


SoulStead
A HeroScape Game Variant
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SoulStead is a game variant of HeroScape that can be played with any number of people. This game allows the process of building the landscape to be an intrinsic part of gameplay, and not merely a task performed prior to battle. It is intended as a better way to play HeroScape, one which makes every aspect of the product part of the gameplay itself.

The Premise of SoulStead is that the Valhalla battles of HeroScape take place literally in a strange version of the Norse afterworld. All the heroes of the game are considered to have already fallen in heroic conflict, and as warriors have been granted a place in the afterlife, in Valhalla. The afterworld of warriors is a place of eternal battle by day, followed by endless nights of feasting and pleasure. However, being a warrior heaven, the degree of pleasures at night is dependant on the status of a warrior, and status in Valhalla is dependant on the amount of spiritual territory claimed by an individual, or an allied group of warriors.

The Wellsprings of HeroScape are therefore considered exactly that, Wellsprings of immortality and spiritual power. A Wellspring in SoulStead is a single HeroScape water tile, which must be completely surrounded by land tiles, to form a *Spirit Wellspring*.



This is the initial start position for any player.

All Players begin by building a Spirit Wellspring. This can most easily be done by using three 2-hex pieces to make a ring, then placing one water tile in the middle. The completed Wellspring allows the player to draft one hero card, and to place on the land tiles surrounding the Wellspring, any and all figures associated with that card. This is the beginning of their campaign to create a personal space, a *SoulStead*, within the swirling, misty, astral void of Valhalla. Once every player has built a Wellspring, and has placed their initial hero or heroes, the game can begin.

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Each Turn a player may perform each of the following actions:

1. Roll Order Markers as dice and use the result to determine land, water tile, glyph and Hero Card allowances.
2. Place any land or water tiles, glyphs, heroes or squads on their own private landscape (SoulStead).
3. Move any one already existing hero or squad across the astral void to the nearest edge of any other players personal SoulStead.
4. Battle normally, if possible.

ORDER MARKERS AS DICE Perhaps the most unusual aspect of SoulStead is that the grey, plastic Order Markers are not used as Order Markers in the game at all. Instead, the Order Markers are used purely and only as dice.

Select four Order Markers, one of each type; 1, 2, 3, and X.

These will now be used as dice to determine how much, if any, land pieces, glyph pieces, water tiles, are generated for a player that turn, or if they may summon a hero or squad from out of a Wellspring.

Roll the Order Markers as though they were funny shaped dice.

If any marker lands number or letter face up, flat on the table, then that number is read and used.

If the marker lands on its side, face down, standing upright, or in any other position than flat and face up, then nothing is gained from that marker.



The results of the four marker-dice are read and interpreted thusly:

Any numbers, such as "1", "2", or "3" on any face-up markers are added together, and the result is the number of land pieces that may be taken out of the box and added to your SoulStead landscape that turn. The size or shape of a given land tile piece is not important, and may have any number of hexes in it. The player may choose all small pieces, or large pieces, or any combination thereof. But the player cannot take more individual land pieces than they have rolled on the marker-dice.

An "X" means that the player may *either* gain one water tile, *OR* gain one random plastic glyph, *OR* summon one hero or squad (draft a hero card). Only one of these options may be taken in a single turn. Summoned heroes or squads can come only from a complete, fully constructed Wellspring as described above, and such figures must be placed on open hexes immediately beside the Wellspring water tile.

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TO BUILD a Wellspring, a player must first construct land pieces such that an *empty space*, one hex in size, is created. If the player has previously rolled their marker-dice and the result is that they have chosen to take, and put aside for later a water tile, the *water tile* may now be played into the one-hex hole in the landscape, thus creating a Wellspring.



WELLSPRINGS ARE IMPORTANT. A player may have any number of Wellsprings on their personal SoulStead, and there are advantages to making many Wellsprings. An open, uncovered Wellspring is the only source from which new heroes or squads can come.

A player is beaten, and their SoulStead is lost, whenever another player manages to place a figure on the water tile of every Wellspring of another player's land.

Thus the more Wellsprings, the harder a Soulstead land is to capture.

A Wellspring is also the *only* way that Glyphs can be used in SoulStead.

When a player rolls an "X" on the Marker dice, one option is for them to take a randomly selected plastic glyph from the box.

The only way that a glyph can be played is for the glyph to be placed, face up, *covering an established Wellspring*. This activates the glyph, making the power of that glyph available to every unit of the player that owns the activated glyph. The power remains in effect until either the player who owns the glyph decides to flip it over during a turn to 'switch it off', or the glyph is controlled by a figure belonging to another player. A glyph is controlled by another player when a figure belonging to them is placed onto it. The control lasts only as long as the figure remains on top of the glyph. The controlling enemy player now benefits as though the glyph had been placed on their own land, and can be switched on, or off, normally. For control of such a captured glyph to return to the owner of the SoulStead land, the invader standing upon it must be driven off or defeated.

Once a glyph is placed upon a Wellspring, it can never be removed, only 'switched off' or 'on' by flipping.

THEREFORE, since *only* an uncovered, unblocked Wellspring can be used to summon heroes and squads to a SoulStead, it is vital to leave at least one Wellspring uncovered by glyphs or figures. It must also have empty hexes around the Wellspring for new figures to appear upon, otherwise, no new heroes can be summoned.

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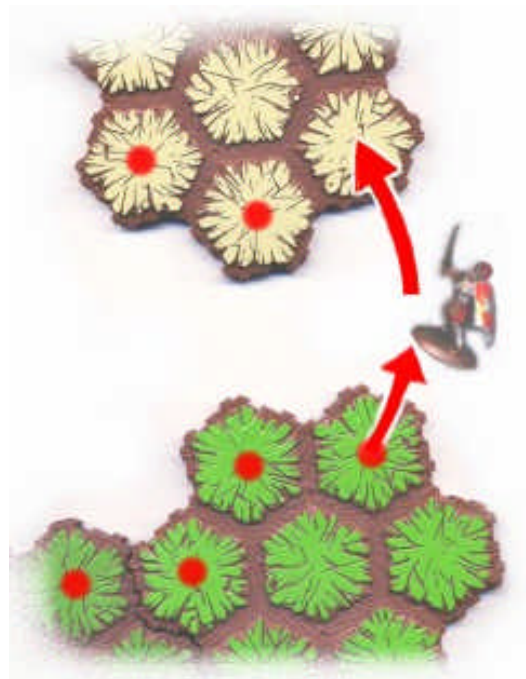
ASTRAL TRAVEL occurs when a player wishes to venture forth from their own private SoulStead island, floating in the astral mists, to attack the SoulStead of another player. Astral travel is easy in Valhalla, but follows special rules.

A hero or squad to reach another SoulStead must move normally off the edge of one SoulStead landscape and be placed onto the intervening tabletop that separates the individual SoulSteads. The edge that the figures move from must directly face the intended target SoulStead. On the next turn, the hero or squad may move onto a directly facing edge hex of the targeted SoulStead. The hero or squad must stop movement once such an edge hex is reached and may move normally only on the next turn. In effect, the Astral Void acts as a kind of water, where, as per the general rules of HeroScape, movement must end upon entry. However, the Astral Void is more hazardous than mere water, and require an entire turn to leave as well. Distance within the Astral Void does not exist, only direction. While a hero or squad must travel to whatever SoulStead is directly opposite the point which they exit their own lands, there are no hexes to count between the two lands, and distance is of no consequence.

In this example of Astral Travel, the hero figure must first move off of the SoulStead of one player to float in the Astral Void for one turn. On the next turn, the hero figure may be moved to any one hex which directly faces the SoulStead he came from. Facing hexes of the two SoulSteads are marked with red dots; these are the only hexes that can legally be moved out from into the void, or moved into, away from the void.

A good way to think of it is that one may only travel to or from the facing edge hexes of any two SoulSteads.

Battle cannot occur within the Astral Void, but only upon a SoulStead.



Once heroes and squads belonging to one player achieve landfall upon another SoulStead, normal battle can occur. The goal is to capture all of the Wellsprings of another SoulStead, by placing a figure upon them. It does not matter if the Wellspring has a glyph installed upon it or not. When all of the Wellsprings of a SoulStead are captured, the SoulStead is captured, and all heroes and glyphs upon it become the full property of the capturing player. The losing player is out of the game. The winner of a game of SoulStead is the last player standing, who will naturally own everything.

HARK sing the Valkyries of Valhalla, a new star has risen to power in the Afterworld. *For now.*