BOMB SQUAD ACADEMY

by Daniel Rocchi and Joshua Cappel

10+ | **2-5** | **20-40 minutes**
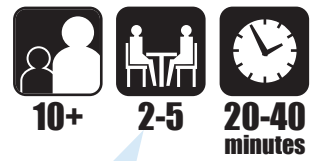
> These are the **prototype rules** for Bomb Squad Academy. Gameplay will be identical in the retail version, but some components will look different.

> There are some minor setup and rules changes for 2-player games. See the 2-Player appendix for details.

CADETS, PREPARE FOR YOUR FIELD EXAM!

This is the final field exam of your bomb disposal training course. The instructor has rigged three training bombs for you and your team to defuse, but little do you know that there is no way to actually defuse them! The bombs will explode eventually, and if you want to graduate at the top of the class then you'll want to cut high-value wires without triggering the explosives! Grab your wire cutters and steady that shaky hand, because it's going to be an explosive night!

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

There are four decks of cards representing the four "wires" of the bomb, and a trigger track next to each deck. Every round, each player secretly decides (*then simultaneously reveals*) the wire that they will cut this round (*or perhaps they'll chicken out, or even call "Wait!" preventing a wire from being cut*). After actions are revealed, the chosen wires are "cut" by flipping cards from those decks. When a card is flipped, its value dictates how far the trigger moves down the trigger track and how many points are earned; cutting wires alone is worth a lot more than cutting the same wire as other players. Push the triggers too far and the bomb will explode! Whoever causes the bomb to explode loses points. Get through three grueling bombs to finish your final exam with the most points!

COMPONENTS

48 Wire Cards
(12 each of Green, Blue, Red, and Black. The back of each deck displays the values of the cards in that deck.)
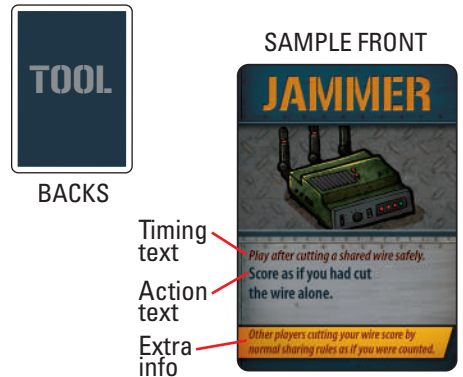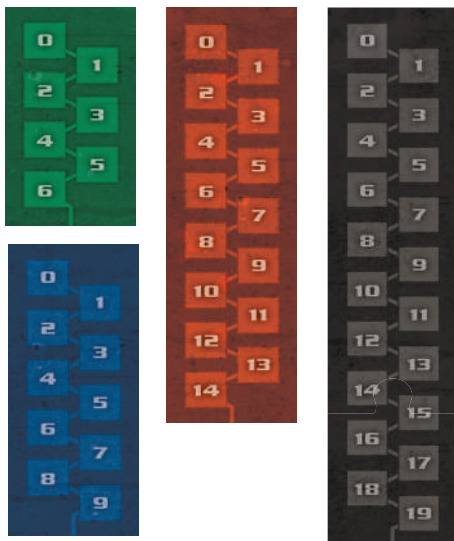
Trigger Reminder — Deck Values

RED BACK

Chain Value — Main Value

RED FRONT

30 Action Cards
(1 deck of 6 cards per player colour; Green/Blue/Red/Black Cutters, Wait, and Chicken)

ACTION FRONTS

20 Tool Cards

TOOL

BACKS

SAMPLE FRONT

JAMMER

Timing text — *Play after cutting a shared wire safely. Score as if you had cut the wire alone.*

Action text

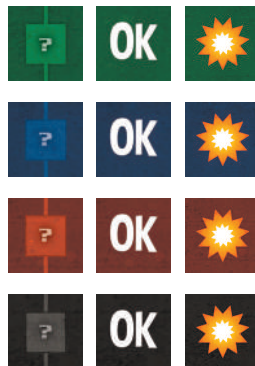Extra info — *Other players cutting your wire score by normal sharing rules as if you were counted.*
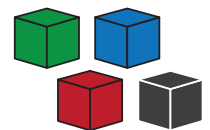
4 Trigger Tracks

12 Trigger Tiles
3 in each colour; 2 of each colour have "OK" on the back, 1 of each colour has a BOOM symbol on the back.
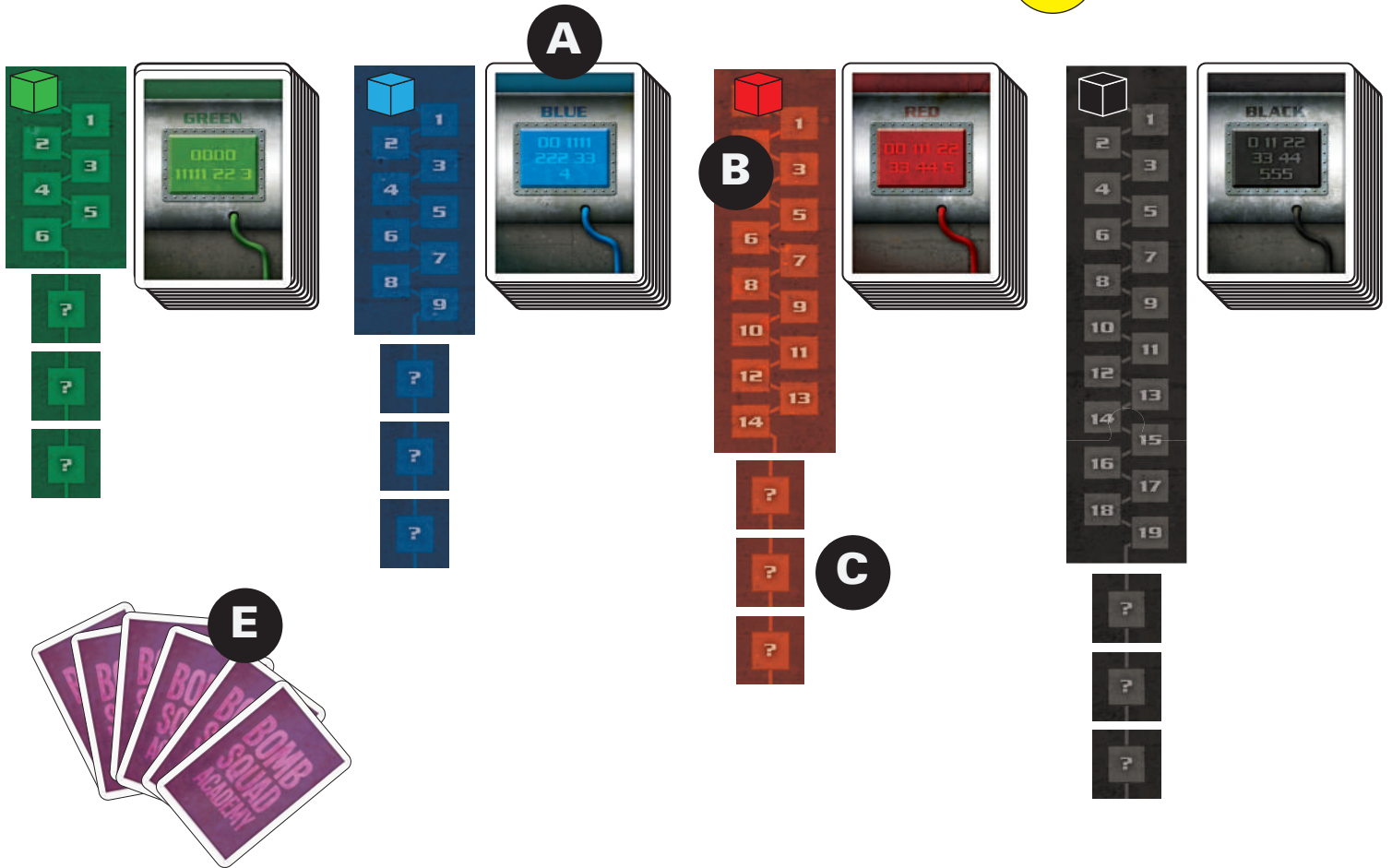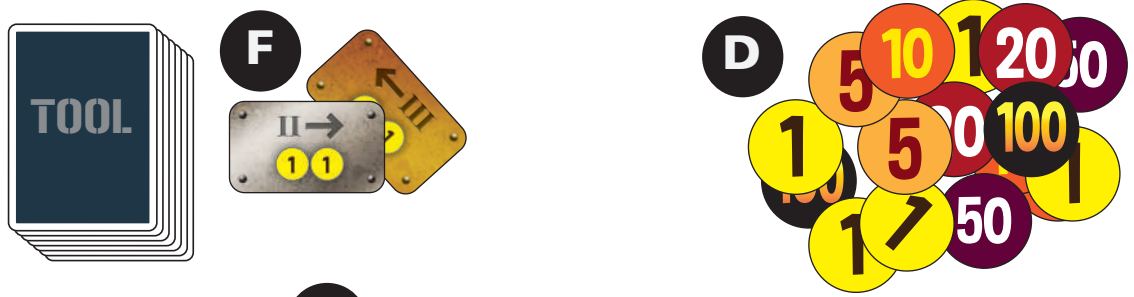
2 Pressure Plates

4 Triggers

46 point discs
Various denominations. The discs have different values on each side; make sure that you keep the correct side face up to show everyone your score. Scores must be visible at all times; no stacking. All players should "colour up" frequently so that their scores are easily countable.

**1** | **5** | **10** | **20** | **50** | **100**

SETUP

A Shuffle each Wire deck separately by colour, and place the decks face down in a row. Green, Blue, Red, Black from left to right. Leave space between them.

B Place the matching Trigger track to the left of each deck as shown. Place the matching marker on the 0 space of each track.

C Place the three matching trigger tiles facedown at the bottom of each track as shown. Shuffle them so that you don't know where the BOOM tile is.

D Make a pile of point discs where everyone can reach them.

E Give each player all 6 Action cards of one colour.
Return unused colours to the box.

F Place the pressure plates and shuffled Tools deck nearby; they won't be needed till bombs II and III.

GAMEPLAY

The game works in rounds. Each round, each player decides what they want to do using one card **from their hand**; play one of the four cutters to cut a wire, play their Wait card, or play their Chicken card.

Each player secretly selects their Action card, and places (*or holds*) it face-down, partially overlapping their own previously-played Action card as shown. (*In the first round there won't be a previously-played card and cards are simply played to the table.*) When all players are ready, the played cards are revealed. (*Keep them overlapping the older cards; this will make it easy for all players to see who just played what.*) It is helpful if all players call out the name of the card they've just played.

Then we resolve the actions. **Players do not pick up their Action cards when they are resolved; played Action cards stay on the table for now**. Actions are resolved in this order: **Wait > Green > Blue > Red > Black > Chicken**
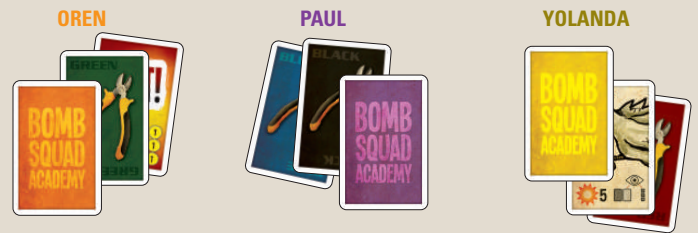
Example: Here, Oren, Paul, and Yolanda have each chosen which card to play and have placed it overlapping their own previous cards on the table. When everyone is ready they flip their cards...
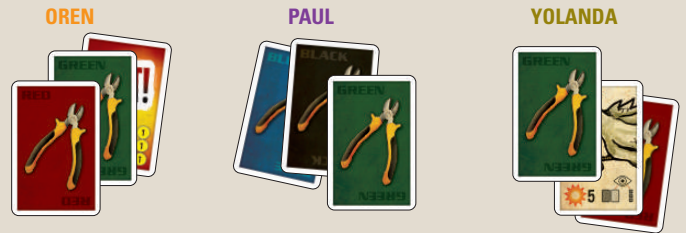
... and we can see now that Oren played the Red cutter and both Paul and Yolanda played the Green cutter. By keeping the cards overlapping, it is clear to all players which cards were played this round, but we can also all see which cards everyone played earlier.

WAIT

Any player that played a Wait card immediately takes **3 points** from the supply. Then, each of those players declares one **wire** that is protected from being cut this round. (*Any wire, regardless of whether anyone played a cutter for that wire this round.*) If multiple players played a Wait card, they may discuss which wires will be protected. Players who played cutters for now-protected wires will do nothing this round.

> **Note:** Unlike the other cards, your Wait card can only be used once per bomb (*more on that in **End of the Round***). Use it wisely, because you only have a few chances to make it count!


Example: Here, Oren has played his Wait card, while Paul and Bree both played their Black cutters; Yolanda played her Blue cutters. Oren takes 3 points, weighs his options, and decides to protect the Black wire; this means that Paul and Bree won't score this round.

CUTTERS: GREEN / BLUE / RED / BLACK

Cutting wires is the main activity of the game, and most of the time you will be playing one of these four cards. The wires are resolved one at a time in order from left to right (from Green to Black.) All wires are resolved in the same way. For each wire:

- **If no players cut it:** Nothing happens.

- **If a player protected it by playing Wait:** Nothing happens. Players who played the cutter for this wire do nothing; *too bad for those guys*.

- **If one player cut it:** The player flips **one** card from the wire deck, placing it below the wire deck and overlapping any previously-placed cards as shown. Each wire card has a *main value*; the trigger for that wire is moved **that many spaces** on its track. If this moves the trigger onto the trigger tiles, the bomb **might** explode (*see **Triggering the Bomb***). If the bomb **doesn't** explode, the player scores the *full value* of the wire. (*The wire's full value is the main value **plus** the chain of 1s that runs up the side.*)
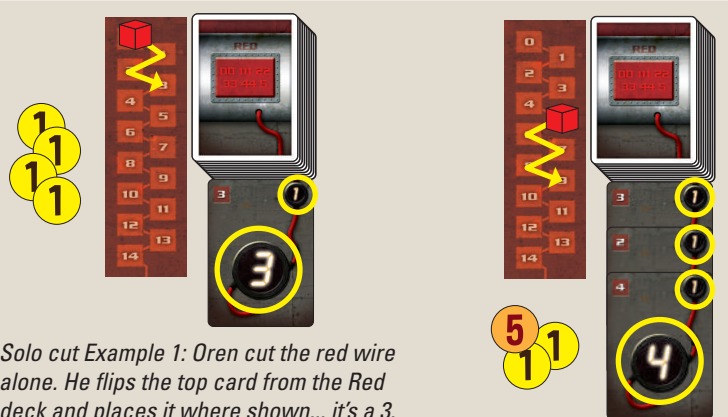
Solo cut Example 1: Oren cut the red wire alone. He flips the top card from the Red deck and places it where shown... it's a 3. Oren moves the red trigger 3 spaces on its track. Since this doesn't cause the bomb to explode, Oren scores. He counts the main value of 3 plus the chain value up the right side for a score of 4. He takes 4 points worth of discs from the supply!

Example 2: Later in the game, a player cuts the Red wire alone, flipping a 4 to the spot shown. After moving the trigger (no explosion), the player scores 4+1+1+1 for a total of 7 points!

- **If more than one player cut it:** Someone flips the same number of cards as there were cutters. (*It doesn't matter who does the flipping; the group of cards is considered to have been cut as a group by all of the players.*) All cards are laid out below the wire deck as shown, overlapping each other as they are placed. As each card is flipped, the Trigger Marker for that wire is moved that many spaces on its track. If this moves the trigger onto the trigger tiles, the bomb **might** explode (*see **Triggering the Bomb***). If the bomb **doesn't** explode, take the full value of the wire and divide that score evenly among the cutting players, ignoring remainders. (*The wire's full value is the main value **plus** the chain of 1s that runs up the side.*)

Example: Here three players have cut the Black wire. We flip three black cards (a 1, 5, and 4, adding to the 3 that was already there) and move the trigger 1+5+4 spaces. This doesn't explode the bomb, so we score. The wire's full value is now 4+1+1+1+1, for a total of 8. Each of the three players thus earns 2 points, and the remainder of 2 is ignored.

As you can see, cutting the same wire as other players is far less profitable than cutting wires alone!
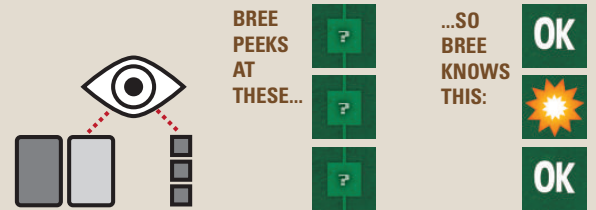
CHICKEN

Any player who played their Chicken did **not** cut a wire this round and will not score normally. However, if any other player caused the bomb to explode this round, all Chicken players **earn 5 points**.

Also, any player who played Chicken may either peek at:
a) the upcoming card from **two** of the wire decks, **or**
b) all three trigger tiles at the bottom of **one** track. (*Don't move them from their original positions though!*)
If multiple players are Chickens, they peek in reverse score order. If there's a tie, the younger player goes first.

*Example: Bree played her Chicken card. She doesn't cut any wire. No other player caused the bomb to explode this round, so she doesn't get the 5 points. She could peek at two upcoming wire cards **or** at the trigger tiles of one colour... she picks the trigger tiles of the Green track and carefully peeks at all three, leaving them in their positions. Now Bree knows exactly where Green's BOOM is!*

Once all Waits, Wire Cutters, and Chickens have been resolved, the round is over.

END OF THE ROUND

At the end of the round, any player with **three** Action cards on the table in front of them takes the **bottom** card back into their hand.

(*In other words, you pick up the card that was played two rounds ago; **every player should have three cards on the table at the end of every round except for the first and second rounds** of each Bomb. After the first two rounds, players will always have two of their Action cards "stuck on the table" unavailable for use. Use this information to help narrow down what your opponents might do!*)

Be aware! This means that you will not be getting your Action cards back into your hand for two rounds once you have played them!


Example: A few rounds into the game, the players have these cards on the table in front of them at the end of the round. Oren picks up his Black card, Paul picks up his Red card, and Yolanda picks up her Chicken card; all three of those players return their retrieved cards to their hands for future use. Bree picks up her Wait card but instead of returning it to her hand, she discards it into the point supply.

Exception: If your **Wait** card is the bottom card of your three, **pick it up and discard it into the point supply** instead of taking it back into your hand. *Yep, Wait cards are one-use only per bomb. (You get them back when a bomb explodes, so at **most** you'll get to use your Wait card three times per game.)*

Why into the point supply? This will keep used Waits clearly out of play so that players don't pick them up by accident.

TRIGGERING THE BOMB 💥

As the game goes on, those triggers are going to work their way down the trigger tracks. (*You can always confirm that a trigger is in the correct place by adding up the reminders on the left of the exposed wire cards.*) Eventually they are going to move off the trigger tracks and onto the trigger tiles. When a trigger moves onto (*or past*) a tile, the tile is flipped to reveal its face. If the tile says OK, you are all safe and the round continues. If the tile shows a BOOM, the bomb has exploded! When it explodes:

- **All players** who cut the wire which caused the explosion **lose 5 points**.

- As stated above, any player who played their **Chicken** during this round will **gain 5 points!** *Bok bok!*

- Since the wires are cut in colour order, players who cut a wire this round **before** the wire that caused the explosion get to keep their points. Players who intended to cut a wire **after** the one that caused the explosion score nothing; *the bomb has gone off and there is nothing left to cut!*

Example: Paul has cut the green wire, and has flipped the 3 card, adding it to the several cards already in play. He moves the trigger down 3 spaces, which brings it past the first trigger tile and on to the second; he must reveal them both.
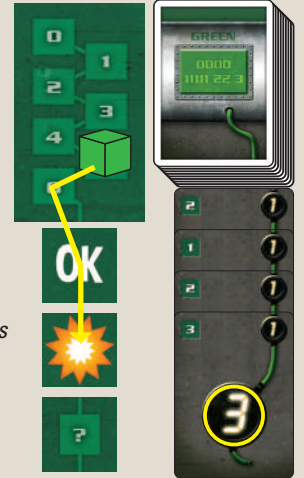
*The first tile turns out to be an OK... phew! No explosion yet.*

The second tile is the BOOM! The bomb has exploded and Paul loses 5 points for being the one that triggered it!

THREE BOMBS!

Had your first explosion? Calm down, these are only training bombs! Your final exam consists of **three bombs**. Reset the game to play your next bomb by setting everything up as in the beginning of the game. (*Players keep their point discs of course, and any player who used their Wait card may retrieve it for use in the next round; players also retrieve their Action cards from the table to start the next bomb with a full set.*) It's a good idea to announce each player's score. When everything is reset, start a new bomb!

BOMB II - THE PRESSURE PLATES

For Bomb II, place the pressure plates (II-side up) at the top of two random wire decks. (*You could draw random action cards to help you decide where to put them.*) During Bomb II, a plate adds its bonus point value to the wire's **full value**. At the end of a round, each plate moves to the next deck in the direction of its arrow, but **only if its current wire was cut and scored this round**. (*Plates will wrap around to the other side if they move left from Green or right from Black.*) It's possible that both plates will be on the same deck; in that case **both** bonus values are added to the wire's full value.
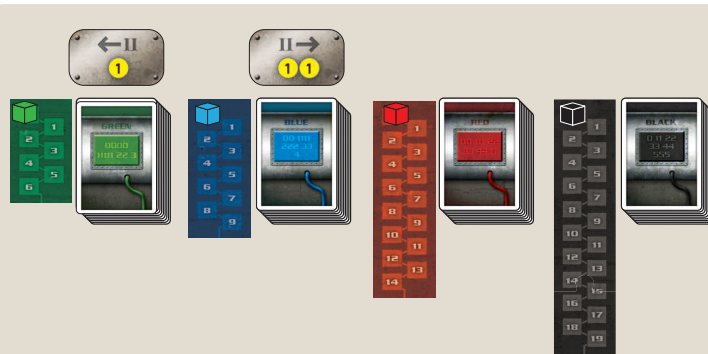
Here the pressure plates are above the Green and Blue wires. This means that the full value of the Green wire gets 1 added to it, and the full value of the Blue wire gets 2 added to it. At the end of a round if the Green wire was cut, its plate will move left (and wrap around) to the Black wire. If the Blue wire was cut, its plate will move right to the Red wire.

BOMB II - THE TOOLS

Bomb II also reveals a new aspect of the game for players: the Tools! Deal out a display of face-up Tools equal to one more than the number of players. (*It's not a bad idea to have someone read out the Tools to all of the players, at least until you are familiar with them.*) Then, in reverse score order (*ties broken by younger player*), each player picks one Tool for him or herself. Discard the unchosen Tool from the game.

Each Tool provides its owner with a one-time-use ability that can be activated when the player chooses. Tools are kept face-up in front of their owners until they are used.

It is a three-player game, so we've laid out four Tools. The player with the lowest score will select either the X-Ray, the Jumper, the Wrench, or the Orders. Exciting! Then the next player will choose from whatever is left, and so on until each player has one Tool. The last Tool is discarded.

To use a Tool, simply declare clearly that you are doing so. (*For example "I'm using my Wrench!"*) Each Tool card tells you exactly when it is legal to use that Tool. Play immediately halts, then the Tool's full effect is resolved according to the text on the card. When you are done, **the used Tool is discarded from the game** and play resumes where it left off.

- Unless specifically forbidden by the card, it **is** permitted for multiple Tools to be declared and played back-to-back by any combination of players… just remember to resolve each Tool **fully** before proceeding to the next.

- If multiple players declare at the same time that they want to use a Tool, **the player who declared first gets to resolve first**. If it's too close to determine who declared first, the player with the lower score gets to resolve first (*ties broken by younger player*). In either case, once the first player has resolved their Tool fully, the other player(s) may choose to either follow through with or cancel their declaration.

Example: Yolanda wants to use her X-Ray Tool. The X-Ray's timing states that you can play it prior to cutting a wire alone. Yolanda waits until she is about to do so, then announces that she's playing the X-Ray. Play stops, and Yolanda follows the instructions on the card; it tells her that when she cuts, she will draw three cards from the wire deck, pick one, and shuffle the rest back in. Not a bad little advantage!

BOMB III - HIGHER PRESSURE

For Bomb III, reset again as above, but now flip the plates over to their III side. They work the same as before but are now even more valuable.

BOMB III - BACK TO THE TOOLBOX

Perform the same procedure to get Tools that you did before Bomb II. If any player still has their Tool from Bomb II, they may keep it; they'll have two Tools at their disposal for this Bomb.

END OF THE GAME

After all three bombs have exploded, the training course is over. The player with the highest score graduates at the top of the class and wins the game! Ties are considered shared victories.

> If you play a game of Tasty Minstrel Games' ***Bomb Squad*** after this, the winner of this game gets to be the starting player in that one. Congratulations!

2-PLAYER CHANGES

When playing with two players, make the following simple changes:

SETUP

- Do not use the Black wire deck or trigger track; the game will be played with only the Green, Blue, and Red wires.

- Each player should discard their Black wire cutter card from their Action deck, as it won't be needed.

GAMEPLAY

- At the end of each round when they have **two** cards on the table, each player picks up the bottom card.

> This is different from the regular game where the number is **three** cards; this means that each player will only ever have **one** card "stuck on the table" unavailable for use instead of two cards as in the regular game.