

# Because It's There!

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## Rules of Play

### I. Introduction

**Because It's There!** is a card game simulating three of the major expeditions that attempted to reach the summit of Mount Everest in the years from 1924 to 1963. A solo player acts in the role of expedition leader, or two players can compete against each other, each leading an expedition trying to be the first to conquer Everest.

### II. Preparing for Play

#### A. Game Pieces

A complete copy of this game consists of 100 1 1/2" by 2 1/4" cards, 20 1/2" markers, and these rules.

#### B. The Cards

There are seven categories of cards in **BIT!**: Terrain, Climbers, Sherpas, Supplies, Camps, Special, and Event cards.

**1. Terrain cards.** Terrain cards are used to construct a Route. Each Terrain card contains a description of the dominant (or most significant) terrain feature represented by the card. The double-headed arrow in each Terrain card contains two numbers. The number at the top represents the Strength cost for exiting the card and moving to a higher Terrain card. The number at the bottom represents the Strength cost for exiting the card and moving to a lower Terrain card (or into Advance Base Camp).

Three Terrain types are represented in **BIT!**: Glacier (blue wavy fill on white background), High Altitude (solid blue), and Extreme Altitude (solid white). Terrain type is important in determining which Events can occur and what effects spending the night in that Terrain will have on Climbers.

**2. Climber cards.** Each of the eighteen Climber cards represents one of the climbers who actually played a role in an historic attempt on Mt. Everest. Climber cards contain historical data and game-related information that must be referred to during play.

**3. Sherpas cards.** The eight Sherpas cards each represent a team of Sherpa porters used to transport Supplies and exhausted Climbers.

**4. Supplies cards.** Supplies cards represent the equipment (climbing gear, tents, sleeping bags, etc.) and consumables (food, stove fuel, and most importantly oxygen) required by the expedition.

**5. Camp cards.** Camp cards each represent a handful of small tents precariously perched on the side of the mountain.

**6. Special cards.** Special cards simulate specialized hardware or capabilities.

**7. Event Cards.** Event cards describe accidents, developing weather conditions, illnesses, etc. that affect play. In addition, Event cards introduce a random element to the degree Climbers can recover Stamina during the night phase. The backs of all Event cards are identical but the borders are color-coded to correspond to one of the three Terrain types.

**C. Markers.** Markers are provided to keep track of individual Climber Strengths, Weather, and Turn.

### **III. Overview**

Figure 1. shows a general layout of a game of BIT! A series of Terrain cards stacked end-to-end represent the Routes that players must climb to reach the Summit card. Each player moves Climbing Teams composed of Climbers, Sherpas and Loaded Supplies up the Route on the right-hand side of the Terrain cards and places Camps and unloads Supplies (after using Sherpas to carry them) on the left side of the Terrain cards. An area at the bottom of each Route serves as Advance Base Camp where Climbing Teams are formed and begin and end movement on a Route. Each player has a unique deck of Climbers, Sherpas, Supplies, and Special cards that are drawn at random, kept in that player's hand, deployed to the respective Advance Base Camp, or discarded to that player's discard pile as play progresses. Players share a common Event deck which serves as a random event and number generator and contains several Special cards. A "dead" pile off to one side holds deceased Climber cards, deserted Sherpas cards, and used Special cards.

### **IV. Getting Started**

There are four scenarios of play (two solo and two two-player) in **BIT!** Three are historical scenarios: the 1924 and 1953 British expeditions, and the 1963 American expedition. A fourth scenario pits two opposing expeditions -- each composed of a "dream team" of historic climbers -- against each other in a competitive race for the summit of Mt. Everest.

Players should choose which scenario they wish to play and read the scenario description before setting up to play.

Cut apart the Terrain cards and separate them into three piles according to border color. Next, randomly select the number of cards from each pile as directed by the scenario and place the end-to-end starting nearest each player with Glacier Terrain cards, then High Altitude cards, then Extreme Altitude cards, and lastly the Summit card.

Cut apart the Event cards and the Special cards and shuffle them together.

Cut apart the Climber cards and the number of Supplies, Camp, and Sherpas cards as directed by the scenario description. Shuffle these together, forming one pile for each player. Deal each player five cards from their pile.

Cut out the Climber Strength markers and set them aside for now. Place the Weather marker as directed in the scenario and the Turn marker on "1".

## **V. Winning**

Play begins when Advance Base Camp is established on Mount Everest. **BIT!** is usually won when a player places one or more Climbers on the Summit of Everest and returns them safely to Advance Base Camp. Some scenarios have special rules governing victory conditions.

## **VI. Sequence of Play**

Each turn is played in phases that must be performed in the order outlined below. Most phases involve both players and can be performed simultaneously by both players, or can be performed by either player.

Players take turns performing the Movement Phase. The player with the fewest Climbers on a Route goes first (roll 1D6 to break ties). When both players complete a phase, move on to the next phase.

**A. Weather Phase\*\*.** Roll to determine if the Weather improves, worsens, or remains the same.

### **B. Discard/Draw Phase.**

1. Players may discard up to three cards from their hands.
2. Players draw from their active decks until they have five cards in their hands.

**C. Advance Base Camp Phase.** Players form Climbing Teams using Climber, Sherpas, and Supplies cards from their hands or from cards already in Advance Base Camp.

### **D. Movement Phase\***

1. Movement/Strength Adjust. Move a Climbing Team (a group of Climber, Sherpas, and Supplies cards) from one Terrain card to another. Adjust Strength markers for each Climber.
2. Draw Event Cards. Draw an Event for the Climbing Team. Apply the effects as directed on the card if the Terrain type of the card drawn matches the Terrain card at the Altitude level just entered.
3. Cache Supplies by moving them from the Climbing Team and placing them to the right of the Terrain card.
4. Unload Supplies by moving them from the Climbing Team and placing them to the left side of a Terrain card. Cached Supplies can also be unloaded if a Climber is present.
5. Declare movement ended for that Climbing Team (invert cards) or continue to step 1 above.
6. Continue moving Climbing Teams following steps 1-5 above until all have ended movement.

### **E. Setup Camp Phase.**

Players may place a Camp card from their hands on a Terrain card which contains at least one Climber and one Unloaded Supplies card.

### **F. Night Phase.**

1. Strength Recovery. Draw an Event card for each Altitude level containing a Climber(s) to determine the Strength levels recovered. Adjust for Unloaded Supplies (+1), Camp (+1), and Ter-

rain . Adjust Climbers Strength markers accordingly. Remove any Climbers that drop below “Near Death.”

3. Sherpas Desertion. Remove Sherpas that are alone or stacked in excess of one card per Terrain card and place them in the dead pile.

**G. End of Turn\*\*.** Advance turn marker.

\* = **players take turns**

\*\* = **either player may perform**

## **VII. Weather Phase**

**A. On Turn 1:** Place the Weather marker on either “Good” or “Fair” as directed by the scenario.

**B. Turns 2 and Later:** Roll 1D6 and consult the Weather Table. On a roll of 1, weather worsens; move the weather marker one position right on the Weather Track (for example, from “Good” to “Fair”). On a roll of 6, weather improves; move the weather marker one position left (for example, from “Storm” to “Poor”).

**C. Scenarios:** Some scenarios contain special rules for deteriorating or improving weather. Subtract from or add to the die roll before checking for weather as specified in the scenario.

**D. Effects of Weather:** Good and Fair Weather provide immunity against some bad Event cards. Poor Weather prevents movement out of Advance Base Camp. Storm Weather prevents movement of any kind.

## **VIII. Discard/Draw Phase.**

**A. Discard.** Each player may discard up to three cards.

**B. Draw.** Each player may draw cards from that player’s active pile to a maximum of five in hand.

**C. Depleted piles.** If a player’s active pile is depleted and there are cards in that player’s discard pile, shuffle the discard pile and it becomes the active pile. If there are no cards in either a player’s active or discard pile then the player can not draw cards until some are discarded or otherwise enter the discard pile.

## **IX. Advance Base Camp Phase.**

Players may move (deploy) cards from their hands to their respective Advance Base Camps. Only Climber, Sherpas, and Supplies cards may be deployed to Advance Base Camp, and they must be deployed as part of a valid Climbing Team.

Climbing Teams are composed of the following: a. One or more Climber cards; b. One Sherpas card; c. One Supplies card. A Climbing Team may not contain a Supplies card unless it also contains a Sherpas card. A Climbing Team may not contain a Sherpas card unless it also contains at

least one Climber card. A Climbing Team may contain only Climbers cards. A Climbing Team may contain at most one Sherpas card and one Supplies card, but may contain any number of Climber cards.

Stack cards belonging to a Climbing Team together to indicate they are part of that team.

If at any time a Sherpas or Supplies card is at Advance Base Camp and it is NOT part of a Climbing Team, that card must be removed to the player's discard pile.

## **X. Movement Phase**

Players move groups of Climbers, Sherpas, and Supplies cards (Climbing Teams) from one Terrain card to another, pausing adjust Climber Strength levels for exiting some Terrain cards and drawing Event cards for Terrain cards entered.

There is no "movement allowance" per se in **BIT!** Movement will end if one or more of the following occurs:

1. An Event card directs that the Climbing Team must end movement.
2. A Climber reaches a Strength level of "Near Death" (EXCEPTION: Sherpas may carry)
3. Weather becomes "Storm" as a result of an Event card or Weather roll.
4. A player voluntarily declares movement is ended for the Climbing Team.

Invert cards that have ended movement to help keep track of which Climbing Teams have moved. Flip them back over again at the end of the Movement Phase.

**A. Movement:** Move a Climbing Team from Advance Base Camp onto the lowest Terrain card, from one Terrain card to another, or from the lowest Terrain card to Advance Base Camp. Players must move Climbing Teams one at a time, completing movement for each before moving another. Keep Climbers, Sherpas, and any Loaded Supplies on the right side of the Terrain card.

**1. Climbing Teams:** Climbers and (optionally) Sherpas and (optionally) Supplies must move stacked together as a Climbing Team. A Climbing Team must contain at least one climber counter. Sherpas may NOT move alone (Sherpas may be left at a Camp without a Climber.)

**2. Limits of Stamina:** Climbers starting the movement phase at the Strength level of Near Death may not move. Climbers which reach Near Death as a result of movement or Event card effects must end movement immediately. Climbers at any Strength level may be carried, however.

**3. Carrying Climbers.** One Climber card may be carried by a Sherpas card that is NOT carrying a Supplies card. Climbers may be picked up or dropped off, like Supplies, at any time during movement.

**4. Moving Supplies:** Supplies cards may only be moved if stacked with a Sherpas card. A single Sherpas card can carry one Supplies card.

**5. Caching Supplies.** Supplies may be dumped ("Cached") by placing them on the right-hand

side of a Terrain card. Cached Supplies may be picked up at any time during movement, provided they are on the right hand side of the Terrain cards.

**6. Unloading Supplies.** Supplies may be Unloaded by removing them from the Climbing Team and placing them on the left-hand side of the Terrain card. Unloaded Supplies may NEVER be picked up again and moved, or moved to the right-hand side of the Terrain card. Unloaded Supplies remain where they are unless Depleted or lost due to a Storm.

**7. Effect of Weather:** Movement is not allowed if Weather is “Storm.” Simply skip the Movement Phase if Weather is “Storm.” In addition, any Supplies cards (Cached or Unloaded) and/or Camps on Terrain cards that do not also contain at least one Climber card are immediately removed to the discard pile.

**6. Stacking Restrictions:** There are no restrictions to the number of Climbers, Sherpas, or Supplies that may occupy the same Terrain card during the Movement Phase. However, at the end of the Night Phase, no more than one Sherpas may be in a Terrain card. Remove any excess to the dead pile. Any number of Climbers or Supplies (Cached or Unloaded) may occupy a Terrain card at any time. Any number of Climbers, Supplies, and Sherpas cards can occupy the Advance Base Camp provided they are grouped in valid Climbing Teams.

**7. Summit.** There is no Strength cost for exiting the Summit card.

**B. Strength Adjustment:** Adjust Climber Strength markers down (to the right) for Climbers exiting a Terrain card by number indicated on the head of the arrow which points to the card just entered.

**1. Climber death.** If any Climber’s Strength drops below “Near Death” as a result of movement, immediately remove that Climber card to the dead pile.

**2. Exhausted/Near Death at Advance Base Camp.** If a Climber ends movement in Advance Base Camp and that Climber’s Strength is “Exhausted” or “Near Death,” remove that Climber card to the discard pile. That Climber may return to play when it is next drawn next as usual (at full Strength).

**3. Carried Climbers:** Climbers which are being carried by Sherpas are NOT excused from paying the Strength cost of exiting a Terrain card. Carried Climbers pay Strength costs just like Climbers that are not being carried.

**C. Event Card Draw:** Draw an Event card for the Climbing Team that just moved. If the border around the Event card matches the Terrain card just entered, apply the effects as described on the card.

**1. Used Event Cards:** Place “used” Event cards in a pile. When all Event cards from the active Event card pile are used, reshuffle the “used” pile; it now becomes the “active” pile.

**2. Random Selection:** When an Event card specifies “one Climber chosen at random” or “one Climber or Sherpas chosen at random,” select one Climber or Sherpas from ALL of the Climbers and/or Sherpas in that Terrain card. Players may decide the method of random selection.

**3. Event Effects.** When an Event card specifies “ALL Climbers” the effect impacts ALL Climbers in the Terrain card, not just those in the Climbing Team that triggered the Event.

**4. Immunity to Events:** Some Event cards have an Immunity printed in the lower left hand corner. Immunities are certain conditions that, when met, cause an Event to have no effect. An Immunity can be a Weather condition (Good, Fair, Poor, Storm), a Climber Skill (Veteran, Experienced, Novice), or a Climber Special Skill (Routefinding, Sherpas, Mechanical).

Some Immunities contain a plus sign (“+”) after them. This can be read as “or better.” For example, “Fair+” means Fair weather or better (Fair or Good), and “Experienced+” means Experienced or better (Experienced or Veteran).

If the Weather matches (or betters) the Immunity or any Climber in the Terrain card matches the Special Skill or matches (or betters) the Skill rating, ignore the effects printed on the card.

**5. Summit.** Do not draw an Event card for entering the Summit card.

## **IX. Camps**

**A. Setting Up Camps:** Players may play a Camp card from their hands onto a Terrain card containing a Climbing Teams with an Unloaded Supplies card (whether they carried it there or not). Camps may not be placed on Terrain cards containing only a Cached Supplies card.

**B. Striking Camps:** Camps may be struck (removed from play) at any time simply by removing the Camp card and placing it in the discard pile as long as at least one Climber card is in the same Terrain card at the time.

**D. Camp Location:** Any Climbers or Sherpas in a Terrain card containing a Camp are assumed to be “in” that Camp and receive the Camp bonus for the Night Phase.

## **X. Night Phase**

During this phase, Climbers may regain some or all Strength levels lost during Movement, or they may lose additional levels due to the effects of altitude, being out of supply, and not being in a Camp.

Determine Strength Recovery separately for each Terrain card containing a Climbing Team. Apply the results to all Climbers in that Terrain card.

**1. Recovery Draw:** Draw an Event card. Ignore the Terrain type of the Event card, the Event description, and the Event effects printed on the card. The highlighted number printed in the lower right hand corner of the Event card is the Base Strength Recovery.

**2. Camp Bonus:** Add one (+1) to the Base Strength Recovery if the Climbing Team is in an Area containing a Camp card.

**3. Unloaded Supplies Bonus:** Add one (+1) to the Base Strength Recovery if the Climbing Team is in an Area containing an Unloaded Supplies card. This bonus is optional and players should declare whether they are using it before drawing an Event card.

**4. Storm Penalty:** If Weather is “Storm,” subtract one (-1) from the Base Strength Recovery for Climbers in High Terrain cards and subtract two (-2) from the Base Strength Recovery for Climbers in Extreme Terrain cards.

**5: Strength Level Adjustment:** The result of the Base Strength Recovery and all adjustments is the Net Strength Recovery. Adjust the Climber Strength marker for each Climber in that Terrain card by the Net Strength Recovery, left (for a positive result), right (for a negative result), or not at all if the net is zero.

**6. Maximum Strength:** A Climber’s Strength may never rise above the Strength level that is printed on that Climber’s card, regardless of the outcome of the Strength Recovery draw and adjustments.

**6. Climber Death:** If a Climber’ Strength drops to “Near Death” and the Climber still has more Strength levels to lose, that Climber has died. Remove that Climber card to the dead pile.

**7. Depleted Supplies.** If the result of the Strength Recovery draw and adjustments is negative, and an Unloaded Supplies card is present and the bonus for such was being used, that Supplies card is Depleted and is removed to the player’s discard pile.

**8. Advance Base Camp Strength Recovery.** Any Climbers in Advance Base Camp automatically recovery two Strength levels. Do not draw for Climbers in Advance Base Camp, or add Supplies bonus, etc. The recovery in Advance Base Camp is ALWAYS two levels, period.

**C. Sherpas Desertion:** If any Sherpas cards are on a Terrain card that does not also contain a Climber card, remove that Sherpas card to the dead pile.

## **XI. End of Turn**

The game ends immediately if the Victory Conditions for the scenario are met. The game also ends if the current turn is turn 20 and no player has met the Victory Conditions. Otherwise, advance the Turn marker one turn on the Turn track.

## **XII. Scenarios**

The descriptions below detail the relevant information needed to play each scenario of BIT!

Route descriptions describe the historical routes taken by a particular expedition and the Terrain card type that is randomly drawn to represent terrain along that route. For example, the South Col Route is described as East Rongbuk Glacier (Glacier), North Col (High), North Ridge (High), Northeast Shoulder (High), Northeast Ridge (Extreme, Extreme), Summit. To construct the South

Col Route, randomly select two Glacier cards, two High Altitude cards, and two Extreme Altitude cards, and place them in front of the player in the order selected (placing Glacier cards nearest and Extreme cards furthest away). Lastly, place the Summit card at the top of the Route.

### **1924 British Expedition**

Player: Solo

Climbers: Mallory, Irvine, Finch, Somervell, Norton, Bruce.

Sherpas: Four.

Camps: Three.

Supplies: Four.

Special: None.

North Ridge Route: East Rongbuk Glacier (Glacier), North Col (High), North Ridge (High), Northeast Shoulder (High), Northeast Ridge (Extreme, Extreme), Summit.

Great Couloir Route: East Rongbuk Glacier (Glacier), North Col (High), North Ridge (High), Great Couloir (High, High, Extreme), Summit.

Weather: Weather on Turn 1 is "Fair." Subtract 1 from the Weather roll on Turn 10 and thereafter.

Special Rules: Only Mallory and Irvine climbed with supplemental oxygen. Ignore any oxygen-related Event cards unless Mallory and/or Irvine are in the Climbing Team.

Victory Conditions: The scenario is successfully completed if at least one Climber reaches the Summit and returns to Advanced Base Camp by Turn 20.

### **1953 British Expedition**

Player: Solo

Climbers: Hunt, Hillary, Tenzing, Bourdillon, Evans, Lowe

Sherpas: Five.

Camps: Five.

Supplies: Six.

Special: All cards except Bivouac.

South Col Route: Khumbu Icefall (Glacier), Western Cwm (Glacier), Lhotse Face (High), South Col (High), Southeast Ridge (Extreme), South Summit (Extreme), Summit.

Weather: Weather on Turn 1 is "Good." Subtract 1 from the Weather roll on Turn 15 and thereafter.

Victory Conditions: The scenario is completed successfully if at least two Climbers reach the Summit and return safely to Advance Base Camp.

### **1963 American Expedition**

Players: Two (Player One and Player Two)

Climbers: Player One: Whittaker, Gombu, Jerstad, Bishop; Player Two: Hornbein, Unsoeld

Sherpas: Four each player.

Camps: Four each player.

Supplies: Five each player.

Special: All cards.

South Col Route: Khumbu Icefall (Glacier), Western Cwm (Glacier), Lhotse Face (High), South Col (High), Southeast Ridge (Extreme), South Summit (Extreme), Summit.

West Ridge Route: Western Cwm (Glacier), West Shoulder (High), West Ridge (High, High, Extreme), North Face (Extreme), Summit.

Weather: Turn 1 through 10 is “Good” -- do not roll for Weather. Roll for Weather Turn 11 and thereafter.

Special Rules: In this scenario, one player (Player One) attempts to place a minimum of two Climbers on the Summit using the South Col Route while the other (Player Two) attempts to reach the Summit with both Climbers using the West Ridge Route and descending via the South Col Route.

Victory Conditions: The scenario is successfully completed if at least two Climbers owned by each player reach the Summit and return to Advanced Base Camp by Turn 20 using the Routes directed in the Special Rules. If both players succeed or both fail the game is a draw. If only one succeeds that player is the winner.

### **“Dream Teams” on Everest**

Players: Two

Climbers: Six Climbers each player (see Special Rules).

Sherpas: Four each player

Routes: See Special Rules.

Weather: Turn 1 is “Good.”

Camps: Four each player.

Special: All Special cards.

Special Rules: Each player rolls 1D6 and the player rolling the higher number selects one card from any of the Climber cards. The other player then selects a Climber card, and players alternate picking Climbers until both players have six Climbers. Players are NOT limited to choosing Climbers from the same historical expedition. Players split the eight Sherpas cards, eight Camp cards, and ten Supplies cards (four, four, and five each, respectively). Each player selects a Route from those described in the other scenarios (both players may choose the same Route but Terrain cards are drawn and Routes formed separately).

Victory Conditions: Victory Points (VP) are awarded to each player for every one of that player's Climbers that reach the Summit and survives the game. If a Climber dies during the game no VP are received for that Climber reaching the Summit (although Climbers can remain in play after reaching the Summit). VP are awarded only once for each Climber (no repeats). The number of VP awarded depends on the Route climbed:

North Ridge Route: 5 points

Great Couloir Route: 5 points

South Col Route: 3 points

West Ridge Route: 4 points

The player with the highest number of VP at the end of Turn 20 is the winner.