Mass Effect: The Board Game - Rules Summary (v2)

Campaign Setup and overview:

- **Mission Book** contains the mission maps plus mission rules page with mission info and parameters
- **Campaign Map** shows available missions: 10 main missions (you will play 3 in one campaign) plus 4 optional loyalty missions (you will play up to 2 in one campaign).
 - Choose your starting mission 1a, 1b or 1c.
 - Note that your starting mission defines which two of the four 2nd missions you can choose (2a, 2b, 2c or 2d).
 - Likewise, your 2nd main mission will determine which 2 of the 3 final missions you can choose (3a, 3b or 3c).
 - o An optional loyalty mission follows mission 1 and 2
 - Successful loyalty missions unlocks an ability
- Squadmates. There will always be 4 Squadmates in a game (one must be Shepard, either male or female). Solo must play all four. Two players play two Squadmates each. With three players, one player will control two Squadmates. Each Squadmate has unique core ability and skills. Squadmates available (you will choose 3 plus Shepard):
 - Shepard (male or female) (versatile) Core ability is commanding other Squadmates and leading and coordinating their efforts.
 - Garrus Vakarian (range attack specialty) Core ability is
 Aiming for precision shots.
 - Liara T'soni (biotic effects) uses Analysis to predict enemy movements and avoiding hazards
 - Tali'zorah (with her drone) her drone can rove ahead to attack and hack
 - Urdnot Wrex (close range combat) his Blood Rage deals damage to multiple enemies at once
 - Note: Typically you keep the starting chosen Squadmates for the full campaign, but you can change them after each mission if you wish.
- Narrative Book should be nearby to read a certain numbered paragraph when instructed (do not read any others)

Prepare for Campaign Game Play:

- **Choose** one of the 3 missions from the bottom row of the Campaign Sheet to start a campaign. Or continue a campaign with an available Mission 2 or Mission 3 (or loyalty mission).
- Open the Mission Book to that Mission page. Set on table.
- **Read the Mission Summary** (top of Mission Info page).
 - Read the additional mission rules (some missions do not have them). They take precedence over standard game rules.
- Read the main and secondary objectives (in black boxes)
- Read the **Objectives** for the Paragon (blue box) and Renegade (red box) victories (not in Loyalty Missions).
- Read the Loyalty Objectives when playing a Loyalty Mission.
- Some Missions have a **Preliminary Objective** that must be completed before the Main Objectives.

- Read the **Mission Fail** box at the bottom of the page. It tells you what will happen if you fail the mission.
- Elite enemies for the mission are shown at the bottom of the Mission Info page. Place their tokens on the matching elite spawn hexes on the map.
- Place enemy minion tokens into the bag as directed on the Mission page. The Enemy Forces box on the Mission Rules Page will specify which faction Minion tokens to use: Cerberus (orange) or Reaper (purple) (never both).
 - Minion tokens have different "challenge levels", so use the low level for the first mission. Future missions will let you know how many minion tokens for each level (low, medium, extreme) to place in the bag.
- Randomly draw enemy minion tokens from the bag and place the tokens on the spawn hexes on the mission map as directed, active side up (unless they are in a shrouded area).
- Set the **Hazard Deck** that matches the enemy type for this mission (Cerebus or Reaper) next to the mission map.
 - As cards are used, they form a discard pile next to the deck.
- Question Mark (objective) tokens are considered to be Points of Interest or Key Locations. Place on indicated question mark map hexes.
- **Loot tokens** are randomly placed face down on loot map hexes. Moving onto their hex lets you gain that loot.
 - Bonus Loot may be referred to in the Additional Setup Instructions for some Missions or there might be bonus loot icons on the map (just place a loot token on them).
- Some maps have **refugee** hexes where you place a refugee token. Part of your objective may be to rescue them!
- Doors: The door tokens are double sided with green for unlocked and orange for locked
 - When placing door tokens on the map during setup, be sure to place them with the correct side facing up
- **Turrets**: Some maps have **turret** locations on some hexes. Place a turret token there (active side up)
- **Squadmates**: Choose and place the **4 Squadmates** on the map in the indicated hexes (must include Shepard).
 - You choose which one goes on each hex.
 - o Give the Squadmate sheet to the player controlling them.
 - Give the **On Point token** to the player controlling Shepard.
- Place the blue shield tracking cube and the red health (aka hit point) tracking cube on the rightmost spot of their tracks.
- Follow additional setup instructions in each Squadmates
 Core Ability box. Example: Some Squadmates have a **special ability track**. Place a <u>yellow</u> tracking cube there (or inactive rage tokens for Wrex)
- Add one blue **Paragon die** for each Paragon victory in the campaign.
- Place a renegade token for each Renegade victory next to each Squadmate sheet.
- Shepard starts the mission with the On Point token
 Give all 12 white dice to this player.

Game Concepts:

- **Enemies and Squadmates** move around the mission map from hex to adjacent hex.
- A red wall or locked door between hexes prevents adjacent movement, but obstacles do not. A door token can be toggled unlocked or locked.
- Purple lines are obstacles (not walls). They do not prevent movement or adjacency. They do affect attacks.
- **Counting spaces**: count from one hex to an adjacent hex. You cannot pass through walls or locked doors for this path.
- Line of Fire goes from the current hex straight out from each of its six sides. Walls and doors (unlocked or locked) block this.
- **Shrouded Area**: any area that does not contain at least one Squadmate is shrouded.
 - Shrouded areas are revealed when a Squadmate stands on the hex before an unlocked door.
- Loot: moving onto a hex with loot reveals the loot and it's added to the squad inventory (all may use it). Set them face up next to Commander Shepard's sheet. They can be used at the start or end of any action:
 - o **Grenade**: target a hex within 3 does 2 damage
 - o Grenade Cache: target a hex within 3 does 3 damage
 - Medi-gel: heals yourself or Squadmate within 2 hexes with 2 hit points (move red health tracker cube up to 2 hexes to the right)
 - Intel Cache: at the end of a Mission, for each Intel Cache token, mark one empty circle in the Intel Gathered grid on the Campaign Map. If a circle with a red arrow is marked, one Squadmate can immediately unlock a new Ability of their choice. Return all Intel Cache tokens to the box.
- Turrets: characters CAN move onto a hex with a turret. It is activated by Hazard cards. Its line of fire includes its own hex and goes out in 1 single line, dealing damage to each Squadmate in its line of fire. The amount of damage is shown on the Hazard card. A Squadmate has an Ability to disable a turret. When disabled, flip it over to its disabled side.
- Fast Travel: Some maps have two Fast Travel icons. You can spend one movement point to go from one to the other.
 - o Enemies may not use Fast Travel
 - o Fast Travel does not provoke an Opportunity Attack
- **Inferno**: When a Squadmate or Minion moves onto a hex with the Inferno icon, it suffers 1 damage.
 - At the start of a round, suffer 1 damage if on an Inferno hex
 Elite enemies are not affected
- **Elevation Change**: Some missions feature elevation changes (ie, trenches or raised platforms).
 - Low ground is darker colored. High ground is lighter colored. Hex edges between elevations are a bright orange.
 - A Turret at a different elevation does not have line of fire except for the immediately adjacent hex
 - Squadmates CAN move from high to low (no movement penalty)
 - Squadmates CANNOT move from low to high.
- **Terminals**: A hex with a Terminal icon indicates a computer terminal. Mission objectives provide special rules for them.

- Coolant Leaks: When a Squadmate ends their turn on a hex with a Coolant Leak icon, they suffer 2 damage
 Enemies are not affected.
- Out of Bounds: Characters cannot move outside the map hex area unless a Mission rules specifically allows it.
- 6 icons on a die:
 - o **2 arrows** move up to 2 hexes
 - o 3 arrows move up to 3 hexes
 - o blue! inside a circle standard action
 - o white! surrounded by blue enhanced action
 - o 2 movement OR standard action icons separated by /
 - o blue star triggers core ability

Squadmate Sheets (double sided):

- Place by the player controlling them. It is like a control panel showing the character rules, abilities and tracking areas.
 - o Top row lets you place a die to do a basic actions
 - Top right is the experience (XP) tracker for marking a circle for each enemy you destroy. Mark the circles from the top down - marking the third circle with the red arrow allows you to unlock a black Ability box of their choice.
 - o Core ability is in the red box on the left side.
 - Upper middle: Shield and hit points tracking. Under it is the tracking for the Squadmate special ability.
 - o Blue boxes are abilities available right from the start
 - **Black boxes** must be **unlocked** before they are available. When unlocked, check its white circle. **To unlock:**
 - Meet the requirements stated on a red outlined "advanced" box
 - Mark off the third experience circle in the top right Experience XP tracker. One column for each mission.
 - Mark off the third intel in a row near the top of the campaign sheet
 - Loyalty ability: bottom right can be unlocked by success in the Squadmate's loyalty mission.
 - A narrative story paragraph tells you to unlock a box

Campaign Map:

- **Tracks your Missions**, beginning with one of the three level 1 missions.
- **Tracks your Intel Gathered**: If you gain loot that gives Intel, mark a circle in the topmost row with an empty spot.
 - When you mark a circle with a red arrow in it, one of the Squadmates can unlock one of their special abilities
- When a Mission is over you **mark the circle** for one of the two successes or as a failure.
- After you complete a level 1 or 2 mission, follow the arrow paths from that mission to see what choices you have for your next mission (you can choose a loyalty mission on the way)
 - o Mark the path you take on the Campaign Map
- Loyalty Mission (optional): Choose which Squadmate loyalty mission to do
 - o Cannot do the same one twice in one campaign
- As you score **War Readiness points**, track those at the bottom of the campaign sheet

Play each round in a mission:

The game is played in a series of rounds. Each player takes their turn in clockwise order beginning with the **On Point player**. Each round is made up of **3 Phases** (Preparation, Squadmate, End):

1. Preparation phase

- Draw a **Hazard card** for each Squadmate and place it face down next to their Squadmate sheet
 - If a Squadmate is downed they do not get a card
- o The **On Point** Squadmate gets all 12 white dice
 - Exception: a downed Squadmate has 3 dice locked on their sheet that are not available to other Squadmates.
 - In missions 2 and 3 and loyalty missions they also get the blue Paragon dice awarded for prior Pargaon victories

2. Squadmate phase

- Going clockwise each Squadmate (beginning with the On Point Squadmate) takes their turn rolling the available dice in the dice pool and taking associated actions.
 - If any **blue Paragon dice** are available, they are included in the dice pool
 - The 2nd, 3rd and 4th Squadmates reroll the dice pool but may **lock 1 die** from the dice pool passed to them first (set it aside and do not reroll it, just keep it showing the icon as it was from the prior Squadmate's dice roll).
 - If available, a **Renegade token** can be used to change the result on any one die **to the icon of your choice**.
 - Each **star** rolled triggers their **core ability** and then are rerolled. If another star is rolled, it also triggers the **core ability** and is rerolled again.
 - Choose 3 of the dice from their pool and place them on their Squadmate sheet to take 3 actions from the top row of their Squadmate sheet or a special ability (then their turn is over).
 - Some actions have a box to place the die. If there is only one box, then that action may only be taken one time per turn.
 - Available blue Paragon dice can be used as bonus dice allowing a 4th or even 5th action
 - 3 white dice <u>must</u> be chosen and placed on a Squadmates sheet, but an action can be ignored
- Move: (2 or 3 arrows die placed in the top row) move your Squadmate up to the movement shown (2 or 3 arrows give 2 or 3 hex movements).
 - Can move through another Squadmate's hex but can't end movement there
 - Cannot move through an enemy hex
 - If a Squadmate is adjacent to an enemy **and moves away**, that **enemy makes an opportunity attack**
 - Squadmate is damaged equal to the enemy attack value
 - If multiple enemies make opportunity attacks, resolve them one at a time beginning with the highest attack value (highest to lowest)
 - Note: if a Squadmate is forced to move (ie, by a Hazard card) it does NOT provoke an opportunity attack.

- **Mission** (! die placed in the ! space in top row): do what the mission rules say for placing a die there. Not all missions allow this action.
- Revive (enhanced! action die placed on that top row spot): Revive a downed Squadmate in an <u>adjacent</u> hex.
 Follow instructions on the back of their Squadmate sheet.
- Special ability box: place a die in this box and perform that action. Only blue and unlocked black boxes are available. Many of these can do damage to enemies:
 - **Damage tokens** equal to the damage dealt is placed on the enemy token.
 - **Minions**: If damage equals or exceeds the enemy shield value, the enemy is defeated. The defeated minion token is <u>returned to the bag</u>.
 - Elite enemies must be defeated through several shields. The damage required for each shield is shown on the Resilience Tracker on the mission sheet. If the damage dealt equals or exceeds the amount required, mark that shield as eliminated (excess damage is lost and does not carry over to the next shield). You must do this for each of the shields. Once all shields are eliminated, the elite enemy is defeated and is removed from the board.
 - For each defeated enemy the current Squadmate is awarded 1 XP (mark it in the corresponding mission column in the experience XP grid of circles at the top right of their Squadmate sheet).
 - **Biotics** (ie, Liara): some Squadmates can place Biotic Effect tokens on an enemy that remain there until the end of the round. That enemy's attack value is reduced by 2 (can go down to zero). Only 1 biotic token is permitted on any one enemy.
 - **Stunned**: Some actions allow a Squadmate to stun an enemy. When stunned, flip the enemy token over. Stunned enemies cannot make Opportunity Attacks and are not Activated until the end of that round.
- Hazard card: Once a Squadmate has taken all their actions, they end their turn by revealing and resolving their Hazard card. Then place it in a discard pile. If the Hazard deck runs out or a third Escalation card instructs you, shuffle the discard pile into a new Hazard deck and mark a circle at the bottom of the Mission Failure box on the Mission Info page. When the third circle is marked, the mission ends in failure at the end of that round (you ran out of time).
 - This usually activates one or more enemies (see "Enemies Turn")
 - If a specified minion is not available on the board, instead you spawn a minion to the spawning hex closest to the current Squadmate. Do this once for each enemy type that cannot be activated.
 - It could spawn a minion onto an empty spawning hex (if none available, ignore spawning). To spawn an enemy, draw a minion token from the bag and place it on the appropriate spawning hex.

- 3. End phase (after all Squadmates have had their turn):
 - o Clear all damage tokens from minions on the board
 - Clear all damage tokens from elite enemies on the board
 - o Bring each Squadmate's shields back to full (farthest right).
 - Remove damage or biotic tokens from minions on the map

 - o Activate stunned enemies that are not shrouded.
 - o Pass the **On Point** token to the Squadmate (who is not downed) on the right (counter clockwise)
 - o Begin the next round.

Enemies Turn:

Note: when multiple enemies (or turrets) are activated, do them one at a time in order of those closest to the Squadmate who just finished their turn. If equidistant, you choose. Stunned enemies are not activated.

• Enemy Notes:

- o Enemies in shrouded areas are not activated and cannot be targeted by attacks or abilities. Flip their token to the stunned side just to remind you that they are hidden.
- o Elite enemies will vary and have tokens to place on the map but have their rules box on the mission page along with their shields which must be eliminated one by one.
- o **Minion tokens**: Cerberus (3 types) and Reaper (3 types)
 - Front (in color) is the active side the bottom shows the attack value (on the left) and shield value (on the right) plus a tag at the bottom.
 - Back (gray, black & white) is the stunned side o includes the challenge level
- **Minion TAGS** (bottom of token):
 - Ranged (circles and crosshair) can attack along line of fire
 - **Rush** (arrow on hex outline) can move up to 4 instead of 2
 - **React** (circle)

if hit and not destroyed moves 1 hex towards the Squadmate that inflicted the damage (you choose which hex it moves to as long as it is as close as possible)

■ **Pinned** (silhouette) Immediately after moving away from this enemy it pins the Squadmate so they can't continue moving

An activated enemy follows this procedure:

- It will attack an adjacent Squadmate
 - o or a Squadmate in it's line of fire if it has a range tag
- If it has more than one potential target, it attacks the one with the fewest hit points remaining (if equal, you choose).
- If it cannot attack, it moves up to 2 hexes instead.
 - o If it has the **Rush** tag it can move 4 instead of 2
 - o Enemies cannot move into a hex of another character.
 - o If possible it must move so it is in position to attack:
 - the current Squadmate
 - otherwise the nearest Squadmate
 - otherwise it moves towards the nearest Squadmate

- Squadmates attacked suffer damage equal to the enemy attack value.
 - o First damage will remove shields by moving the blue shield tracker cube to the left.
 - o If there are no shields left, but still more damage, then it reduces the health by moving the red health (hit point) tracker cube to the left.
 - o If a Squadmate's health (aka hit points) is reduced to zero, they are downed. If Shepard is downed, the mission ends immediately as a failure.
 - Flip the downed Squadmate's sheet over.
 - Three white dice are "locked" in the three boxes near the top as long as they are downed and are unavailable to other Squadmates.
 - They cannot move or take any actions while downed
 - They do not receive a Hazard card at the beginning of a round
 - Another Squadmate must come to an <u>adjacent</u> hex and use the **Revive** action to revive them.

End of Mission Scoring:

- Each main mission has clearly defined parameters for success and failure
 - o Paragon Victory (meet Paragon parameters, usually the harder victory and awarding more points)
 - Gain a Paragon die
 - Renegade Victory (meet Renegade parameters)
 - Gain Renegade tokens
 - o Shepard Defeat (Shepard was knocked down)
 - o Time Defeat (ran out of time based on needing to remake the Hazard Deck a third time)
- Each Loyalty Mission ends in Victory if the Loyalty Objective is completed.
- War Readiness (bottom of campaign sheet) is tracked during gameplay and gives your final score.
 - o At the end of each mission calculate how many points to add to your War Readiness score.
 - o You also can gain War Readiness points during a mission by accomplishing objectives
- Always advance to the next mission after mission 1 and 2 (success or failure)
 - o Except if you fail both mission 1 and 2. That ends the campaign.
 - o You also may do an optional Loyalty Mission

Saving the Game:

Between missions you can pack up the game. Your progress is already recorded on the Campaign sheet and Squadmate sheets which let you restart at a later time. OR you can scan the QR code in the rulebook to save your campaign.

Notes:

• If there is anything missed or incorrect, please let me know so that I can fix it.