassembled game set, such that each player may purchase, trade, or otherwise obtain a personal collection of player movers. In such embodiments, a player may select a different group of player movers for each game.

[0016] In some methods of game play, pre-game preparation may also include the use of removable covers to conceal some player movers of a selected group, such as the beta movers. In such methods, the alpha mover and the concealed beta movers of a player's group may be placed initially in a designated starting area on a game board, and each beta mover may remain concealed until the player moves the mover onto the common area or otherwise brings the mover into play, at which point the cover is removed and the character indicia of the beta mover is revealed. As such, initial concealment of some of the player movers may incorporate a strategic element into game play because a player's use of the player mover, or its position in an initial configuration, may not be evident to an opponent until the player mover is brought into play.

[0017] In embodiments in which each player selects a group of player movers from a personal collection of player movers, not only the initial arrangement of each player's beta movers, but also their identities, may be hidden from opponents, by concealing character indicia of the beta movers prior to being brought into play. In such embodiments, a method may provide that a reference element for a concealed beta mover is revealed only upon bringing the beta mover into play.

[0018] In embodiments in which some of the game attribute value indicia of the beta movers is visible when the character indicia is concealed, the covered player movers may be turned so that the indicia is not visible to an opponent, so that the visible indicia provide a reference or reminder to the player. Optionally, such indicia may be visible by an opponent, in which case an opponent may attempt to deduce the identity of the concealed player mover. In embodiments in which each cover includes categorizational indicia, such indicia may provide additional information to an opponent regarding the identity, or character indicia, of the beta mover concealed by the cover.

[0019] In some methods, players may execute turns in sequence to perform a number of game actions, the number and nature of which may be determined by one or more game attributes of the player's alpha mover. For example, the set of game attribute value indicia for each alpha mover may include a numerical value representing an "action value." The set of game attribute value indicia for each player mover may include various numerical values representing "action costs" for game actions available for each player mover. Thus, the action value of a player's alpha mover may represent a limit for the game actions that may be performed with the player's player movers during a turn. In other words, game actions may be performed such that the action costs of the various game actions performed in a player's turn sum to a value less than or equal to the action value of the player's alpha mover. Such game actions may include bringing a player mover into play by moving it from a starting area to the common area (and revealing the character indicia, if the player mover is a beta mover), moving a player mover on the common area, attacking an opponent's player mover, and so forth.

[0020] In some methods, during game play, each player's player movers may engage in combat with an opponent's player movers under certain conditions. For example, the set of game attribute value indicia for a player mover may include indicia indicating an attack range, such as a range of movement spaces relative to the player mover. If an opponent's player mover is within a player mover's attack range, the player mover may "attack," or engage the enemy's mover in combat. Combat may be resolved according to a system of rules, and may relate to game attribute value indicia representing each player mover's attributes in combat, such as damage and defense attributes. For example, each player's set of game attribute value indicia may include a damage value, which may indicate a number of "points" or units of damage that a player mover inflicts to the other player mover during combat. When a player mover has sustained a predetermined amount of damage, such as represented by a defense value associated with the player mover, it may be considered defeated or destroyed, and removed from play.

[0021] In some methods, the goal of game play may be to defeat an opponent's alpha mover. Such methods may provide that a player's alpha mover may be defeated either as a result of combat or as a result of defeating a number of the player's beta movers. For example, each player's alpha mover may also have a defense value that is reduced by a predetermined amount when one of the player's beta movers is defeated.

[0022] A set of game rules may incorporate aspects of the described methods of game play, and may specify additional restrictions or game features. For example, a set of rules may provide that a player's alpha mover may not attack other

player movers, but that it may itself be attacked by an opponent's beta movers. As another example, a set of rules may provide that a player's group of player movers may include a limited or unrestricted number of copies of a beta mover, that only beta movers having the same categorizational indicia of the alpha mover may be selected, that a player mover may be attacked before it has been brought into play, and so forth.

[0023] The board games and methods of the present disclosure will be understood more readily after a consideration of the drawings and the Detailed Description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] FIG. 1 is an isometric view showing various exemplary components of a board game, including a game board with a common area, upon which is shown two alpha player movers and two beta player movers. Adjacent the common area are two starting areas, each with a plurality of covered beta movers arranged thereon. Two covers are also shown on the game board, and a plurality of reference elements and tokens are shown adjacent the game board.

[0025] FIG. 2 is an elevation view of one of the beta movers of FIG. 1, which includes character indicia in the form of a sculpted figurine, representing a creature, mounted to a base portion. The base portion also includes game attribute value indicia in the form of numbers and symbols.

[0026] FIG. 3 is an elevation view of one of the alpha movers of FIG. 1, which includes character indicia in the form of a sculpted figurine, resembling a crystal, mounted to a base portion.

[0027] FIG. 4 is an elevation view of one of the removable covers for a beta mover shown in FIG. 1. The cover includes categorizational indicia in the form of a symbol.

[0028] FIG. 5 is a three-dimensional view showing how the cover of FIG. 4 is removably attachable to the base portion of the beta mover of FIG. 2.

[0029] FIG. 6 is an elevation view of the beta mover of FIG. 2 with a cover attached to the base portion, concealing the character indicia. The game attribute value indicia on the base portion is visible.

[0030] FIG. 7 is an elevation view of a beta mover with an alternative embodiment of a cover attached to the base portion, which conceals both the character indicia and the game attribute value indicia of the player mover.

[0031] FIGS. 8 and 9 are top views of exemplary reference elements for two player movers, shown as cards. The reference element shown in FIG. 8 corresponds to the beta mover of FIG. 2, and the reference element shown in FIG. 9 corresponds to the alpha mover of FIG. 3. Each reference element is shown to include a representation of the sculpted figurine of the player mover to which the reference element corresponds, and a set of game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0032] Referring to FIG. 1, exemplary components of a board game 10 are shown to include a game board 12, a plurality of player movers 14, covers 16, a plurality of reference elements 18, and tokens 20. Player movers 14 are shown positioned on various areas of the game board; thus, the illustration presented in FIG. 1 may represent a game in progress between two players, each of whom controls a group of player movers.

[0033] The game board 12 can be seen to include a playing surface 30 partitioned into three contiguous areas: a centrally located common area 32 and two starting areas 34 located generally to either side of common area 32. The playing surface (the common area and the starting areas) are divided into a plurality of square-shaped movement spaces 36 arranged in a grid-like configuration. In some methods of game play, each of two opposing groups of player movers 14 may be placed initially on movement spaces 36 of one of starting areas 34, and then moved into common area 32.

[0034] As shown, common area 32 includes thirty-six movement spaces 36 (arranged in a 6×6 grid), and each starting area 34 includes eight movement spaces 36 (arranged substantially in a 3×3 grid). Two of the movement spaces of each starting area abut two movement spaces in opposing corners of the common area. However, some embodiments may have common and/or starting areas with more or fewer movement spaces, which may be square-shaped or otherwise, and arranged in a different configuration.

[0035] Also, as shown, game board 12 is configured to accommodate two teams, or groups, of player movers, one group for each starting area 34. However, embodiments may have any number of starting areas, and/or starting areas that are not partitioned separately from the common area.

[0036] Arranged on the game board are several player movers 14. Each group of player movers consists of player movers from first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, also referred to herein for convenience and clarity as an "alpha set" and a "beta set." The movers of each set are also referred to herein as "alpha player movers" or "alpha movers" and "beta player movers" or "beta movers." Each group of player movers is shown to include one alpha mover 40 and a plurality of beta movers 42, the identities of some of which are shown concealed by covers 16 attached to the player movers.

[0037] As shown in greater detail in FIGS. 2 and 3, each player mover 14 is shown to include a base portion 44 having differentiable character indicia indicated thereon, shown as a sculpted figurine 46. More specifically, each alpha mover 40 includes a sculpted figurine in the form of a colored, shaped crystal 50, and each beta mover 42 includes a sculpted figurine in the form of a creature or monster 52.

[0038] As such, in the illustrated embodiment, player movers of each set are visually distinguishable from player movers of the other set: all alpha movers of the exemplary embodiment resemble differently colored, shaped crystals, and all beta movers resemble different creatures or monsters. Additionally, the player movers vary by height.

[0039] Further, the base portions of each type of player mover are configured differently. With additional reference to FIG. 5, base portion 44 of beta mover 42 is shown to include a multi-sided vertical wall 60, at the upper end of which is a horizontally disposed surface 62. A plurality of shaped tabs or fins 64 radiate outwardly from surface 62. As explained in more detail below, the base portions of the beta

movers, specifically fins **64**, are adapted to interfit with covers **16**, whereas the base portions of the alpha movers are not. Also, one side of wall **60** is shown to include a set of indicia **66** in the form of a group of symbols and numbers. Set of indicia **66** may include some of the game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover, as explained in greater detail below.

[0040] Thus, each alpha mover is differentiable from each other alpha mover by color, and each beta mover is differentiable from each other beta mover by the creature or monster represented by the sculpted figurine. Also, player movers of each set are visually distinguishable from player movers of the other set by means of a variety of visual and structural features as detailed above. However, the various types of player movers **14** may have any desired form, such as figurines, tokens, chips, tiles, markers, and so forth, and the character indicia of each player mover may consist of any suitable indicia such as symbols, images, text, icons, three-dimensional structure, and so forth, or any combination thereof, to indicate a differentiable character. In each embodiment, player movers of each set are visually distinguishable from player movers of the other set, and player movers of each set are differentiable from other player movers of the set.

[0041] An exemplary cover **16** is shown in more detail in **FIGS. 4 and 5** to have a generally cylindrically shaped wall **70** with a rounded top portion **72** and an open bottom portion **74** defined by a bottom edge **76**. Wall **70** defines an interior cavity sized to accommodate a sculpted figurine of a beta mover (i.e., monster **52**), as indicated in **FIG. 5**, and bottom edge **76** includes a plurality of notches **78**. Wall **70** further includes one of several categorizational indicia **80**, such as the stylized cross and circle design shown.

[0042] As shown in **FIGS. 5 and 6**, cover **16** is adapted to selectively conceal the character indicia of a beta mover by covering the sculpted figurine **46** (i.e., monster **52**) of a beta mover. The cover is removably attachable to the base portion of the beta mover by means of fins **64** and notches **78**, which interfit when the cover is placed on the base portion in a snap-fit relationship. In the illustrated embodiment, the nature of the snap-fit relationship is such that the player mover may be moved around, such as on the game board, by a user grasping the wall **70** of the cover attached to the base portion of the player mover. However, any suitable manner of interfit may be used.

[0043] Also, as shown in **FIGS. 5 and 6**, when cover **16** is attached to a beta mover, categorizational indicia **80** is visible, as is set of indicia **66**. As described in greater detail below, each player mover may be associated with one of a predetermined number of categories, or suits, each of which may be represented with categorizational indicia such as a symbol, icon, and so forth. In the illustrated configuration, the covers including different categorizational indicia are distinguishable from each other only by categorizational indicia, but are otherwise substantially identical.

[0044] As such, in the illustrated embodiment, visible categorizational indicia **80** on the cover **16** may provide a hint as to the identity of the beta mover concealed therein, such as to an opponent, without revealing the character indicia of the beta mover. Although not shown, categorizational indicia **80** is disposed on cover **16** on opposing sides of wall **70**, such that categorizational indicia **80** is visible

from any direction. In other embodiments, however, categorizational indicia **80** may be disposed on cover **16** to be visible from only one position, for example so that a player controlling the covered player mover may see the categorizational indicia **80**, but an opponent may not. Such a configuration may be useful to provide a player with a visual reminder of the identity of the concealed player mover without having to remove the cover.

[0045] Also, the exemplary cover is illustrated to be attached to the base portion of any beta mover. In other embodiments, however, a cover having a particular categorizational indicia may be configured to be removably attached only to a beta mover of the same category, or each cover may be configured only to fit one beta mover exclusively.

[0046] Unlike categorizational indicia **80** of cover **16**, the set of indicia **66** is shown to be disposed on vertical wall **60** of the base portion of the player mover to be visible from only one direction. As such, in the illustrated embodiment, concealed player movers may be placed on game board **10** so that the categorizational indicia **80** associated with each covered player mover is visible to both players, but each covered player mover may be turned such that the set of indicia **66** on the base portion is visible only to the player who controls the player mover. As with categorizational indicia **80**, set of indicia **66** may serve as a reminder to the player of the identity of the concealed player mover. However, an alternative embodiment of a cover **16** in **FIG. 7** is shown to be configured to conceal set of indicia **66** when attached to the base portion **44** of a beta mover.

[0047] Each player mover is associated with a unique set of game attributes, each representing a different attribute of the player mover in game play, such as related to combat attributes, movement attributes, and so forth. Such attributes may be represented in any suitable manner, such as indicia indicating numerical values for each of a set of attributes, and may be represented in any suitable configuration, such as indicia marked on the player movers, presented in a set of rules that may accompany the game, and/or on reference cards or similar elements that may accompany the game.

[0048] For example, in the illustrated embodiment, all of the game attributes of each player mover are presented as indicia on a reference element **18** in the form of a card that identifiably corresponds to the player mover. Additionally, some game attribute value indicia also appear as set of indicia **66** on the base portion of beta movers **42**. As such, the reference elements may serve to provide players with a visual reference of the attributes of each player piece, which may be more convenient to use during game play than finding the information in a set of game rules, recalling the attributes for a player mover from memory, or determining such attributes by examining indicia on the player mover itself, especially if such activity would delay or otherwise interfere with game play.

[0049] As shown in **FIG. 1** and **FIGS. 8 and 9**, reference elements **18** may be alpha reference elements **90** or beta reference elements **92**, each corresponding to an alpha mover or a beta mover. Reference elements **18** are shown as cards, and are thus also referred to herein as "alpha cards" and "beta cards." Each includes a front side **94** and a back side **96**, the front side of each of which is marked with a set of indicia further described below. Back sides **96** are shown

to be unmarked, and thus indistinguishable, but may be marked with any manner of suitable indicia, such as decorative or trade dress indicia, and so forth, such that the reference elements do not indicate the player movers with which they correspond, when viewed from the back side.

[0050] In **FIG. 8**, the front side **94** of beta card **92** is shown to include a number of different indicia indicating various attributes of the beta mover represented by the reference element, including a set of game attribute value indicia, identification indicia, and so forth. In terms of identification indicia, the beta card identifiably corresponds to a beta mover in that the beta card includes a graphical image **100** of the beta mover represented, as well as a player mover name **102** of the beta mover. The name and image may be literal or fanciful, as desired and/or appropriate to a theme or backstory upon which the game may be based, for example if the various sculpted figurines represent characters or creatures from a film, book, or other publication. Other embodiments may include alternative or additional indicia adapted to establish an identifiable correspondence with the player mover.

[0051] In terms of game attribute value indicia, the beta card includes a number of numerical values and symbols, including selection cost indicia **110**, defense value indicia **112**, damage value indicia **114**, movement pattern indicia **116**, movement range indicia **118**, movement cost indicia **120**, attack pattern indicia **122**, attack range indicia **124**, attack cost indicia **126**, and special ability indicia **128**. In the illustrated embodiment, most of the indicia appear as a number or symbol marked inside of a geometric shape. The geometric shape may serve to provide a quick reference for players, such as by creating visual associations with certain types of indicia.

[0052] For example, each beta mover includes movement pattern indicia **116**, but the actual symbol representing the movement pattern may vary, such as to indicate that one beta player mover may have a different movement pattern from another. However, including the symbol within a geometric shape (shown on the exemplary beta card as an arrow shape) that is consistent among player movers may assist players in finding the information that corresponds to the player mover's movement pattern, by looking for the geometric shape associated with the information. However, other embodiments may include such indicia in a different configuration, such as each type of indicia being associated with a different color, font, and so forth.

[0053] In **FIG. 9**, the front side **94** of alpha card **90** is shown to include a number of different indicia indicating various attributes of the alpha mover represented by the reference element, including identification indicia, shown as a graphical image **100** and a player mover name **102**, and a set of game attribute value indicia. Like beta card **92**, alpha card **90** includes categorizational indicia **80**, movement pattern indicia **116**, movement range indicia **118**, movement cost indicia **120**, and special ability indicia **128**. However, beta cards may include game attribute value indicia that the alpha cards do not, to indicate that alpha movers have different game attributes than beta movers. For example, the alpha cards of the illustrated embodiments do not include indicia related to attack attributes, indicating that alpha movers are not used in game play to attack other player movers.

[0054] Conversely, alpha cards may include game attribute value indicia that the beta cards do not. As shown in **FIG. 9**, alpha card **90** includes selection value indicia **130** and action value indicia **132**. More specifically, selection value indicia **130** and action value indicia **132** each include two numerical values, which may represent alternative values of each of the aforementioned game attributes. Some methods of game play may provide that one set of values may be used according to a first set of rules, such as to play a "basic" game, and that the other set of values may be used according to a second set of rules, such as to play an "advanced" game.

[0055] As explained in greater detail below, the various game attribute value indicia associated with each of the player movers may indicate, in various methods of game play, the manner in which various players may be used in different aspects of game play.

[0056] For example, selection value indicia **130** of a player's alpha mover may be a numerical value representing a limit to the number and nature of the beta movers selected to form the player's group of player movers prior to game play. Each beta mover's selection cost indicia **110** may correspondingly be a numerical value indicating the cost of including that beta mover in the group of player movers.

[0057] Somewhat similarly, action value indicia **132** of a player's alpha mover may be a numerical value representing a limit to the number and nature of various game actions, each of which may have a corresponding game action cost, that may be performed on a player's turn.

[0058] As another example, movement pattern indicia **116** may indicates the manner and/or direction in which the player mover may be moved on a game board, with different symbols representing different manners and/or directions of movement. Movement range indicia **118** may indicate the number of movement spaces a player may be moved, such as in a direction indicated by the movement pattern symbol, and movement cost indicia **120** may indicate the cost associated with the game action of moving the player mover.

[0059] Somewhat similarly, attack pattern indicia **122** and attack range indicia **124** of a beta card may define a group of movement spaces relative to the beta mover, such that if an opponent's player mover is positioned within that group of movement spaces, the beta mover may attack the opponent's player mover. Attack cost indicia **126** may indicate a cost associated with the game action of attacking the opponent's player mover with the beta mover.

[0060] If a player mover attacks an opponent's player mover, the result of the simulated combat may be resolved by comparing other game attribute values of the attacking and defending player movers. For example, if a beta mover attacks an opponent's beta mover, each may sustain an amount of damage "units" or "points" equal to the other player mover's damage value indicia **114**. If the amount of damage sustained by either player mover meets or exceeds the value indicated by the player mover's defense value indicia **112**, the player mover may be considered defeated or killed, and may be removed from the game board. The extent of damage that an alpha mover may sustain may be represented by the alpha mover's selection value indicia **130**. Some methods of game play may provide that defeating a player's beta mover results in the player's alpha mover sustaining an amount of damage equal to the defeated beta mover's selection cost.

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[0061] The game attributes associated with the player movers may differ in other embodiments, depending on the methods of game play. Tokens **20** may similarly be configured as desired, and may be used to indicate the results of a game action, such as to increment damage sustained by a player mover, and thus may include numerical or any other appropriate indicia.

[0062] Exemplary methods of game play utilizing the concepts and components discussed above are outlined in the paragraphs below. Games may be played by two players, each of which controls a group of player movers, the group consisting of an alpha player mover and a plurality of beta player movers, for movement and simulated combat on the game board. The goal of game play for each player may be to defeat the opponent's alpha mover in combat, either by attacking and defeating all of the opponent's beta movers, or by attacking and defeating the opponent's alpha mover directly.

[0063] Some methods provide that a group of player movers is selected for each player prior to game play, the group consisting of one alpha mover and a plurality of beta movers, the number and nature of the beta player movers determined by, or otherwise relating to, a game attribute of the selected alpha mover. For example, the group of player movers may be selected such that the selection costs of the beta movers have a predetermined mathematical relationship to the selection value of the alpha mover. The predetermined mathematical relationship may be one in which the beta movers have selection costs summing to a value less than or equal to the selected alpha mover's selection cost, or may be some other mathematical relationship, such as set forth in a set of rules for game play. Such methods may further include selecting a group of reference elements corresponding to the player movers of the selected group.

[0064] In some methods, the available pool of player movers (and corresponding reference elements) from which a group of player movers is selected for game play may be as provided with a preassembled game set, sometimes called a "starter set" of "starter pack," such that a group of player movers may be preselected for each of a number of players of the game, according to the selection technique described above. Optionally, sets of one or more player movers, sometimes called "booster sets" or "booster packs," may be made available separately from those available in a preassembled game set, such that each player may purchase, trade, or otherwise obtain a personal collection of player movers. In such embodiments, a player may select a different group of player movers for each game. Moreover, a player may privately select a group, so that, prior to game play, the composition of each player's group of player movers is unknown to the other, incorporating a strategic element into pre-game preparation.

[0065] Some embodiments of the game include a collectible aspect, as players attempt to collect player movers in order to be able to select a group of desired movers for game play. Moreover, certain player movers may have limited availability with respect to other movers. For example, the available player movers may include multiple copies of some player movers, with some player movers having fewer or more copies than other player movers. The limited availability of some game components may enhance the collectible aspect of the game.

[0066] In some methods, pre-game preparation may also include concealing the character indicia of at least some of the group of player movers, such as by attaching covers **16** to each beta mover. In such methods, the player's group of player movers may then be placed in an initial configuration on the game board, such as within the player's designated starting area, and the concealed character indicia of a player mover may be revealed upon moving the player on the game board, such as removing the cover of a concealed beta mover upon bringing it into play by moving it from the starting area to the common area. Optionally, such methods may further provide that reference elements for concealed beta movers are only revealed when the character indicia of the beta mover is revealed.

[0067] As such, initial concealment of some of the player movers may further the strategic aspect of game play, because a player's use of the player mover, or its position in an initial configuration, may not be evident to an opponent until the player mover is brought into play.

[0068] In embodiments in which some of the game attribute value indicia of the beta player movers is visible when the character indicia is concealed, the covered movers may be turned so that the indicia is not visible to an opponent, and so that the visible indicia provide a reference or reminder to the player. Optionally, such indicia may be made visible to an opponent, in which case an opponent may attempt to deduce the identity of the concealed player mover. In embodiments in which each cover includes categorizational indicia, the visible categorizational indicia may provide additional information to an opponent regarding the identity, or character indicia, of the beta player mover concealed by the cover.

[0069] In some methods, players may execute turns in sequence to perform a number of game actions, the number and nature of which may be determined by, or otherwise relate to, one or more game attributes of the player's alpha mover. For example, game actions may be performed such that the action costs of the various game actions performed in a player's turn have a predetermined mathematical relationship to the action value of the alpha mover. The predetermined mathematical relationship may be one in which game actions have action costs summing to a value less than or equal to the alpha mover's action cost, or may be some other mathematical relationship, such as set forth in a set of rules for game play.

[0070] Such game actions may include bringing a player mover into play by moving it from a starting area to the common area (and revealing the character indicia, if the player mover is a beta mover), moving a player mover on the common area, attacking an opponent's player mover, and so forth.

[0071] In some methods, each player's player movers may engage in combat with an opponent's player movers under certain conditions. For example, if an opponent's player mover is within a beta mover's attack range, the beta mover may engage the enemy's mover in combat. Combat may be resolved according to a system of rules, and may relate to game attribute value indicia representing each player mover's attributes in combat, such as damage and defense attributes. For example, a player mover's damage value may indicate a number of "points" of damage that the player mover inflicts to a defending player mover. When a player

mover has sustained a predetermined amount of damage, such as represented by a defense value associated with the player mover, it may be considered defeated or "killed," and removed from play.

[0072] In other words, such methods may include maintaining a record of a score for each player mover in the group, and removing a player mover from the game board when the player mover's score meets or exceeds a predetermined value. The score could represent the amount of damage a mover has sustained, in which case the score would be increased to indicate additional damage sustained, such that the predetermined value would be the game attribute value indicating the total amount of damage a player mover is able to sustain before being removed from play. Alternatively, the score could represent the amount of further damage a mover is able to sustain, in which case the score would be decreased to indicate damage sustained, such that the predetermined value would be the value at which the player mover is not able to sustain further damage before being removed from play.

[0073] Such methods may further provide that the score for an alpha mover may be changed as a result of the defeat of a beta mover. For example, each player's alpha mover may have a defense value that is reduced by a predetermined amount when one of the player's beta movers is defeated. The predetermined amount may be equal to the beta player mover's selection cost. In other words, such methods may provide that a player's alpha mover may be defeated either as a result of combat or as a result of defeating all of (or some number of) the player's beta movers.

[0074] A set of game rules may incorporate aspects of the described methods of game play, and may specify additional restrictions or game features. A non-limiting, exemplary set of rules for a commercial embodiment of a game is set forth below. The exemplary rules are suitable for use with the exemplary game components described and illustrated herein, and may be supplied with a preassembled "starter set." Several aspects of the commercial embodiment of the game, entitled "Yu-Gi-Oh Capsule Monsters," produced by Mattel, Inc., are based on an animated television series. As such, the rules employ a game lexicon different from, but not inconsistent with, the terminology and concepts as set forth in the disclosure above. For example, alpha movers are referred to as "kings," beta movers are referred to as "monsters," and covers are referred to as "capsules." An alpha mover's selection value is referred to as "monster points," the action value is referred to as "action points," and so forth. Throughout the exemplary set of rules, reference numbers are provided for clarity, but are not to be considered in a limiting sense.

[0075] Introduction

[0076] The Yu-Gi-Oh! CAPSULE MONSTERS game is based on the animated television series. With one Starter Set, you have everything you need to play CAPSULE MONSTERS. You and another person can play a complete CAPSULE MONSTERS game with the Monsters that come in a Starter Set. For even more fun, you can collect extra Monsters in Booster Packs (sold separately) to use in the game too. These additional Monsters have new and different abilities that can boost your chances of winning!

[0077] Object

The object of CAPSULE MONSTERS is to use your Monsters to defeat your Opponent's King. The first player to reduce the opposing King's Hit Points to zero or less wins the game.

[0078] Game Contents

The Starter Set contains everything two players need to play a game of CAPSULE MONSTERS:

[0079] 6 Monster Figures (42)

[0080] 6 Monster Capsules (16)

[0081] 6 Monster Cards (92)

[0082] 2 King Figures (40)

[0083] 2 King Cards (90)

[0084] 1 Damage Marker Sheet (tokens 20)

[0085] 1 Coliseum (12)

[0086] 1 set of rules

[0087] 1 set of Markers (20)

[0088] Monsters and Kings

[0089] Monster Figures (42) represent the Monsters you control in the game, and each comes with a Monster Capsule (16) and a Monster Card (92). You hide the figures in their Capsules until you can bring them into the game. The cards tell your everything you need to know about each Monster.

King Figures (40) work like Monster Figures (42), but they don't come with a Capsule (16), just a King Card (90). Your King represents you in the Coliseum. If your King loses all of its Hit Points, you lose the game.

You and your opponent only need the six Monsters and two Kings that come in the Starter Set to beging playing the Basic Game right away. With more figures from CAPSULE MONSTERS Booster Packs, you can move up to the Advanced Game.

[0090] Capsules

All Capsules (16) are identical except for the symbols (categorizational indicia 80) that identify the Capsule's Faction. Every Monster belongs to one Faction and must be paired with a Capsule from the same Faction.

Capsules fit around the Monster Figures (42). Use them before the game starts to hide your Monsters from your opponent.

[0091] King and Monster Cards (90, 92)

Each card shows you everything you need to know about the matching King or Monster.

Two pairs of numbers are listed for both the King's Monster Points (130) and its Action Points (132). Use the first number in the Basic Game and the second number in the Advanced Game.

[0092] Markers (20)

Use the Markers to keep track of how much damage a Monster has taken. When a Monster is attacked, place the appropriate number of Markers on its card.

Additionally, Markers can be used to mark the card of a Monster than has been "stunned" by a Special Ability.

Markers may also be used to tell duplicate copies of Monsters apart, to keep track of which figures have attacked or moved in a turn, etc.

[0093]   Coliseum

The game board (**12**) represents the arena (**30**) in which your Monsters battle. The squares (**36**) that make up the 8-square sections on either side of the game board are the Starting Areas (**34**).

[0094]   The Basic Game

[0095]   Setting Up

[0096]   Unfold the Coliseum in the middle of the playing surface.

[0097]   The younger player is Player 1, the older player is Player 2. Each player takes a pre-selected team, composed of a King Figure (and King Card) and Monster Figures (and Monster Cards), plus a Monster Capsule for each Monster.

[0098]   Snap your Monster Capsules over your Monster Figures. Don't let your opponent see which figures you put in each Capsule—this way your opponent won't know what's in store for the battle. Mare sure you match the Faction symbol (**80**) on your Capsules to the Monsters. A Monster's Faction appears on its card. Turn your Monster Figure so that the movement label (**66**) on its base (**44**) faces you, not your opponent.

[0099]   Place your King on any space (**36**) in your Starting Area (**34**) in the Coliseum.

[0100]   Place each of your Monsters—now hidden inside their Capsules—on any empty space in your Starting Area. Only one Monster Capsule can go into any one space.

[0101]   Put your King Card (**90**) face-up in front of you and your Monster Cards (**92**) face-down. Be sure not to let your opponent see your Monster Cards.

[0102]   Patterns

Figures (**14**) move and attack in one of four different Patterns, as described on its card. A figure's Move Pattern (**116**) is not always the same as its Attack Pattern (**122**). The four types of Patterns are:

[0103]   "+"-type—the figure can move or attack straight forward, straight back, straight left, or straight right, up to the limit of its Move Range (**118**) or Attack Range (**124**). You cannot move through your opponent's figures, but you can move and attack through your own figures.

[0104]   "x"-type—the figure can move or attack diagonally, up to the limit of its Move Range or Attack Range. You cannot move or attack through your opponent's figures, but you can move and attack through your own figures.

[0105]   "o"-type—the figure can mover or attack the second space away in any direction from the space in which it sits. An "o"-type pattern is special because the move or attack leaps over the squares between the figure and its destination or target, even if an opposing figure sits in one of those in-between squares. However, you can only move to or attack the spaces that are two spaces away.

[0106]   "*"-type—only Kings have this movement pattern. They can move in any direction: right, left, forward, back, or diagonally.

[0107]   Special Abilities

Some Monsters and all Kings have Special Abilities (**128**) described on their cards. These override the normal rules of the game and give extra powers to these figures.

[0108]   Turn Sequence

Player 1 goes first. When Player 1 is done, Player 2 takes a turn. Players alternate turns until one player wins the game.

At the start of your turn, you get the number of Action Points (**132**) listed on your King Card (**90**) (use the first number for the Basic Game). During your turn, you can spend your Action Points to do the following:

[0109]   1) Summon a Monster.

[0110]   2) Move one of your figures that has not yet moved this turn.

[0111]   3) Attack with one of your Monsters that has not yet attacked this turn.

[0112]   4) Activate any Special Ability that has not yet been used this turn.

[0113]   Your Monster Cards (**92**) list the number of Action Points it takes to perform each of these actions (movement cost **120**; attack cost **126**; special ability indicia **128**). As long as you have enough Action Points, you may take the actions listed above, in any order or combination you want with as many Monsters are you want. For instance, you could do nothing more on your turn than move three Monsters, or your could choose to attack with one Monster, activate the Special Ability of a second Monster, then go back to the first Monster again and move it. If you have the Action Points, you may take any actions you want. Just remember: each of your figures may only move once, attack once, and use its Special Ability (if any) once each turn.

[0114]   When you've used all the Action Points you can, or you don't want to do anything else, your turn ends. You cannot save unused Action Points for a later turn.

[0115]   1) Summon a Monster

[0116]   A Monster can't do anything until you summon it from its Capsule. To do so, pay Action Points equal to the Monster Cost (**110**) listed on its card. Then open the Monster Capsule, remove the Monster Figure, and put it in the Capsule's space. Put your empty Capsule to one side, and flip over the Monster's Card face-up. A Monster can move and attack on the same turn it is summoned.

[0117]   2) Move a Monster or King

[0118]   To move one of your Monsters or your King, pay its Move Cost (**120**) in Action Points (**132**). The Move Range (**118**) listed on a figure's card is the maximum number of spaces it can move in one turn. It must move according to its Move Pattern (**116**) and cannot end its move in the same space as another figure.

[0119] When you move a figure, also place a Marker (**20**) on its card or otherwise keep track of which figures you've moved. When you're done with your turn, remove the Marker or otherwise indicate that the figure is available to be moved on the next turn.

[0120] 3) Attack with a Monster

[0121] To attack one of your opponent's Monsters with one of your Monsters, pay your Monster's Attack Cost (**126**) in Action Points (**132**). Kings cannot attack and do not have an Attack Cost. Monsters can attack Kings, though, so do your best to keep your King safe.

[0122] You can only attack opposing Monsters that sit within your Monster's Attack Zone (the spaces covered by your Monster's Attack Pattern (**116**) and its Attack Range (**118**). Your Monster must attack according to its Attack Pattern. Its Attack Range is the maximum number of spaces its attack can reach. When counting range, count your target's space, but not the space in which your Monster sits.

Attacks cannot be blocked. Your Monster's attack is an automatic hit.

When your Monster attacks, put a number of Markers (**20**) equal to your Monster's Damage Value (**114**) on the target Monster's Card.

If the total number of Markers on a Monster's Card is equal to or greater than that Monster's Hit Points (**112**), the Monster is destroyed. With a King, use the King's Monster Points (**130**) as its Hit Points.

[0123] If a Monster is destroyed, remove its figure from the board and place it on top of its Monster Card. Next, take a number of Markers equal to the cost (**110**) of the defeated Monster and place them on the card of that Monster's King. This means each time you destroy one of your opponent's Monsters, you also hurt your opponent's King.

[0124] You can attack a Monster still in its Capsule. Capsules can only take two points of damage. When a Capsule is destroyed, the Monster inside is destroyed as well. As above, place Markers equal to the full cost of the defeated Monster on its King's card.

Your Monster does not move into a target's space after an attack, even if the target is destroyed. Your Monster stays right where it is.

[0125] 4) Activate Special Abilities

[0126] Some Special Abilities (**128**) listed on your cards cost Action Points to use. If a Special Ability requires Action Points, the cost is listed as a number before the description of the Special Ability. If no cost is listed, the Special Ability is free. When using a Special Ability, follow the rules on the card.

[0127] Some of the Special Abilities include "flying" and "stun." Monsters with the "flying" ability can move over opposing Monsters that block their paths, but must still obey their Move Patterns and Ranges. When a Monster with the "stun" ability attacks a target, the targeted Monster becomes "stunned" and cannot move or attack until its owner pays its Cost (**110**) in Action Points during the owner's turn. "Stun" does not affect Kings.

[0128] Winning the Game

If you destroy your opponent's King—either by reducing its Hit Points (Monster Points (**130**)) to zero or by defeating all of its Monsters—you win the game!

[0129] The Advanced Game

Once you've mastered the Basic Game, give the Advanced Game a try. The Advanced Game works just like the Basic Game, with a few exceptions.

[0130] Kings

Use the second number on your King Card for your King's Monster Points (**130**) and Action Points (**132**). This gives you more options for building your team of Monsters and makes the game last longer too.

[0131] Building a Team of Monsters

[0132] Before the game, pick a King and assemble your team of Monsters. The total Cost (**110**) of these Monsters must be equal or less than your King's Monster Points (**130**). You can use the Monsters from the Starter Set and from any Booster Packs you have.

[0133] You cannot have more Monsters on your team than can fit in a Starting Area (**34**) on the game board (**12**), along with your King. Using the Coliseum that comes in the Starter Set, this means you cannot have more than seven Monsters on your team.

You can have as many copies of any Monster on your team as you like. Your opponent can have some or all of the same Monsters as you do.

When identical Monsters are in the same game, use Markers to tell them apart.

[0134] Level-2 (3, 4 . . .) Monsters

Some Monsters have a number listed after their Name (**102**). You can only use these Monsters on your team if their Faction (**80**) matches that of your King.

[0135] Several aspects of the exemplary methods of game play may be modified from that disclosed above, and may be reflected in the set of rules to accompany the game. The rules may thus be configured to provide a game with a desired degree of complexity or difficulty, for example to adapt the game to players of a predetermined age range, to incorporate a theme or themes other than that discussed above, and so forth. The rules may include additional methods of game play consistent with the components and concepts of the game as described above, and may vary from those as indicated herein.

[0136] It is believed that the disclosure set forth herein encompasses multiple distinct inventions with independent utility. While each of these inventions has been disclosed in a specific form, the embodiments thereof as disclosed and illustrated herein are not to be considered in a limiting sense as numerous variations are possible. The subject matter of the inventions includes all novel and non-obvious combinations and subcombinations of the various elements, features, functions components, concepts, and/or properties disclosed herein. Also, where the claims recite "a" or "a first" element of the equivalent thereof, such claims should be understood to include incorporation of one or more such elements, neither requiring nor excluding two or more such elements.

[0137]   It is believed that the following claims particularly point out certain combinations and subcombinations of features, functions, elements, components, actions, and/or properties that may be claimed through amendment of the present claims or presentation of new claims in this or a related application. Such amended or new claims, whether they are directed to a different invention or directed to the same invention, whether different, broader, narrower or equal in scope to the original claims, are also regarded as included within the subject matter of the inventions of the present disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. A set of game components, comprising:

first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, each player mover of each set including a base portion having differentiable character indicia indicated thereon, each player mover of the first set further including a cover adapted to selectively conceal the character indicia;

a reference element for each player mover, each reference element identifiably corresponding to the player mover and including a unique set of game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover; and

a game board having an array of movement spaces for movement of the player movers.

2. The set of claim 1 wherein the character indicia of each player mover includes a sculpted figurine mounted to the base portion.

3. The set of claim 2 wherein the cover of each player mover of the first set is configured to be removably attachable to the base portion.

4. The set of claim 2 wherein the reference element for each player mover includes a representation of the sculpted figurine.

5. The set of claim 1 wherein the cover of each player mover of the first set is configured to be removably attachable to the player mover.

6. The set of claim 5 wherein the cover of each player mover of the first set is configured to be removably attachable to each of the player movers of the first set.

7. The set of claim 5 wherein the cover of each player mover of the first set includes one of a plurality of categorizational indicia.

8. The set of claim 7 wherein covers including different categorizational indicia are distinguishable from each other only by categorizational indicia.

9. The set of claim 1 wherein each player mover of the first set further includes at least one of the unique set of game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover.

10. The set of claim 9 wherein the game attribute value indicia is located on the base portion of the player mover.

11. The set of claim 9 wherein the game attribute value indicia is visible when the character indicia is concealed.

12. The set of claim 1 wherein the array of movement spaces is arranged to form a common area and at least two starting areas each adjacent the common area.

13. A player mover kit for use with a game system, the kit comprising:

a player mover, having:

a base portion;

one of a predetermined set of differentiable character indicia indicated on the base portion; and

a cover configured to be removably attachable to the base portion and to selectively conceal the character indicia when attached to the base portion, the cover further configured to be removably attachable to any player mover that includes one of the predetermined set of differentiable character indicia; and

a reference element identifiably corresponding to the player mover and including a unique set of game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover.

14. A method of providing a game system with player movers and a game board, the method comprising:

providing first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, each player mover of the first set having associated indicia indicating a selection value, and each player mover of the second set having associated indicia indicating a selection cost; and

selecting a group of player movers for each of a plurality of game players, each group of player movers including one player mover of the first set and a plurality of player movers of the second set;

wherein the group of player movers is selected such that the selection costs of the selected player movers of the second set have a predetermined mathematical relationship to the selection value of the selected player mover of the first set.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the predetermined mathematical relationship is one in which the selected player movers of the second set have selection costs summing to a value less than or equal to the selection value of the selected player mover the first set.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein each player mover is associated with a unique set of game attribute value indicia, the method further comprising:

providing a reference element for each player mover that identifiably corresponds to the player mover and includes one or more of the game attribute value indicia associated with the player mover;

wherein selecting a group of player movers further includes selecting a group of reference elements corresponding to the selected group of player movers.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the set of game value attribute indicia of each player mover of the first set includes at least two groups of values including a first and second group of values; the method further comprising:

providing a first set of rules for game play instructing use of the first group of values; and

providing a second set of rules for game play instructing use of the second group of values.

18. A method of playing a game, the game including a game board, a set of rules for game play, and first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, each player mover of each set having associated indicia indicating a game action cost for each game action that may be performed with the player mover in accordance with the set of

rules, and each player mover of the second set having associated indicia indicating a selection cost, the method for each player comprising:

selecting a group of player movers, the group including one player mover of the first set and a plurality of player movers of the second set;

placing the selected group of player movers in an initial configuration on the game board according to the set of rules; and

executing a turn in sequence with other players to perform a number of game actions with one or more of the selected group of player movers in accordance with the set of rules;

wherein each group of player movers is selected such that the selection costs of the selected player movers of the second set have a first predetermined mathematical relationship to a first predetermined value; and

wherein the game actions performed during a turn have game action costs having a second predetermined mathematical relationship to a second predetermined value.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the game actions comprise moving a player mover on the game board and attacking an opponent's player mover.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising:

maintaining a record of a score for each player mover in the group;

adjusting the score of a player mover as a result of an attack;

removing a player mover from the game board when the score of the player mover reaches or exceeds a predetermined value associated with the player mover.

21. The method of claim 20 further comprising changing the score of the player mover of the first set by a predetermined amount when a player mover of the second set is removed from the game board.

22. The method of claim 18 wherein one or more of the first and second predetermined values for each group are determined by one or more game attribute values associated with the selected player mover of the first set.

23. The method of claim 18 wherein one or more of the first and second predetermined mathematical relationships is one in which the costs sum to a value less than or equal to the corresponding predetermined value.

24. A method of playing a game, the game including a game board, a set of rules for game play, and first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, each player mover of each set having associated indicia indicating a game action cost for each game action that may be performed with the player mover, and each player mover of the first set having associated indicia indicating a game action value, the method for each player comprising:

selecting a group of player movers, the group including one player mover of the first set and a plurality of player movers of the second set;

placing the selected group of player movers in an initial configuration on the game board according to the set of rules; and

executing a turn in sequence with other players to perform a number of game actions with one or more of the selected group of player movers in accordance with the set of rules;

wherein the game actions performed during a turn have game action costs having a predetermined mathematical relationship to the game action value of the player mover of the first set.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the predetermined mathematical relationship is one in which the game action costs sum to a value less than or equal to the game action value of the player mover of the first set.

26. A method of playing a game, the game including a game board, a set of rules for game play, and an available pool of player movers, each player mover including visually differentiable character indicia, the method for each player comprising:

selecting a group of player movers from the available pool of player movers in accordance with the set of rules;

concealing the character indicia of at least some of the group of player movers;

placing the group of player movers in an initial configuration on the game board according to the set of rules; and

revealing the concealed character indicia of a player mover upon moving the player mover on the game board.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising:

executing a turn in sequence with other players to perform a number of game actions with one or more of the selected group of player movers in accordance with the set of rules, including attacking an opponent's player mover.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein attacking an opponent's player mover includes attacking a player mover with concealed character indicia.

29. The method of claim 26,

wherein the available pool of player movers includes first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers,

wherein selecting a group of player movers further includes selecting at least one player mover from each set; and

wherein concealing the character indicia of at least some of the group of player movers further includes concealing the character indicia of all of the selected player movers of one set and none of the other set.

30. A method of playing a game, the game including a game board with at least two starting areas each adjacent a common area, a set of rules for game play, and an available pool of player movers, each player mover including visually differentiable character indicia, the method for each player comprising:

selecting a group of player movers from the available pool of player movers in accordance with the set of rules;

concealing the character indicia of each of the group of player movers;

placing the group of player movers in one of the starting areas on the game board;

revealing the concealed character indicia of a player mover; and

moving a revealed player mover from the starting area to the common area.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising:

executing a turn in sequence with other players to perform a number of game actions with one or more of the selected group of player movers in accordance with the set of rules, wherein the number of game actions includes attacking an opponent's revealed player mover.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the number of game actions includes attacking an opponent's player mover in a starting area.

33. A method of playing a game, the game including a game board, a set of rules for game play, and first and second visually distinguishable sets of player movers, the method for each player comprising:

selecting a group of player movers, the group including one player mover of the first set and a plurality of player movers of the second set;

maintaining a record of a score for each player mover in the group;

removing a player mover from the game board when the player mover's score meets or exceeds a predetermined value;

changing the score of the player mover of the first set by a predetermined amount when a player mover of the second set is removed from the game board.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising:

executing a turn in sequence with other players to perform a number of game actions with one or more of the selected group of player movers in accordance with the set of rules, until each opponent's player mover of the first set is removed from the game board.

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