

# RPS Phoenix: Evolution and Resolution

## A Game of Natural Transformation

RPS Phoenix represents more than just a strategic board game—it embodies fundamental principles of evolutionary game theory and systems adaptation. At its core, the game mirrors how complex systems naturally evolve when faced with stagnation, offering profound insights through play.

## The Philosophy of Dual Phases

The game begins in an ordered state—the Normal Phase—where players maneuver across the grid according to established rules and predictable interactions. This represents a system in equilibrium, where strategic positioning and calculated risk-taking determine advantage. Like all stable systems, however, this equilibrium carries within it the seeds of its own transformation.

## The Significance of 27

The transformation occurs after 27 turns per player—a number of profound significance. As the cube of three ( $3^3$ ), it represents completion in three dimensions, perfectly mirroring the triadic nature of Rock-Paper-Scissors itself. Just as the game operates on a system of three interrelated elements, the transformation manifests when this principle has been fully expressed through 27 cycles.

In numerous philosophical traditions, 27 represents the completion of a cycle before renewal becomes necessary. It suggests not an arbitrary transition, but the precise moment when a system has explored all possible configurations within its existing parameters and must evolve to continue its journey. The Phoenix cannot rise until the fire has fully consumed what came before.

## Evolution as Resolution

When the 27th turn concludes, the Escalation Phase emerges as the system's natural response to potential stagnation. Just as water transforms to vapor when reaching a critical temperature, the game transforms not through abandoning its nature but by expanding its possibilities. The extended diagonal movement, enhanced resurrection powers, and intensified interactions represent not a revolution but an evolution—the system adapting to ensure its continued vitality.

Like the mythical Phoenix itself, the game undergoes a form of death and rebirth. The initial structure "burns away" after 27 turns, giving rise to a more dynamic form that carries forward the fundamental elements while manifesting new possibilities.

## Beyond Entertainment: A Model of Adaptation

This dual-phase structure offers players more than entertainment—it provides experiential insight into how systems evolve. Players must not only master the initial ruleset but also anticipate and adapt to the inevitable transformation, much as successful strategies in nature and society must evolve when conditions change.

In playing RPS Phoenix, participants engage not just in strategic competition, but in a philosophical exploration of transformation, resolution, and the natural evolution of complex systems. The game teaches us that apparent endings often become new beginnings, and systems that appear headed toward stalemate can find resolution when their underlying conditions adapt and transcend previous limitations.

The Phoenix rises not despite the ashes, but because of them—just as the game finds its most dynamic expression precisely when its initial form has been fully realized.

# RPS Phoenix Rulebook

## Game Concept

RPS Phoenix is an innovative variation of the classic Rock-Paper-Scissors game that adds elements of luck and strategy through the use of dice and a game board. Players maneuver their playing pieces across a grid, engaging in RPS-based combat to eliminate opponents from the playing area.

Like a Phoenix, eliminated pieces can be "resurrected" back into the game, adding a dynamic element of comeback potential and ongoing strategic decision-making. The winner is the player who eliminates all opponent's pieces from the designated playing area.

## Game Components

- **Game Board:** A 6×6 grid with coordinates on the X and Y axes
- **Dice:** 2 dice (1 Black for X-axis, 1 White for Y-axis)
- **Birds:** 3 colored playing pieces for each player, each representing:
  - Rock (✕)
  - Paper (□)
  - Scissors (✂)
- **The Ashes:** A designated area where eliminated Birds are placed
- **Turn Counter:** To track when the Escalation Phase begins

## Set-Up

1. Each player chooses a color and places their 3 Birds in front of them.
2. To determine the order of play, each player rolls both dice. The highest total begins the game. If tied, re-roll until a clear order is established.
3. Play proceeds clockwise around the board.
4. Set the turn counter to zero.

# Game Play

## Beginning of the Game

1. On their turn, each player rolls both dice to determine coordinates on the grid (Black dice = X-axis, White dice = Y-axis).
2. The player places one of their Birds on the corresponding square. Players can choose any available Bird when first entering the game.
3. If the rolled coordinates already contain one of the player's Birds, their turn ends with no action taken.
4. If the rolled coordinates contain an opponent's Bird, the opponent's Bird is eliminated regardless of RPS rules and sent to the Ashes.
5. This initial phase continues until all players have placed their Birds on the grid or in the Ashes.
6. Each completed turn increases the turn counter by one.

## Movement and Interaction

Once all Birds are activated (on the grid or in the Ashes), players have two options on their turn:

**Option 1:** Roll dice to move a Bird to the coordinates shown

**Option 2:** Move one Bird diagonally one square in any direction

After moving, if your Bird lands diagonally adjacent to an opponent's Bird, they interact according to RPS rules:

- Rock (×) beats Scissors (✂)
- Scissors (✂) beats Paper (□)
- Paper (□) beats Rock (×)

The winning Bird eliminates the losing Bird to the Ashes and takes its place on the grid. This may create new diagonal interactions which are resolved immediately in the same turn.

## Resurrection (Phoenix)

If a player rolls doubles (same number on both dice), they have the option to resurrect one of their Birds from the Ashes by placing it on the square corresponding to the roll. This is called a "Phoenix." The squares on the grid designated by doubles are highlighted in gold.

The player can choose whether to resurrect a Bird or move an existing Bird. If the Phoenix square is occupied by an opponent's Bird, the opponent's Bird is eliminated to the Ashes and the resurrected Bird takes its place.

## The Escalation Phase

After 27 turns per player (track with the turn counter), the game automatically enters the Escalation Phase to accelerate play toward a conclusion.

During the Escalation Phase:

1. **Extended Diagonal Movement:** Birds can move any number of squares along a diagonal line (similar to a bishop in chess) until they reach the edge of the board or another Bird. This dramatically increases the chance of interactions and prevents players from easily

avoiding confrontation.

2. **Mutual Elimination:** When Birds interact diagonally, both are eliminated to the Ashes regardless of the normal RPS hierarchy, creating more open spaces on the grid.
3. **Enhanced Phoenix Power:** When a player rolls doubles, they can resurrect two Birds from the Ashes instead of one. The first is placed on the Phoenix square, and the second can be placed on any adjacent empty square.
4. **Chain Reactions:** After a Bird eliminates an opponent's Bird and moves to its square, it may immediately move one additional square in the same direction if possible, potentially creating additional eliminations in a single turn.

## Scoring System

Players earn points throughout the game as follows:

- **1 point:** Successfully eliminating an opponent's Bird
- **2 points:** Successfully resurrecting a Bird from the Ashes
- **3 points:** Winning the game by eliminating all opponent Birds

In tournament play, matches consist of multiple games, with the overall winner determined by the highest total score across all games.

For time-limited play, if no player has eliminated all opponent Birds within 60 minutes, the player with the highest score wins.

## End of the Game

The game ends when a player has eliminated all opponent Birds from the grid. The last player with Birds remaining on the grid is the winner and receives 3 bonus points.

## Optional Variants

### 'Team' Mode

RPS Phoenix can be played in teams (Red-Pink vs. Blue-Green). Teammates work together to eliminate opposing team Birds. A team wins when all Birds of the opposing team are eliminated.

### 'Give-Away' Mode

In this variant, the strategy is reversed: the winner is the first player to have all their Birds eliminated from the grid into the Ashes. In this mode, if a player rolls doubles and has a Bird in the Ashes, they must resurrect it.

### 'Casino' Mode

Players place a chip in a pot each time one of their Birds is eliminated. The winner collects all chips in the pot.

## Tips

- The squares on the edges of the board are statistically safer than interior squares as they have fewer possible diagonal interactions.
- Diagonal movement offers more control than dice rolls but limits the distance you can move in the normal phase.
- Rolling doubles provides strategic opportunities for resurrection, especially when you have multiple Birds in the Ashes.
- During the Escalation Phase, positioning becomes even more critical due to extended diagonal movement.
- "If you're afraid to shake dice, you'll never roll a Phoenix."