

Robo Battle Pigs

A simple combat game for 2 to 8 players
 Playing time: 25 minutes
 Designed by Randy Cox

2001 8x8 Game Design Competition finalist

Check it out!

A group of very bright Dutch students with good taste in board games have written a networked, multiplayer version of RBP for Windows. You can download it and waste even more time at work or school!



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Equipment

- A chess or checker board
- A token for each player that has a definite front (I like to use rubber pigs like the ones in my "Pass The Pigs" game, but chess knights work equally well)
- Paper and a pencil for each player

Object

To destroy your opponent's Robo Battle Pig by inflicting five points of damage with your laser or powerful robot fist.

Rules

For two to four players, the pigs start the game on opposite sides of the board, just to the right of the center line, facing the center of the board. (See the [B.A.S.H. variation](#) for starting positions for up to eight players.)

In the example diagrams, A and B are the pigs, and the line indicates the direction that they are facing.

Each round of the game is made of five moves. Both players plan their five moves, recording them on paper. The players then reveal their "programs", and move their pigs simultaneously.

Commands

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|--|
| ^ | Forward | Walk forward one space |
| v | Backward | Walk backward one space |
| \ | Forward Left | Walk diagonally to the left one space |
| / | Forward Right | Walk diagonally to the right one space |
| TL | Turn Left | Rotate 90 degrees left (counter-clockwise) |
| TR | Turn Right | Rotate 90 degrees right (clockwise) |
| F | Fire | Fire your forward-pointing laser |
| H | Hit | Swing with your massive robot punching arm |
| R | Repair | Fixes one point of damage (uses all 5 moves) |

X Damage Do nothing (the result of being damaged)

All movement directions are relative to the direction that the pig is facing. For example, a pig facing east that moves backwards is moving west.

When moving Forward Left or Forward Right, the pigs maintain the same facing (i.e. if they were facing north, then moved Forward Left, they end up facing north).

Collisions

The Robo Battle Pigs cannot both occupy the same square on the board at the end of a move. Here are the possible collision states, and what to do about them.

Pigs move onto the same square:

Neither pig moves.

One pig attempts to move onto a square where the other pig rotates, repairs, or take a damage move

The moving pig stays in his old square, and the other carries out its action.

Face-to-face, back-to-back, or corner-to-corner pigs attempt to move "through" each other to occupy each other's original spaces

Neither pig moves.

Side-to-side pigs attempt to cross paths diagonally

Both pigs complete their desired moves.

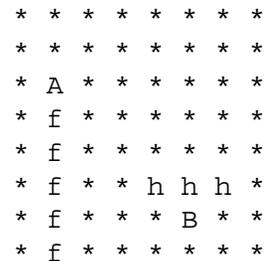
One pig moves onto the square that the other pig leaves

Both pigs complete their desired moves.

Attacking Moves (Fire and Hit)

These commands are the only ways to damage your opponent's pig. Firing the laser will hit a pig directly in front of you, no matter the range. Hitting will damage a pig standing in any of the three adjacent forward squares.

For example, if A (facing south) fires, then all of the squares labeled "f" score a damage point. If B (facing north) hits, then all of the squares labeled "h" score a damage point.



(If this were a real game, then neither player would succeed in damaging his opponent.)

Damage

If a Robo Battle Pig is damaged, on subsequent rounds it must play a damage move (X) for each point of damage it has incurred. This damage move can be played at any time during the round. The damage move causes the pig to perform more poorly the more damaged it is.

For example, if a pig has incurred three damage points, his commands for a round may look like this: ^ X X H X. This means that on the first step, he walks forward. Then he does nothing for the next two steps. Then he hits on the fourth step, and does nothing on the fifth step.

Remember, the damage moves can be played at any point during the round.

Repair

If a pig has been damaged, it may be repaired. To repair, the player writes "R R R R R" as his command set for a given round. During this round, the pig does not move or attack. One round of repairs reduces the pig's damage score by one point. A pig can receive damage from it's opponent while it is attempting to repair itself (if it gets hit twice while it is repairing, then subtract one damage point for the repair, and add two for the damage).

Repairing your pig is intentionally risky. If it was easy to repair damage, then the game would go on forever.

Winning the game

The game ends immediately when one Robo Battle Pig has incurred five points of damage.

Example Game

Here are the first three rounds of a sample game between two players. In the diagrams, the lines indicate the direction that the pigs are facing.

```

* * * A * * *
*
* * * | * * * *
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
* * * * | * * *
* * * * B * * *
    
```

Round 1

The players record their five commands on paper, then reveal them at the same time.

A: F ^ TR v H (0 damage)
 B: \ \ F ^ / (0 damage)

```

* * * A * * *
*
* * * | * * * *
* * * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * * *
*
* * * | * * * *
* * * B * * * *
* * * * * * * *
    
```

Round 1, Move 1

A: F
 B: \

B takes one point of damage from A's laser!

```

* * * * *
*
* * * A * * *
* * * | * * *
*
* * * * * Round 1, Move 2
*
* * | * * * * A: ^
* B: \
* * B * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

```

```

* * * * *
* * --A * * *
* * * * * Round 1, Move 3
* * * * *
* * | * * * * A: TR
* * B * * * * B: F
* * * * *
* * * * * B misses.

```

```

* * * * *
*
* * * --A * * *
* * * * *
*
* * | * * * * Round 1, Move 4
*
* * B * * * * A: v
* B: ^
* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

```

```

* * * * *
*
* * * --A * * *
* * * | * * *
*
* * * B * * * Round 1, Move 5
*
* * * * * A: H
* B: /
* * * * *
*
* * * * * A narrowly misses hitting B! Remember, a pig hits in the direction that it
* is facing. If B was one step further north, it would have been hit.
*
* * * * *
*

```

```

* * * * *
*
* * * --A * *
*
* * * | * * *
*
* * * B * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 2

A: v \ \ TR F (0 damage)

B: / / TL X F (1 damage)

B is trying to get behind A by moving to the east. A is betting that B will move north, and is trying to get behind it and fire.

```

* * * * *
*
* * * * | -A *
*
* * * * B * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 2, Move 1

A: v

B: /

They're both wishing that their next move was a hit!

```

* * * * *
*
* * * * | -A * *
* * * * B * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 2, Move 2

A: \

B: /

The pigs collide, (A tries to move SW, B tries to move NE) and neither goes anywhere. This is really going to mess up their plans.

```

* * * * *
*
* * * * --A * *
* * * --B * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 2, Move 3

A: \
B: TL

A collides with B and doesn't move. B turns.

```

* * * * * | *
*
* * * * * A * *
* * * --B * *
*
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 2, Move 4

A: TR
B: X

B uses his damage move (he must take one at some point during this round since he has incurred one damage point). A turns north.

```

* * * * * | *
*
* * * * * A * *
* * * --B * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 2, Move 5

A: F
B: F

Both pigs fire. Both pigs miss.

Not a very exciting round. They just bumped into each other a lot.

```

* * * * * | * *
* * * * * A *
*
* * * --B * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 3

A: / TL v \ F (0 damage)

B: v v v X H (1 damage)

A runs to the corner, then comes out with guns blazing. B backs up to the wall and hits.

```

* * * * * * |
* * * * * * A
*
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * --B *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 3, Move 1

A: /

B: v

```

* * * * * --A
*
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * --B
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*
* * * * * * *
*

```

Round 3, Move 2

A: TL

B: v

* * * * * --

A

* * * * * * *

* * * * * --

B

* * * * * *

*

Round 3, Move 3

* * * * * *

*

A: v

* * * * * *

B: v

*

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * --A *

* * * * * --

B

* * * * * *

Round 3, Move 4

*

* * * * * *

A: \

*

B: X

* * * * * *

*

B takes his damage move.

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * --A

*

* * * * * --

B

* * * * * *

Round 3, Move 5

*

* * * * * *

A: F

*

B: H

* * * * * *

*

A fires its laser at nothing as it gets hit in the back! Ouch!!

* * * * * *

*

* * * * * *

*

Round 4 would begin with both pigs having one damage point each. If either of them gets too damaged, it might try to repair. During a repair round, the pig cannot move or hit.

Variations

RBP for Kids

This game requires decent abstract thinking skills to visualize where your pig will end up while planning moves. To help kids play, it might be a good idea to provide them with a second board and token out of view of their opponent, so they can walk through their moves as they plan them.

Another way to take away a bit of the complexity is to ignore damage moves. Allow all pigs to make five moves on every turn no matter how damaged they are. Still, the first person to hit their opponent five times is the winner.

B.A.S.H. - Battle Against Several Hogs

Erik Arneson suggested that we modify the rules to create an eight player "battle royal" version of RBP for play in the [About Boardgames forum](#). We brought in Chouser to help, and here is what we came up with.

All normal Robo Battle Pigs rules regarding movement, damage, and repair apply. The pigs start the game arranged in a ring, facing outward from the center of the board:

```
* * * * * * * *
* * * | | * * *
* * * A B * * *
* --H * * C-- *
* --G * * D-- *
* * * F E * * *
* * * | | * * *
* * * * * * * *
```

Additional rules:

- Laser blasts do not penetrate pigs. If multiple pigs are in line with a laser blast, only the first pig in the line takes damage.
- Hitting can damage multiple pigs at one time. All pigs within the three squares that define hitting range are damaged by a hit.
- When a pig is destroyed, the the non-functional hulk remains on the board.
- As with living pigs, laser shots cannot penetrate a destroyed pig, so it can be used as laser cover for the remaining pigs.
- If a living pig moves onto a square containing a non-functional pig, the non-functional pig is removed from the board (it is flattened and is no longer an obstacle).
- Hitting a dead pig has no effect.

Continuous Feedback RPB (Advanced)

This variation eliminates the idea of rounds and allows the players to react to their opponents on a move-by-move basis.

The game starts with the pigs in the normal position, but the players plan out only the first three moves, rather than five.

Unlike the standard game where five moves are revealed at once, in this variation moves are

revealed one at a time. To start the game, reveal only the first move, and move the pigs accordingly. After each move, the players add one more move to the end of their move lists, then the next "first" move is revealed and executed, and so on.

If a pig is damaged, then the player must repeat the move at the end of his list before he adds a new move. This means that the more damaged a pig gets, the longer his move list becomes. And a longer move list means that he can't react as quickly to the actions of his opponent.

When a player takes five damage points, he is out of the game.

Here are the first few moves of a sample game:

```

* * * A * * *
*
* * * | * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * | * * *
* * * * B * * *

```

Initial Setup

Both players plan the first three moves:

A (0 damage): \ F \
B (0 damage): ^ ^ ^

Player A is going to cut over to the east side of the board (firing along the way), and Player B plans to go to the center.

```

* * * * * * *
*
* * * * A * * *
* * * * | * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * | * * *
* * * * B * * *
* * * * * * *

```

Move 1

The players reveal and execute the first move in their list (in brackets). After seeing what their opponent did, they add a new move to their list.

A (0 damage): [\] F \ ... ^
B (0 damage): [^] ^ ^ ... H

```

* * * * * * *
*
* * * * A * * *
* * * * | * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * | * * *
* * * * B * * *
* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *

```

Move 2

The players reveal and execute the next move in their list. Player B is hit by a laser! So, Player B repeats the last move on his list before he adds a new move. Player A just adds a move like normal.

A (0 damage): [F] \ ^ ... TL
B (1 damage): [^] ^ H ... H TL

Now Player B's move list is four moves long, while Player A's list is three moves long. The longer your move list, the harder it is to control your pig.

* * * * *

*

Move 3

* * * * *

* * * * * A * *

* * * * * | | * *

* * * * * B * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

The players reveal and execute the next move in their list. Player B thinks that Player A is making his way to the east side of the board (based on the last few revealed moves) and realizes that before long he's going to be facing west. He decides he had better turn around!

A (0 damage): [\] ^ TL ... F

B (1 damage): [^] H H TL ... TR

* * * * *

*

Move 4

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * * | A * *

* * * * * B | * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

Player B hits Player A! Now Player A must repeat his last move before he adds a new one.

A (1 damage): [^] TL F ... F \

B (1 damage): [H] H TL TR ... TR

...And so on until one player has five damage. Gameplay is slower with Continuous Feedback than with the standard game because the players think through their move lists after every move rather than every five moves. It has a very different feel than the standard Robo Battle Pigs game.

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