

Sentinels of the Multiverse **Published by Greater Than Games 2011;** **Designer: Christopher Badell**

Review by Paul Le Long

Overview

Sentinels is a co-operative superhero card game, but not a collectible card game ó everything you need to play is in the box and each box has the same cards ó there are no expansions for individual decks. I have the enhanced edition which contains a deck each for 10 heroes, 4 villains and 4 environments. (The photo immediately below is of the front of the game box.)



You play 2-5 heroes against a villain in a particular environment. There are many expansions that add extra heroes, villains and environments. The original game alone has almost limitless replay value so each expansion just adds ever more variety. The characters, by the way, are all original though you can see where the inspiration for some of them came from (Haka is The Hulk, Tachyon is The Flash, Wraith is Batmaní).

Can it be played solo?

This is a fully co-operative game and can therefore be played either solo or by a group who are all playing against the game ó the bad guys are controlled by the game's AI. I play solo but tend to run 3-4 heroes in each game; 4 seems to be the optimum for a good game (3 is fine, 5 would be a bit easy and 2 would be very tough).

What are the components?

Cards: There are 578 cards in the box! And they are really lovely, with great comic book art. Most cards have a bit of dialogue from a supposed comic book which creates a sense that you are playing within a proper comic book universe. There are also lots of very nice tokens which are used to track damage.

What is the level of complexity?

Pretty simple; the rules are read within minutes. Most of the rules are encountered as you go along ó you play a card and follow the instructions. It's a very simple game.

What do you spend your time doing during play?

The villain goes first followed by each hero in turn, then the environment. The sequence for everyone (mostly) is start of turn effects, play a card, use a power (all heroes have an innate ability which they can use), draw a card, end of turn effects. Basically you just follow instructions on the cards as you play them. The villain dishes out punishment to the heroes and deploys lots of minions to complicate things. The environment tends to complicate everyone's day by turning up things like toppling buildings, terrified civilians, rampaging dinosaurs or meteor showers!

What are the tactical decisions?

The game is really all about getting the best synergies out of each hero's cards and powers and there are some pretty powerful combinations if you can get your cards in order. There are also synergies between heroes ó some heroes can really help others by increasing the damage they deal, minimising incoming damage or redirecting it or by helping them cycle through their deck looking for useful cards. Some turns your hero will fail to inflict any damage on the baddies because they are preparing for something much more effective down the line. Really the goal is to inflict damage on the villain in order to take them down and win the game but you'll be distracted by the environment and bad-guy minions, which means that there are a lot of difficult choices to make each turn. Do you, for example, heal yourself, attack the villain, take out some minions, stop that runaway train killing innocent bystanders or play a card that will have no effect now but could be devastating later?

Web Links

There are some good play-through videos on Doug Herring's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Dougmysticeye>

There are other play-throughs too: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms5buwRH3Hk>

is by The Lonesome Gamer; Boardgame Geek's Game Night channel has:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfZuFGjLicY> and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2Rz_i56WJE is a nice learn-to-play video.

Final assessment

I really like this game. It is designed for co-operative play which means it plays well solitaire too. There is virtually no set-up or pack-away time and a game can last about 45 minutes on average (running 4 heroes). There is limitless replay value and loads of variety. I also think there is a lot of tactical play. I'm not really a big fan of the superhero genre but this is great fun and done well. I find the games very absorbing and filled with decision-making.

Recommended.
(More photos below.)









The four photos immediately above are 1) the back of the game box; 2) a game laid out and ready to begin; 3) the counters; and 4) some villain cards, to give an idea of the quality of the artwork.