Rock & Stick Rumble

QUICK START

2 players · **Paper & pencil** · **4 tokens** (coins, pebbles, bottle caps)
Single game: 5–10 minutes · **Full match:** 15–25 minutes
Setup: 30 seconds

BEFORE THE RUMBLE

Long long ago. Before wheel. Before fire. Before anybody ask "why." One cave. Two Grug.
Both Grug name Grug. Very confuse. Mama no help.
One day, sky drop mammoth. Just drop. THUD. Sky no say why.
One mammoth. Two Grug. Grug grab stick. Other Grug grab rock. Grug look at rock. Look at stick. Drop stick.
This how fight start. Also how math start. Little bit.
Them cave still share. Mammoth no share.



WHAT YOU NEED

1. Each player starts with **5 Health** (draw 5 tally marks)
2. Place **4 Damage Tokens** in the middle pool
3. Decide who goes first: **Rock-Stick-Rock** (each player throws imaginary rock or stick. Heavier throw wins. Tie? Both get rock in head. Try again. Still can't decide? **Flip a rock.**)

SINGLE GAME RULES

Players alternate turns. Choose ONE action per turn:

ROCK ATTACK

Spend 1 token from hand → deal **2 damage**.

- Token returns to pool at end of round
- You must have a token in hand

> *"Big rock. Small skull. No need math."*

STICK SWING

Deal **1 damage**. Free — no token needed.

> *"Wood hurt too. Sometimes."*

SCAVENGE

Take **2 tokens** from pool (max 3 in hand). Skip attacking.

EXPOSED! Next attack against you deals **+1 damage** until your next turn

> *"Find better rock. Also, butt in air. Very vulnerable."*

DESPERATION At exactly **1 Health**, Scavenge also deals **1 damage** to opponent

> *"—you dying? Grab rock! Flail wildly! Sometimes even work."*

DEFEND

Next attack against you deals **2 less damage** (minimum 0).

- If your shield absorbs any damage, immediately draw **1 token** from pool
- Shield expires after absorbing one attack, or after one full round

> *"Hug arm. Protect head. Find shiny rock while cowering."*

WINNING A GAME

Reduce opponent to **0 Health** to win that game.

Tiebreaker: If both reach 0 HP in the same round, first player's action resolved first — they win the game.

> *"Both fall? Whoever fall on face still counted standing-ish."*

MATCH FORMAT

BEST TWO OUT OF THREE

Play a full match:

1. **Game 1: Flip a rock** or play **rock-stick-rock** to decide first player
2. **Game 2+:** The **loser of the previous game goes first**
3. **Best two out of three:** First player to win 2 games takes the match

> *"You no like being second? Then second you be. Twice."*

COMMON PITFALLS

- **Scavenge twice in a row:** You'll get punished hard while Exposed
- **Defend when opponent has 0 tokens:** Waste of a turn
- **Hoard more than 3 tokens:** Hand limit forces discards — tempo wasted

VARIATIONS

NAME	RULE CHANGE	PLAY TIME
Brutal	Start with 3 HP	3–5 min/game
Endless Blood	Below 2 HP, gain permanent +1 damage	Same as standard

> *"Brutal mode: Like being baby, but angrier."*

DESIGNER'S NOTE: This game balances itself through human stupidity, which is to say it balances perfectly. If you find yourself at a loss, you're playing right into the caveman spirit.

Mammoth awarded to winner. Cave shared by both.

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