

# WHAT A SNOWBALL!

*What a Tanker-inspired Rules for Snowball Fights*

by Ioan Davies-John  
[www.ioandaviesjohn.com](http://www.ioandaviesjohn.com)



2023 Edition!  
Fewer typos!

**A Quick Note:** You may have noticed that I've forgone my usual high standard of formatting and visual design and made these rules look like a Christmas Fair leaflet from a lamppost in 2003 – in other words, a crime against graphic design. This is entirely intentional. Also, try not to take it too seriously. :)

I was doing some Christmas shopping in Cardiff one morning and came across a place selling everything you need for a Christmas Village diorama, with almost every model being a variation on “Snowball Kid”. That somehow inspired this.

This is a game designed for 6-12 players all controlling one Kid (miniature/soldier) each. If you can't find that many players, fewer players can control two or three Kids each. Either way, they should be split into two to four “Teams”. These rules have no adult content and are suitable for all ages!

These rules are based on TooFatLardies' *What a Tanker* ([www.toofatlardies.co.uk](http://www.toofatlardies.co.uk)). If you like these rules, please consider trying it out.

## **I. GAME COMPONENTS**

**A model “Christmas village”:** Should take up an approx. 2x2 foot area. Make sure there's plenty of room for your miniatures to move around hassle-free, and make sure it looks special – it's Christmas!

**“Snowball Kids” miniatures:** Found in your average holiday-happy hobby shop. Make sure you mark out which Team they're on and/or which player they belong to – this could be distinguishing features, labels, and coat colours.

**15D6 per player:** Fifteen six-sided dice per player. Six of those dice should be coloured or otherwise separate from the rest, as these will be your Command Dice. The rest will be used for your regular dice rolls.

**Tape measure:** Used to measure distance. Make sure it can measure in inches!

**Pencils & paper:** Used to keep things such as score and your Kids' status. There are Kids' Character Sheets at the end of this book to help.

## 2. BASIC OVERVIEW & SETUP

*Before the game begins*, all Kids (and players) are split into two to four equally sized Teams. If you're playing with multiple Kids per player, one player's Kids should all be on the same side to avoid confusion. Once everyone knows who's controlling who, the players must decide what Trait each Kid will have; *Fast*, *Strong*, *Skilful*, or *Resourceful*. A Kid's Trait will make them more likely to perform a related Action (see **Section 3.2**).

### 2.1. Setting Up

Once the Village has been set up, one player in every Team rolls a D6. Starting with the highest roller and descending, each Team picks one corner of the Village and places all their Kids anywhere they like within 6" of it. If you're playing with only two Teams, each Teams picks **two** corners. A Team can't pick a corner that's already been chosen!

### 2.2. A Quick Summary of How the Game Works

Every Turn, every player rolls a D6 for every Kid under their command to determine the Activation Order (3.1). When a Kid is activated, they roll 6 "Command Dice" (3.2) which determines what they can do for this Turn (the number of Command Dice can be reduced by well-aimed Snowballs). Rolls of 6, or "Wild Dice", can be used to increase a Kid's Activation Order roll in the next Turn, changed into any other result, and for many other purposes (3.2.5). The activation ends when the Kid uses all their Command Dice or the player commanding them decides they're done. A Turn ends when all the Kids on the "battlefield" have had their activations.

As you could probably imagine, the aim of the game is to gather snowballs and throw them at every other Team's Kids. The bigger the Snowball, the more likely it is to shock your opponent and make their job harder! A Kid scores a Point for every "enemy" they successfully hit with a Snowball. There are ways a Kid can cheat, but that could end with their parents pulling them inside by the ear and removing them from the game!

The game lasts a maximum of six Turns. Once those six Turns are over, the Kids wave goodbye and go home for Christmas Dinner. Every Team adds up their Kids' Points for their total score, and the Team with the highest wins!

### 2.3. Ending the Game & Victory Conditions

The game ends and your Team wins if one of the following happens:

- Every other Team's Kids are removed from play – it doesn't matter how\*\*.
- Every other Team's player(s) voluntarily surrender (they can do this at any time).
- Turn 6 has passed and your Team has scored the highest number of Points\*.

\*Games of *What a Snowball!* last no longer than six Turns. Once every remaining Kid has had their sixth Turn, it's time for come home for Christmas Dinner! The epic snowball fight comes to an end, and each *remaining* Kid's points are added to their Team's total with the following modifiers:

- **+5 Points** if your Team still has all its Kids.
- **+5 Points** if your Team has the most remaining Kids (if this is tied, each of the tied Teams gets these 5 Points).
- **-1,000,000 Points** if your Team has lost all its Kids before the game ended.

Outside of this, Points are earned by hitting other Teams' Kids with Snowballs and/or successfully defending against them. The Team with the highest total Points wins.

### 3. THE TURN

At the start of every Turn, every player rolls to determine their Activation Order, then the Kids activate in that Order. Simple enough, right?

#### 3.1. Rolling for Activation Order

Every player rolls 1D6 for every Kid under their command, adding 1 for every Wild Dice spent Preparing in the previous Turn. The Activation Order (the order in which Kids activate) is descending from the highest roller to the lowest.

If two or more Kids roll the same result, even if they're on the same Team, re-roll the dice to determine the Activation Order *within* that group. The idea is to have a clear order in which each Kid activates, one at a time.

#### 3.2. The Activation (Command Dice)

A Kid's activation always begins with their controlling player rolling Command Dice. The starting number of Command Dice is 6, but this can be depleted depending on the other Kids' luck and Snowballs. Each result is spent performing an Action:

Command Dice Result	Action
1	MOVE
2	GATHER SNOW
3	AIM
4	THROW
5	<i>Depends on Trait*</i>
6	WILD DICE (see 3.2.5)

*Kid's Trait	Action when spending a 5
Fast	MOVE
Strong	THROW
Skilful	AIM
Resourceful	GATHER SNOW

Once all a Kid's Command Dice are spent, their activation ends. A player can also end their Kid's activation whenever they like – but this isn't really recommended unless there's nothing left *to* do (such as having THROW dice with no Snowballs).

##### 3.2.1. MOVE (1 or Fast 5)

When a Kid spends a MOVE Dice, they roll 1D6 and move the result in inches. They can move in any direction they like and can change direction at any point during their move.

Kids can't pass through walls, buildings, trees, or other obstacles. They can't go indoors (as the grown-ups would shout at them if they did!) and can't move through other Kid(s).

**Vaulting:** If a Kid is in contact with an obstacle that's shorter than them, they may spend a MOVE Dice vaulting over it instead of making a regular move.

##### 3.2.1.1. CHEATING! (Shove 'Em!)

When a Kid spends a MOVE Dice and comes into contact with an opposing Kid, they can knock them over. The other Kid is knocked to the ground, rendered unable to act until they spend a Wild Dice getting up. They also lose a Command Dice if they've got two or more left.

However, the Kid's player rolls 1D6 immediately after resolving this act of malice – if they roll 4 or higher, the aggressor's parents see this foul play and drag them home for a telling off! They're removed from the game entirely.

### 3.2.2. GATHER SNOW (2 or Resourceful 5)

When a Kid spends a GATHER SNOW Dice while standing on snow (**not** on gritted roads or other snowless ground), they perform one of the following actions:

- Create a new **Size 1** Snowball.
- Add +1 to the **Size** of a Snowball in their possession (to a maximum of 5) \*.
- Give one of their Snowballs to a Kid on the same Team within 2” of them\*.

\*Of course, the latter two actions require the Kid to have a Snowball.

### 3.2.3. AIM (3 or Skilful 5)

When a Kid spends an AIM Dice, they add +1 to their Roll to Hit when they next spend a THROW Dice. The effects of Aiming are also removed if the Kid is Hit before using it.

### 3.2.4. THROW (4 or Strong 5)

When a Kid spends a THROW Dice, they remove one of their Snowballs to throw at any Kid visible to them (from another Team). Note that other Kids – including those on your own Team – block a Kid’s Line of Sight. You may not THROW without a Snowball.

#### 3.2.4.1. Roll to Hit

First, the active Kid’s player rolls 2D6 to find out if they hit. Consult the tables below for the required result:

Distance from Target	To Hit
Up to 6”	7
6” to 12”	8
Over 12”	9

Condition	Modifier
For every AIM prior	-1
Snowball’s Size is 2 or 3	-1
Snowball’s Size is 4 or 5	-2
For every object within 1 inch of the “line of fire”	+1

If the roll is equal to or above the required result, the Kid hits and scores 1 point – go to the next step (see 3.2.4.2). If not, the shot is missed and nothing else happens – move on to the next Command Dice (if you have one).

**Critical Hit:** A natural 12 (AKA a “double-six”) always Hits and adds +1 to the Snowball’s Size value during the next step.

**Critical Miss:** A natural 2 (AKA a “double-one” or “snake eyes”) always Misses. To add insult to injury, this immediately ends the Kid’s Activation.

#### 3.2.4.2. Roll for Effect

The player controlling the **target** Kid rolls a pool of D6 equal in number to the Snowball’s Size. For every roll of 4 or higher, the targeted Kid loses one Command Dice from the cold shock, which can be recovered using Wild Dice. If this leaves them with no Command Dice, they go home to warm up and are removed from the game.

#### 3.2.4.3. CHEATING! (Too Close!)

If a Kid spends a THROW Dice and targets an opposing Kid within 1”, they automatically Hit and score a Point, moving on to Roll for Effect. However, the Kid’s player rolls 1D6 immediately after resolving this act of malice. If they roll 4 or higher, the aggressor’s parents see this foul play and drag them home for a telling off! They’re removed from the game entirely.

### 3.2.5. WILD DICE (6 or Elf 5)

A Kid can spend a Wild Dice to perform one of the following actions. You can spend as many Wild Dice as you roll at once (for instance, you can spend three Wild Dice in a Turn and add +3 to your Activation Order roll):

- Recover a lost Command Dice (don't roll/spend it until next Turn!).
- Add +1 to their Roll for Activation Order at the start of the next Turn.
- Act as if spending **any** other Command Dice result (MOVE, GATHER SNOW, AIM, THROW).
- Get up when knocked down (see 3.1.1.1).

## 4. SPECIAL PLAYERS (OPTIONAL)

If you want a more powerful "Unit" in your Team, some Kids (perhaps chosen by roll-off) can be replaced with either a Living Snowman, a Big Kid, a Penguin, a Yeti, or a Christmas Elf. You can even have a whole Team of these special Kid alternatives.

**Designer's Note:** I wouldn't recommend more than one Elf or Yeti per Team...then again, I'm not a cop. It's your game, do what you want!

### 4.1. Big Kids (approx. 2 Kids each)

Big Kids are bigger, meaner, and tougher than anyone else on the neighbourhood, and they take those traits onto the snowy battlefield. They have the following benefits:

- **Two Traits:** The Big Kid selects two Traits. When spending a Command Dice of 5, they perform **one** of those Traits' associated Actions.
- **Big Hands:** When the Big Kid makes a GATHER SNOW action, they make a Size 2 Snowball **or** add +2 to one of their existing ones (max. Size is still 5).
- **Expert Dodger:** Any Snowballs thrown **at** a Big Kid have -1 to their Hit Rolls, except for those thrown by Christmas Elves.
- **Playing Rough:** When rolling to find out if a Big Kid got away with Cheating, roll 2D6 and remove the highest result.

### 4.2. Christmas Elves (approx. 4 Kids each)

Christmas Elves come straight from Santa's Workshop and snowball fights are their favourite pastime. However, Elfin snowball warfare is far more competitive than its human counterpart. Christmas Elves have the following benefits:

- **Snowball Warrior:** Christmas Elves have no Trait(s). For a Christmas Elf, Command Dice of 5 are treated as Wild Dice.
- **Skirmisher:** Any Snowballs thrown **at** an Elf have -1 to their Hit Rolls, and any Snowballs thrown **by** an Elf have +1 to their Hit Rolls.
- **Master of the Craft:** When an Elf makes a GATHER SNOW action, they make a Size 2 Snowball **or** add +2 to one of their existing ones (max. Size is still 5).
- **Warm Heart:** When rolling for a Snowball's effect against an Elf (see 3.2.4.2), they only lose Command Dice on rolls of 5 or 6.
- **Santa's Watching:** Kids won't Cheat against a Christmas Elf, as they'd be scared of Santa's retribution come next year! Christmas Elves have a code of honour which prohibits them from Cheating against *anyone* – except Snowmen.

### 4.3. Living Snowmen (approx. 2 Kids each)

They're made of snow, but the Kids all know, how they came to life someday – and then cheated in a snowball fight. Jerks. Living Snowmen have the following “benefits”:

- **Throw Yourself:** When making a THROW action, Snowmen can forgo spending a Snowball and instead “throw” a piece of themselves (represented by one of their Command Dice), treating it as Size 4.
- **Made of Snow:** When making a GATHER SNOW action, Snowmen can forgo the usual action(s) and instead replace a lost Command Dice.
- **Blend In:** Any Snowballs thrown at a Snowman have -1 to their Hit Rolls, except for those thrown by Christmas Elves.
- **Jerk:** Snowmen suffer no repercussions for Cheating as they have no parents and can't be on the naughty list. They can also Cheat against Christmas Elves. However, no repercussions are suffered for Cheating against Snowmen, as they're technically not people and deserve it anyway for being cheaters.

### 4.4. Yetis (approx. 3 Kids each)

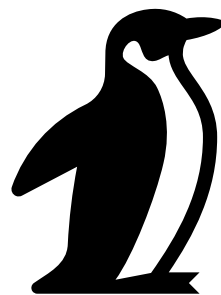
Big, dumb, and misunderstood fun-lovers who like nothing more than a good snowball fight! Yetis have the following benefits:

- **Fast and Strong:** Yetis have both the *Fast and Strong* Traits. When spending a Command Dice of 5, they perform either a MOVE **or** THROW Action.
- **Huge Hands:** When a Yeti makes a GATHER SNOW action, they make a Size 3 Snowball **or** add +3 to one of their existing ones (max. Size is still 5).
- **Thick Fur:** When rolling for a Snowball's effect against a Yeti (see 3.2.4.2), they lose one Command Dice for every **two** rolls of 4+.
- **Oops:** Yetis are too stupid and friendly to Cheat. If someone tries to knock one down (see 3.2.1.1), the Yeti's player rolls a D6. If they roll 4 or higher, the Yeti also knocks down the aggressor and removes one of their Command Dice, completely by accident. They suffer no consequences as this wasn't their fault.

### 4.5. Penguins (approx. 1½ Kids each)

How a penguin can throw snowballs I don't know, but Pingu and his friends can do it, so why not! Penguins have the following benefits:

- **Slide:** When moving on snow or similarly icy surfaces, Penguins can slide on their bellies. They move 2D6 inches per MOVE action on snow and ice.
- **DO NOT HIT ANIMALS:** If a Kid Cheats against a Penguin, they get caught by their parents on a roll of 2 or higher. If a Snowman Cheats against a Penguin, it loses a Point – it's a cruel act even for them!



## 5. ABILITY CARDS (OPTIONAL)

Ability Cards are a completely optional addition to *What a Snowball*. In fact, if you want them, there are two distinct ways you can distribute Ability Cards in your games:

**Method 1:** Kids start with no Ability Cards, randomly drawing one when they score 3 Points or remove another Team's Kid (*this is especially useful if you're playing a Tournament, or several games chained together*).

**Method 2:** Kids start with 3 Ability Cards each game, randomly drawing as soon as they've finished setting up (see section 2). If there's more than one Kid per player I'd recommend 1 Card per Kid, or 3 Cards per player that can be "used" on any Kid(s).

Either way, the best way to make Ability Cards is to print off this page (twice per Kid should be enough) and cut out the Cards. You can either print the Cards onto thick card, laminate them afterwards, or fold them into a hat and have players draw from there.

<p><b>"I've been saving these!"</b> Discard at any point during your activation. You instantly gain three Size 1 Snowballs, two Size 3 Snowballs, or one Size 5 Snowball.</p> <p><i>You've had a stash this whole time? Your secret's safe with me!</i></p>	<p><b>"I'm not done yet!"</b> Discard at the very beginning of your activation and <b>before</b> rolling Command Dice. For that activation, they roll 6 Command Dice, regardless of how many they actually have left.</p> <p><i>A secret weapon... Uncle Kyle's energy drink!</i></p>
<p><b>"Ice to see you!"</b> Discard while making a THROW action and <b>before</b> Rolling to Hit. The Snowball you've thrown is especially cold, and therefore gains +3 Size when rolling for effect, even if it goes above the usual maximum of 5 (or 6 for Critical Hits).</p> <p><i>A terrible pun for a shocking snowball.</i></p>	<p><b>"Thanks, Grandma!"</b> Discard after being Hit by a Snowball but <b>before</b> rolling for its effect. Thanks to an extra (ugly) sweater you've been wearing this whole time, you lose no Command Dice from this attack.</p> <p><i>Knitted with love...which is snowball fighting's equivalent to Kevlar.</i></p>
<p><b>"I've been practicing my pitch!"</b> Discard while making a THROW action and <b>before</b> Rolling to Hit. Instead of Rolling to Hit normally, roll 3D6 and discard the <b>lowest</b> result.</p> <p><i>Don't let all those Saturdays of baseball practice go to waste!</i></p>	<p><b>"Missed me, dork!"</b> Discard when someone declares a THROW action at you, and <b>before</b> they Roll to Hit. Instead of Rolling to Hit normally, they roll 3D6 and discard the <b>highest</b> result.</p> <p><i>Looks like <b>someone's</b> memorised the 5 D's of dodgeball!</i></p>
<p><b>"A Christmas Miracle!"</b> Discard when you're about to be removed for Cheating. Your parents are distracted at the last second, and nothing happens. If you can't cheat (for instance: playing as an Elf), you may discard at any time and draw two Cards.</p> <p><i>You were lucky <b>this</b> time, jerk.</i></p>	<p><b>"Dashing through the snow!"</b> Discard at any time, even if it's not your activation. Immediately move 2D6 inches in any direction, following standard movement rules. Any THROW actions targeting you are still resolved.</p> <p><i>Get a move on!</i></p>

*"Missed me, dork!" and "I've been practicing my pitch!" cancel each other out.*

# CHARACTER SHEETS

Print and cut out these mini character sheets (enough to represent all Kids on the board!) to help keep track of your stats. If you're coming here before reading the optional rules, the default "Type" is Kid – the rest are optional alternatives.

<i>(Character's/Player's Name)</i>							
TRAIT(S)						COMMAND DICE RESULTS	
POINTS						1	MOVE
						2	GATHER SNOW
COMMAND DICE						3	AIM
SNOWBALL SIZES						4	THROW
						5	
						6	WILD DICE
<b>TYPE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Kid <input type="checkbox"/> Big Kid <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Elf <input type="checkbox"/> Living Snowman <input type="checkbox"/> Yeti <input type="checkbox"/> Penguin							

<i>(Character's/Player's Name)</i>							
TRAIT(S)						COMMAND DICE RESULTS	
POINTS						1	MOVE
						2	GATHER SNOW
COMMAND DICE						3	AIM
SNOWBALL SIZES						4	THROW
						5	
						6	WILD DICE
<b>TYPE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Kid <input type="checkbox"/> Big Kid <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Elf <input type="checkbox"/> Living Snowman <input type="checkbox"/> Yeti <input type="checkbox"/> Penguin							

Trait	Command Dice 5
Fast	MOVE
Strong	THROW
Skilful	AIM
Resourceful	GATHER SNOW
Christmas Elf	WILD DICE
Yeti	MOVE or THROW

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