

# Mudslinger

A Dirty Little Game of Politics

(3 to 6 players)

*Lie, cheat steal and backstab your way to victory on your quest to become the next President of the United States.*

## Object of the Game

*Accrue the most electoral points to win the "General Election"*

Players do this by securing elections in each state. Every state has their own electoral point value. At the end of the game, after all the states have been acquired, players add up their electoral points. The player with the most points wins.

## Game Difficulty

Looks hard at first, but it isn't!

## Description of Cards

6 Presidential Candidate cards (each player begins with one candidate)

50 State cards

112 Mudslinger cards (comprised of Group cards, Action Cards and Power cards)

## Other Things You'll Need

### Money Chits or Poker Chips

If we could have fit money chits in the game without it nearly doubling our costs, we would have (the burdens of small-press publishing). Fortunately, it is very easy to make money chits and then you throw them in a plastic baggy for use later. Poker chips can also work by assigning a campaign dollar figure for each colored poker chip. Also, pennies and nickels work, too.

One way to make money chits is to get a piece of construction paper (green, preferably) and cut them into ½" X 1" sizes (or whatever size you like, really). The size of the chits do not have to be perfect. With a marker or bold pen, write the number "1" on 40 of these chits (on BOTH sides of each chit if you want to make handling them even easier). Make another 40 with the number "2" and another 40 with the number "5". You can also make 10s and 20s but you probably won't need many of those. If you need more than this, simply make a few more.

*You can download a template of our money chits to print on our website: [mudslingerthegame.com](http://mudslingerthegame.com).*

## **Dice**

This game also requires 3 six-sided dice. Go cannibalize that Yahtzee™ game you never play or hit up the dollar store.

*Our accessories pack comes with the dice and money chits.*

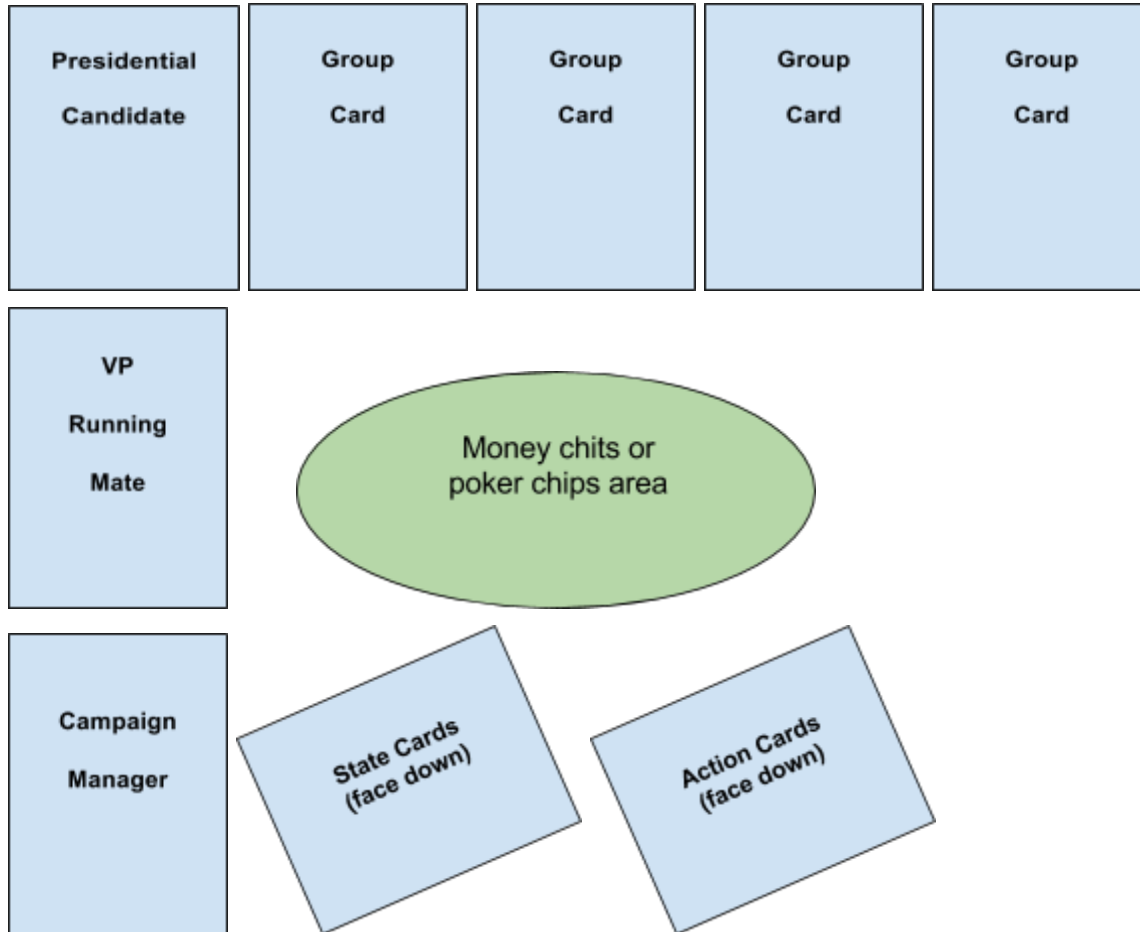
## **Setting up the Game**

1. Mix up the presidential cards and have players pick one randomly. Or not. We don't care. Just so every player gets one candidate card. Remove the "Pick Your Party" Candidate card when playing with fewer than six people. Fight or roll the dice to see who goes first.
2. Get a table and sit.
3. Every player needs to make a space in front of them to place their cards. Presidential Candidates in play are placed face up, at the top left corner of each player's area. Presidential Cards not held by players may be put back in the box.
4. Shuffle the Mudslinger deck and place it somewhere near the middle of the table, face down. Leave space for a discard pile. All discarded cards will be placed face up in this pile.
5. Shuffle the State deck and place it somewhere in the middle of the table, face down. However take the top four cards from the State deck and place them face-up in the middle of the table. These four states are currently available to be won by the candidates. Anytime a state card is won by a player, flip another one over, leaving four face up at all times (until there are fewer than four left to be won).

## Basics of Card Placement during Gameplay

Acquired Group cards will be placed to the right of the Candidate cards. Group cards financially support a campaign. Power cards will be placed below the Candidate cards. These include Vice-Presidential Candidates and Campaign Managers.

An example of what a player's hand will look like *after* having acquired groups, action cards and state cards:



## Understanding the Political Spectrum

Presidential Candidates each have a political party to which they belong: Peaceful, Liberal, Independent, Conservative or Militant. Groups and Vice-Presidential running mates also belong to one of those parties. Campaign Managers do not belong to a political party and can be held by any player, any time.

*You must keep the political spectrum in mind when placing group and power cards.*

Peaceful | Liberal | Independent | Conservative | Militant

Think of the word **POLITICUM** (latin for “political”), to remember the spectrum.

## Rules Behind Group and Power Cards and How to Place Them

Group cards support a candidate with campaign dollars every turn. The number listed on the bottom left of the card is the amount of campaign dollars given to the candidate at the beginning of each turn. For example, let’s say Bob has four groups supporting him, each worth one campaign dollar. He would get four campaign dollars at the beginning of his turn. On his next turn, he picks up another group and it’s worth two campaign dollars, so the following turn, he would get six campaign dollars.

*Quick Note: Use money chits (explained at the bottom of these rules) or poker chips to manage money.*

Power cards are vice-presidential running mates and campaign managers. These cards increase the influence of a presidential candidate. This increases a player’s influence or “base roll” when attempting to acquire a state.

The first Group placed to the right of a Presidential Candidate must belong to the same party as the candidate, or be one party to the left or right of the candidate. For instance, the Liberal Presidential Candidate could pick up her first group card if it belonged to the Liberal party, or the Peaceful party (one to the left) or the Independent party (one to the right). Each subsequent Group card will be placed to the right of the last Group card, and the same rules apply. It can belong to the same party, or be one to the left or right, of the last *Group’s* party alignment.

For example: the Conservative Candidate has a Militant Group to its right. The next group card is Conservative, followed by an Independent, and finally a Liberal Group. Essentially, Groups funnel money through each other, allowing even Peaceful Groups to support Militant Candidates or vice-versa.

VP Running Mates may be placed under a Candidate, so long as they are politically compatible as explained above. However, if a VP Running Mate belongs to the exact same party as the Presidential Candidate, it has more value. Players may possess only one VP Running Mate, but there is no limit to number of Campaign Managers a player may have.

## Action Card Rules

Action cards may be played at any time, against anyone, unless specifically explained otherwise on the card. They may also be traded in at any time for three campaign dollars. When playing one, place it face up on the discard pile and announce who you are playing it against, or if you are trading it in for three campaign dollars. Action cards “block” the last card on the top of the discard pile, because they can never be picked up if already played.

### Important to Remember

If a player draws an Action Card, they should know it is ALWAYS to their benefit. Unlike many other games, picking up a random card does not hurt the player that picks up the card. How and when they choose to play it, however, may influence how much the action card actually helps them.

## Sequence of Turns

1. Receive Campaign Contributions
2. Pick up a card from the Mudslinger deck OR pick up the top card from the Discard Pile
3. Attempt to acquire a state, unless you drew from the Discard Pile.

### *1. Receive Campaign Contributions*

At the beginning of the game, no one possesses any Group or Power Cards, nor do they have any money. As players acquire Group cards (their financial supporters), they will add up the total campaign dollars their groups generate each turn and get that much money from the bank.

### *2. Pick up a Mudslinger Card OR pick up the top card from the Discard Pile.*

If you pick up a card from the Mudslinger deck and it is a Group or Power card that can be placed on the player's table (either in their chain of group cards, or below the candidate as a power card), then do so immediately. If it is not politically compatible, place it FACE UP up in the discard pile. If an Action card is picked up from the Mudslinger pile, it may be played now or held for later.

If there is a Group or Power card on top of the discard pile that a player wants, they may pick it up, but in doing so they forfeit their chance to acquire a state that round. Action cards may NOT be picked up from the top of the discard pile. In essence, this means the player spent their turn lobbying for that group or power card, rather than campaigning for a state.

### *3. Attempt to Acquire a State*

This is done by securing state elections, explained in more detail below.

## **Securing State Elections (Attempting to Acquire a State Card)**

Winning state elections depends on a few factors, but it starts with the dice and a player's Base Roll (or Influence). Players roll three dice when attempting to win a state, the lower the number the better. To win, the number rolled must be *below* their Popularity Rating in that state.

The Popularity Rating is affected by the Base Roll (Influence) plus the amount of campaign dollars spent campaigning MINUS campaign dollars spent against you by other players.

Influence (base roll) + Campaign Dollars - Mudslinging Dollars = Popularity Rating

For example: John is playing the Conservative candidate and is attempting to win the state of Georgia. His Influence (or Base Roll) as the conservative candidate in that state is 7. However, he also possesses the Conservative VP running mate and two campaign managers. Those power cards increase his influence in every state. The VP adds +2 and the campaign managers add +1 each. This brings John's *base roll* to acquire Georgia to be 11 or less (7+2+1+1). A base roll is again, the player's level of Influence in that state, and no opponent may mudsling a player below their base roll in any state. There are some action cards that, when played, may break this rule.

### **Using Campaign Dollars to Increase Popularity... and Sling Mud**

For every campaign dollar John spends campaigning, he adds +1 to the roll. Consider this money being spent on advertisements, canvassing and such. Going back to the example above, let's say John spends 5 dollars campaigning. Now his Popularity Rating is higher and his chance to acquire the state is a roll of 16 or less (11 base roll +5 campaign dollars).

However, Nancy doesn't want John to win the state, so she spends 5 campaign dollars to "mudsling" him. This brings him back down to 11 or less. They may continue this, *and other players may join in*, either to help Nancy or even help John, until all players agree to stop spending money campaigning and mudslinging.

*Remember, action cards may be played at any time by anyone during this time, too.*

When everyone is done spending money and action cards, the player rolls to see if he won the state. In the above example, let's say John spent another 5 dollars to bring the roll back up to 16 or less. Nancy spends two more to mudsling him, bringing the roll down to 14 or less. Everyone agrees to stop spending money and allows John to roll the dice. He rolls poorly with a 15, and fails to win the state. However, if he had rolled a 14 or any number below it, he would have picked up the state.

If a state is acquired by a player, turn another state card over from the State Deck pile, always leaving four face up. These are the states currently up to secure elections.

### **Important Rules to Know and Remember**

1. Opponents MAY NOT mudsling a player below their Base Roll (Influence), however there are a few Action cards that may allow this to happen.
2. Players may not increase their Popularity Rating over 16 or less. If a 17 or 18 is rolled, it is an automatic loss.

## Requesting a Poll

Players may keep their acquired state cards hidden from opponents. However, anyone may pay to have a poll taken. This forces all other players to show that player all the states they have acquired. This may be done by anyone, at any time, and costs the player 5 campaign dollars (to the bank). Anyone who pays for a poll DOES NOT have to reveal the results of that poll to anyone, but they can if they want.

## The Art of Negotiation

There are a lot of random things that can happen when playing Mudslinger, but good strategy means winning more consistently. Devious deals can have a major impact in gameplay, and because people are different, strategies may have to be changed based upon who you are playing against. Players can negotiate with each other, play aggressively or defensively, even help opponents to win over as temporary allies.

*Mudslinger totally allows players to take back any promises that were made when negotiating with another player. In fact, players can flat out lie if they want to. If someone gets screwed unfairly, oh well. This is politics.*

Some people may be timid about being mean to other players, but it usually doesn't last past the first game or two. Mudslinger can bring out the worst in people, but in the most hilarious ways.

Typically, for those who are new to Mudslinger, the first game or two is played without much deal-slinging going on. Instead, attention tends to be focused on learning the fundamentals of gameplay.

*But never be afraid to negotiate.*

What might one negotiate for? Here's just one example: David is attempting to acquire a state, but he doesn't have much money to campaign in order to win it. He agrees to give two Action Card to Nancy, if she helps him *successfully* win the state. She agrees, only because she doesn't want Jeff, the next player, to pick up that particular state. So Nancy helped David win the state and tells David to give her the Actions cards she was promised. David says, "Nevermind. I really need these, after all."

There is nothing Nancy can do about it.

But it's not always smart to screw people over all the time. They won't ever negotiate with you if you do. Play smart. Win big.

### **\*\*\*THE ONE RULE IN NEGOTIATION\*\*\***

Players MAY NOT include acquired state cards (or any state cards, for that matter) when negotiating. For example, David cannot say to Nancy, "I will give you Indiana if you give me two action cards," or "I will give you this state if you help me win it, just so long as we keep it out of Jeff's hands."

## **Winning the Game**

After all the state cards have been acquired, players count their electoral points. Player with the highest amount wins. It is rare, but possible, that players may have the same number of electoral points. If this happens, those who are tied for the win count the number of state cards they are holding and the one with the most state cards ultimately wins the game (and the election).

## **Advanced Rules (Optional)**

Advanced rules can be used if players want to experience a more intense, sometimes more ruthless, game. There are two rules that can be introduced that can greatly affect gameplay.

1. The Popularity Rating cannot exceed 15 or less (rather than 16 or less)
2. Riding a "Hot Streak" - This occurs when a player attempts to acquire a state and rolls a 3, 4 or 5. At that time, the player is considered so popular he may attempt to secure another state on the table in the same turn, OR go after another player's already acquired state. Keep in mind, all these state elections are simply "held" or "secured" until the actual election takes place. This is when ALL the state cards have been acquired and players count electoral points to see who wins. If a player is on a Hot Streak and attempts to go after another player's state, only those two may fight for the state. No other players may directly mudsling or play action cards against the player on the Hot Streak at this time. However, the one who is fighting to keep their state card may negotiate with other players on the table like always.