

A Race for the Ages — Updated Rules Outline

1. Game Overview

A Race for the Ages is a memory-match racing game for **2–4 players**. Players race through five stages of transportation and speed:

Run → Bike → Sailing → Car → Rocket → Moon

On each turn, players reveal two facedown cards and try to find the specific matching pair they currently need. Successful matches move racers farther and allow them to go again, while failed matches still provide a small amount of movement.

Terrain spaces, stage-specific Bonus Cards, private Peek effects, and smart timing give racers additional ways to advance.

The first player to successfully match the final **Landing** pair lands on the Moon and wins.

2. Core Components

The current game concept includes:

- 1 main Race Board
 - 4 Racer Pawns
 - 4 Player Boards
 - Stage and Progress Markers
 - Run Cards
 - Bike Cards
 - Sailing Cards
 - Car Cards
 - Rocket Cards
 - Stage-Specific Bonus Card pairs
 - Special terrain spaces on the board
 - Reference cards / rulebook
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3. The Five Race Stages

Stage 1 — Run

Four required pairs:

Match	Movement
Speed Walk	2
Jog	3
Run	4
Sprint	5

Perfect-match track length: 14 spaces

Stage 2 — Bike

Five required pairs:

Match	Movement
Slow Pedal	2
Cruise	3
Pace	4
Fast Pedal	5
Breakaway	6

Perfect-match track length: 20 spaces

Stage 3 — Sailing

Six required pairs:

Match	Movement
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Calm	2
Breeze	
Steady Sail	3
Full Sail	4
Fast Tack	5
Strong Gust	6
Regatta	7

Perfect-match track length: 27 spaces

Stage 4 — Car

Six required Gear pairs:

Match Movement

Gear 1 2

Gear 2 3

Gear 3 4

Gear 4 5

Gear 5 6

Gear 6 7

Perfect-match track length: 27 spaces

Turbo Boost is a Car-stage Bonus pair and may be found at any time during the Car stage. It is not part of the required Gear sequence.

Stage 5 — Rocket

Six required pairs:

Match Movement

Liftoff 5

Boost	4
Drift	3
Approach	2
Engine Off	1
Landing	0 — WIN

Rocket flight-path length: 15 spaces

Landing does not provide movement. Successfully matching Landing wins the game.

4. Setting Up the Memory Grids

Cards are shuffled and placed **facedown in a neat grid pattern**.

Every card has a fixed position within the grid. Whenever normal Race Cards are revealed, they are returned facedown to exactly the same location.

Normal matched Race Cards are **never removed from the grid**.

This means everyone can learn from every player's turn.

5. Difficulty Levels

Basic

Each stage has its own independent grid:

Run | Bike | Sailing | Car | Rocket

Stage-specific Bonus pairs are mixed into their appropriate grids.

When Bonus Cards are claimed and removed, the resulting empty spaces remain empty.

Advanced

Combine:

Run + Bike

and

Sailing + Car

Rocket always remains separate.

When Bonus pairs are removed, perform a **Grid Shift** to close the empty spaces.

Expert

Combine:

Run + Bike + Sailing + Car

into one large memory grid.

Rocket always remains separate.

Bonus removals also trigger a **Grid Shift**.

6. Optional Course Preview

For an easier game, Basic Mode may use **Course Preview**.

When a stage first becomes active, randomly reveal:

Stage	Public Preview
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Run	1 card
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Bike	2 cards
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Sailing	3 cards
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Car	4 cards
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Rocket	None
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Everyone sees the revealed cards before they are returned facedown.

Course Preview is optional.

7. Public Reveals

Every card selected during a normal turn is revealed so **all players can see it**.

Reveal the first card, allow everyone to see it, then reveal the second card.

Once the attempt has been resolved, both cards are returned facedown to their original locations unless they are a successfully matched Bonus pair.

Paying attention during another player's turn is therefore an important part of the game.

8. Player Boards

Each player has a board that tracks:

- Current race stage
- Current required match
- Sequence of matches
- Movement value of each match
- Stored Bonus Cards
- Important turn reminders

Players may be at completely different points in their matching sequences even when their racers are physically close together.

9. Starting the Race

Turn order provides later players with additional information because they see more cards before taking their first turn.

To compensate, racers receive a Head Start:

Player 1: +3 spaces

Player 2: +2 spaces

Player 3: +1 space

Player 4: Start

These positions are marked directly on the Run track.

10. Taking a Turn

Reveal two cards.

Correct Required Match

If the two cards are the pair currently required on your Player Board:

1. Move the listed number of spaces.
2. Advance your Progress Marker.
3. Turn both cards facedown.
4. **Go again.**

Incorrect Match

If the two cards are not your required pair:

1. Turn them facedown.
2. Move **1 space**.
3. End your turn.

Information revealed remains available to everyone who remembers it.

11. Matches Must Normally Be Found in Sequence

Within a stage, your Player Board tells you which Race pair you currently need.

If you need **Jog** and reveal both **Sprint** cards, you have found a matching pair, but it does not advance your tracker or provide Sprint's movement.

You have, however, learned where Sprint is for later.

12. Players Do Not Have to Complete Every Match

Completing the entire sequence is **not required to leave a stage**.

Movement may come from:

- successful Race matches,
- the 1-space movement from misses,
- Bonus Cards,
- helpful board spaces,
- other special effects.

If these effects get you to the next stage before you complete your entire sequence, you advance anyway.

Any unfinished matches from the old stage are abandoned.

This allows racers to overcome difficult memory situations through smart use of bonuses and the board.

13. Transition Rule

When movement reaches or passes the end of a stage:

Stop at the transition point.

Any excess movement is lost.

Then:

1. Move your stage tracker to the new stage.
2. Set your Progress Marker to that stage's first required match.
3. Immediately **go again**, revealing two cards from the newly entered stage.

Movement never carries across a transition.

Example:

A racer needs Sprint but is only 1 space away from Bike. They miss Sprint, move 1 space, and reach Bike.

Instead of ending their turn, they enter Bike and immediately attempt **Slow Pedal**.

14. Stage Leader Bonus

The first racer to enter each new stage earns the **Stage Leader Bonus**.

This occurs when first reaching:

Bike, Sailing, Car, and Rocket

The Stage Leader immediately gains **1 Bonus Card**.

Only one Stage Leader Bonus is awarded per stage.

Playtest item: We should still finalize exactly how this bonus is drawn now that most Bonus Cards are stage-specific pairs hidden inside the memory grids.

15. Stage-Specific Bonus Pairs

Each stage currently has two thematic Bonus sets.

Run

Water Bottle — Add +1 movement to a turn.

Second Wind — After a failed match, take another turn.

Bike

Energy Bar — Add +1 to your next 3 moves.

Gear Shift — Move forward 2 spaces.

Sailing

Tailwind — Move forward 3 spaces.

Steady Rudder — Privately Peek at 2 cards in the Sailing grid.

Car

Shortcut — Move forward 3 spaces.

Turbo Boost — Move forward 7 spaces.

Rocket

Gravity Assist — Move forward 2 spaces.

Navigation Scan — Privately Peek at 2 cards in the Rocket grid.

These values can still be adjusted through playtesting.

16. Matching Bonus Cards

Bonus pairs do **not** have to be found in stage sequence.

If you reveal two matching Bonus Cards:

1. Claim the Bonus.
2. Remove both Bonus Cards from the grid.
3. Your required Race tracker does not advance.
4. You receive no normal Race-match movement.
5. **Go again.**

You are still searching for the same required Race pair.

Unlike Race Cards, claimed Bonus Cards do not remain available to other players.

17. Grid Shift

Basic Mode

Removing a Bonus pair leaves two empty spaces.

Do not move any other cards.

Advanced and Expert

Removing a Bonus pair triggers a **Grid Shift**.

Move remaining facedown cards only as necessary to close the gaps and create a clean, even grid.

Do **not** reshuffle or randomly rearrange the cards.

Everyone may watch the cards move and try to follow their new positions.

18. Special Board Spaces

The race track contains stage-themed spaces that can help or hinder racers.

Current categories include:

Peek — gain information about hidden cards.

Boost — gain additional movement.

Obstacle — lose movement, move backward, or receive another minor penalty.

Catch-Up — gives trailing racers additional help.

Special terrain is intended to make physical race position matter just as much as memory skill.

19. Position-Based Peek

Some board spaces trigger a private Peek based on current race position:

1st place: Peek at 1 card

2nd place: Peek at 2 cards

3rd place: Peek at 3 cards

4th place: Peek at 4 cards

Peeked cards are seen **only by that player** and returned facedown to their original positions.

This provides a natural catch-up mechanic without simply giving trailing racers free movement.

20. Entering the Rocket Stage

When a player reaches the end of Car movement, they stop on the **Launch Pad**.

Excess movement is lost.

They immediately switch their tracker to **Liftoff** and attempt the Liftoff pair.

If they are the first racer to reach Rocket, they also receive the Stage Leader Bonus.

21. The Liftoff Rule

The Launch Pad is the only location where a failed normal match does **not** move the racer 1 space.

The rocket cannot move until:

Liftoff + Liftoff

is successfully matched.

If Liftoff is missed:

- turn the cards facedown,
- remain on the Launch Pad,
- move 0,
- end the turn.

Once Liftoff is found, move **5 spaces** and go again.

22. Rocket Flight

After Liftoff, the normal miss rule returns.

The player proceeds through:

Boost 4 → Drift 3 → Approach 2 → Engine Off 1 → Landing 0

A failed attempt after Liftoff still moves the Rocket **1 space**.

As with earlier stages, board movement and Bonus Cards may carry a racer to the end of the Rocket flight path without completing every remaining movement match.

23. Landing

Reaching the Moon does **not** automatically win.

Once a player's Rocket has reached the final landing area, they must successfully reveal:

Landing + Landing

Landing provides **0 movement**.

It represents safely touching down on the lunar surface.

24. Winning the Game

The first player to successfully match the two **Landing** cards completes the journey:

Run → Bike → Sailing → Car → Rocket → Moon

and wins **A Race for the Ages**.

Current design principle

The game is intentionally built so that **memory is the primary engine, but memory alone does not determine the winner**. Terrain, Bonus Cards, shared information, catch-up Peeks, movement from missed matches, and transitions all create alternate ways to keep racing forward.