



# GWENT

**UP FOR A FEW ROUNDS OF GWENT?**

*by William Arnott*



## A first look at Gwent from a complete card game novice

I must admit, I've never been a really big fan of card games. I've dabbled in all sorts of nerdy hobbies but I've never found myself collecting 'cardboard crack'. I hear lots about *Magic: the Gathering* in my group of friends and I did try *Hearthstone* a few times but I always lose interest after a while.

Which is why I'm so surprised that I have absolutely fallen in love with Gwent.

Originally I played it while gallivanting around as Geralt in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. Walking up to unsuspecting peasants and asking whether they wanted to play a game of cards is how I spent a lot of my time in that game. It was surprisingly fleshed out for a small minigame in such a huge world but it was easy to get started and scratch a collectible itch I didn't know I had. Again, I'd never been grabbed by a card



minigame before. I had one look at *Fallout: New Vegas' Caravan* and immediately forgot everything about it and immediately proceeded to ignore it.

When *CD Projekt Red* announced they were making a standalone multiplayer game, I signed up for beta access as soon as I could. After a fair bit of waiting, I finally got a code and was able to sink my teeth into the thing.

What sets *Gwent* apart from other card games is its different rule system. Each player creates a deck with between twenty-five and forty cards, drawing eleven at the start of the game. The battlefield has zones for melee, ranged, and siege cards to be played, and each of those cards has a certain 'strength' that can be buffed and debuffed by special cards. Playing a card

doesn't take any resources, but you must take an action each turn or pass for that round.

Cards are divided into three colour types: Bronze Silver and Gold. *Gwent* limits the amount of Gold and Silver cards you can take in a deck which means new players won't get smacked around by people who have been playing for much longer. Gold cards are also special, as they aren't usually affected by cards that usually debuff, but on the other hand it is a lot harder to buff them as well.

The objective of the game is to have a higher total card value on the battlefield at the end of the round. The round ends when one player passes or there are no more actions the player can take. Whoever wins two out of three rounds is declared the victor.



When building a deck, you ideally want to have the least amount of cards.  
Photo Credit: CD Projekt Red



Weather cards reduce all cards in a certain row to 1 strength.  
Photo Credit: CD Projekt Red

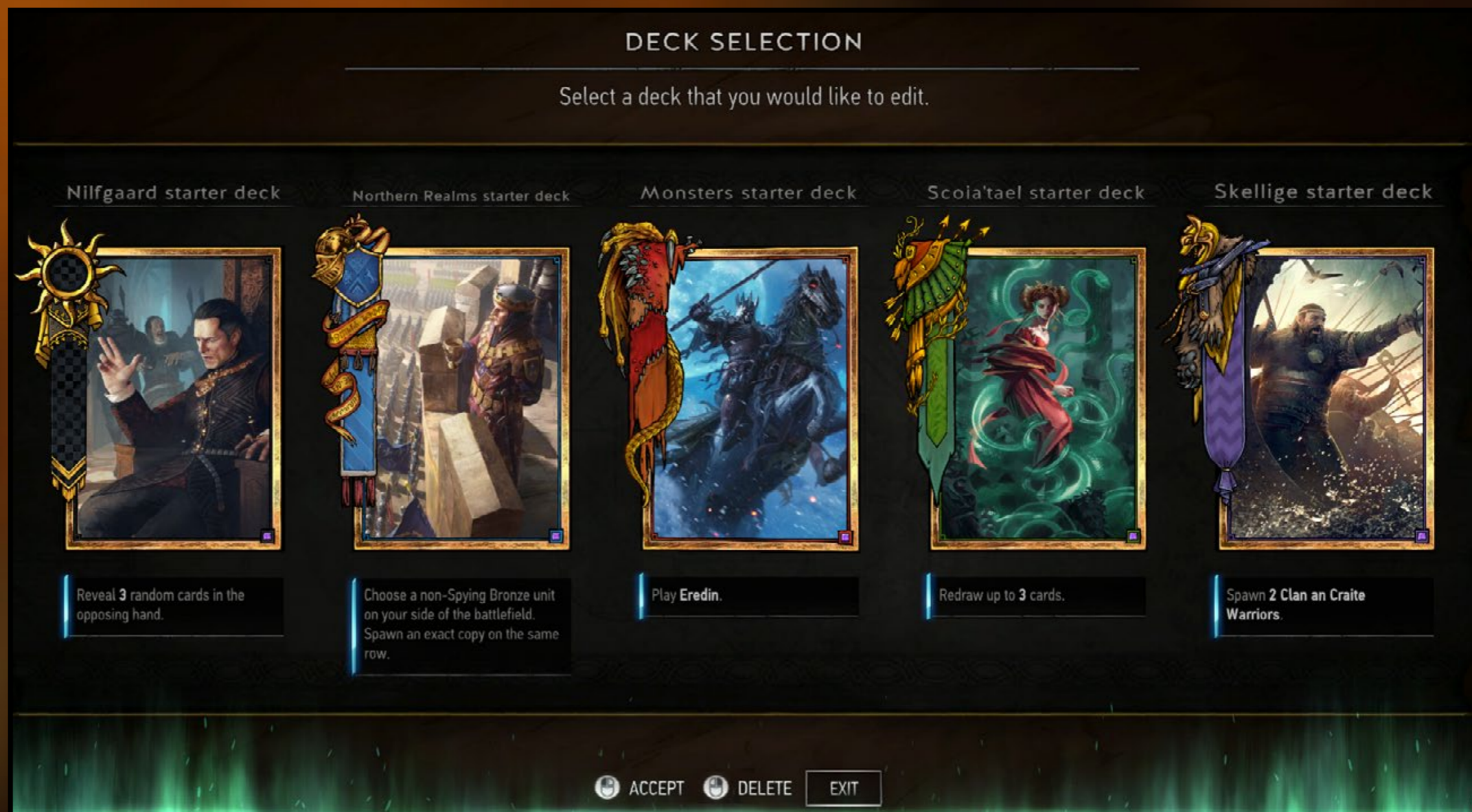


There are two forms of in-game currency, Ore gets you card kegs and scraps let you build cards.  
Photo Credit: CD Projekt Red

At the end of each round, each player draws a few cards, making it almost impossible to run out of cards in your deck. You don't have a health score but you do get a leader card that has a special ability which can have a huge outcome on the game.

By adding a round system, the game becomes much more tactical. If your opponent has a healthy lead in the first round and then passes, should you attempt to beat him to get a victory in the first round? If you do, you might have to use more cards this round leaving you at a disadvantage for future rounds.

Because *Gwent* originally was balanced around a single player campaign, it wouldn't translate well to a multiplayer format. Certain decks and card combos were overpowered, there were no limits on certain cards and the AI wasn't the smartest opponent. Now they've rebalanced cards and factions to make them viable and flexible, gone are the days of having cards that double their strength exponentially.



There are now 5 factions in Gwent, each with its own flavour and playstyle.  
Photo Credit: CD Projekt Red