

The US Presidential Election 2024

HARRIS
WALZ
LETS WIN THIS!

TRUMP
VANCE
MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!



A Game for from 2 to 6 Players
by John Armatys

This edition especially prepared for the
Wargame Developments website.

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The US Presidential Election 2024

A Game by John Armatys

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The US Presidential election takes place on 5th November 2024. The game begins in mid-October 2024, and ends on Inauguration Day, 20th January 2025.

There is a note on the US election process at the end of this document.

This is a matrix game. If you are not familiar with the genre there is a good guide in the Wargame Developments Handbook which can be downloaded free from <https://wargamedevelopments.org/about/>

In addition to this document you will need the accompanying spreadsheet to play the game. It is available from <https://wargamedevelopments.org/rules/>

All the players should be provided with a copy of the rules and the spreadsheet in advance of the game.

The game was designed to be played on Zoom (or a similar video conferencing service) with the umpire screen sharing the spreadsheet so that all the participants can see it. If playing face to face a projector could be used to allow the players to look at the umpire's copy of the spreadsheet.

Players are allocated to parties, each of which has three characters:

Democrats

Kamala Harris, Vice President, Democrat nominee for POTUS.

Tim Walz, Kamala Harris's running mate, Governor of Minnesota.

Joe Biden, President of the United States of America.

Republicans (and Supporters)

Donald Trump, former president, Republican nominee for POTUS.

J D Vance, Donald Trump's running mate, Senator for Ohio.

Robert F Kennedy Jr (RFK Jr), Independent candidate for POTUS who has suspended his campaign (but remains on the ballot in states where it will not affect the race and in some where it will) and has endorsed Donald Trump. [The umpire may choose to substitute an alternative Republican character].

If there are two players one takes each party.

If there are three players one player takes the democrats, one is Donald Trump and the other is the remaining Republicans.

If there are four players one player takes Kamala Harris, one takes the remaining democrats, one is Donald Trump and the other is the remaining Republicans.

If there are five players one player takes Kamala Harris, one takes the remaining democrats, the other three each take one of the republicans.

If there are six players one player takes each character:

Spectators can be appointed as campaign managers, who advise the players but do not make arguments.

During the game participants can communicate with each other via the Zoom chat function, which the umpire will not be reading. In a face to face game the participants can communicate by passing notes or by sending text messages on their phones (which should

be set to "silent").

The umpire may introduce facts as the game proceeds. Players can introduce facts by making arguments.

The Spreadsheet

The game is managed using an Excel spreadsheet. Cells filled in yellow can be changed by the umpire, other cells should not be amended.

For game purposes the presidential polls have also been used to find the results of the Senate and House elections.

Pollsters hope to have a margin for error of about 5% a week before the election. It is thought that about 5% to 15% of the electorate are undecided.

Game Format

The game is a matrix game with the following variations:

1. Each of the players writes their own **five** secret objectives/predictions and sends them to the umpire in advance of the game. The objectives/predictions will specify:
 1. who will be inaugurated as the President of the United States;
 2. who will be Vice President;
 3. which party will have a majority in the Senate, or if there will be a tie;
 4. whether the Democrats or the Republicans will have most seats in the House of Representatives; and
 5. anything the player chooses.Objectives/predictions will be revealed in a de-brief after the game.
2. The game has two phases. Phase 1, turns 1 to 10, covers the campaign. In Phase 2, polling day and its aftermath, the turns are:
 - Turn 11 - 5th November 2024 - Election. Voting happens at county level, with the certified results sent to each state capitol. The umpire rolls 2D6 for variation for each party and then resolves any tied states (Roll a six sided dice, 1 - 3 Democrats win, 4 - 6 Republicans win).
Each State's Executive prepares a Certificate of Ascertainment listing the number of votes each candidate received, the names of all the individuals on the slates for each candidate, and which individuals were appointed as the State's electors.
The 2022 Electoral Count Reform Act provides for expedited court action if one or more of the candidates disputes the election results so that the electors can be appointed no later than six days before the meeting of the electors.
 - Turn 12 - 17th December 2024 - Electors meet in their respective States and cast their votes for President and Vice President on separate ballots. If any electors are unable to carry out their duties substitute electors are appointed by the State. The electors' votes in each State are recorded on a Certificate of Vote, which, with the Certificate of Ascertainment, is sent to Congress to be counted.
 - Turn 13 - 6th January 2025 - A joint session of Congress, presided over by the Vice President as President of the Senate, counts the electoral votes. The President of the Senate then calls for any objections.
Objections must be made in writing and signed by at least one-fifth of the Senators and one-fifth of the members of the House of Representatives.
There are only two grounds for objection: that the electors of the State were not lawfully certified under a certificate of ascertainment, or that the vote of

one or more electors has not been regularly given. The Senate and the House of Representatives debate any objection separately. After the debate, the Senate and the House of Representatives rejoin and both must agree for the votes to be rejected.

After all the votes are recorded and counted, the President of the Senate declares which persons, if any, have been elected President and Vice President of the United States.

If no candidate has 270 votes the House decides who will be president from the three candidates who received most electoral votes, each state delegation having one vote. The Senate decides who will be vice president from the top two candidates.

Turn 14 - 20th January 2025 - Inauguration Day - the President and Vice President take office.

The umpire may allow additional turns in Phase 2 if events make it appropriate.

3. Each turn the player controlling each character may either
 - a) make an argument (stating an ACTION, a RESULT, and **up to three REASONS WHY**).
 In phase 1 any player may use an argument to attempt to influence undecided voters. Success increases or reduces a specified party's dice roll in the election by 1. A disastrous fail (an unmodified roll of 2) has the reverse effect.
 In phase 1 a candidate (not RFK Jr) may campaign, including a rally and a significant spend on advertising, in a state of their choice, to add one point to their party's poll result and deduct one from the rival party's poll result in that state. No reasons are required, success is likely or probable, 6+ for a nominee for president, 7+ for a running mate, with - 1 on the dice roll if both parties are campaigning in that state that turn. A disastrous fail (an unmodified roll of 2) has the reverse effect; or
 - b) support **or** oppose an argument put forward by another character (which requires no reasons, support or opposition will give +1 or -1 to the dice roll). Players may support or oppose the argument of a character whose go is later in the turn (without necessarily knowing what they will do...); or
 - c) pass.
4. The characters make their arguments in the following order - candidate for POTUS for each party, running mate for each party, third character for each party. The party to play first in the first turn will be decided by dice roll. In subsequent turns the party to play first will take into account the success of the party in the preceding round, with a player who "passed" deciding whether it counts as success or failure.

All arguments are resolved at the end of each turn using two six sided dice, the score required being decided by the umpire's opinion of the chance of success:

Description	Chance	Dice Roll
Remote chance	3%	12
Highly unlikely	8%	11
Highly unlikely	17%	10
Unlikely	28%	9
Realistic possibility	42%	8
Likely or probably	58%	7
Likely or probably	72%	6
Highly likely	83%	5
Highly likely	92%	4
Almost certain	97%	3
Certain	100%	2

The umpire then updates the spreadsheet.

A Note on US Presidential Elections

The President of the United States is elected by an Electoral College. Voters don't actually vote for a presidential candidate, they tell their State which candidate they want the State's electors to vote for. The States use these general election results ("the popular vote") to appoint their electors. In most states the "winner takes all" - the winning candidate's State political party selects the individuals who will be electors, chosen because they hold a leadership position in their party or to recognize years of loyal service to the party. In Nebraska and Maine the state winner receives two electors and the winner in each congressional district receives one elector. In addition to the 50 States the District of Columbia appoints electors to the Electoral College.

There is no Constitutional provision or Federal law that requires electors to vote according to the results of the popular vote in their States. Some States, however, require electors to cast their votes according to the popular vote, and the political parties may extract pledges from electors to vote for the parties' nominees. Some State's laws provide that "faithless electors" can be subject to fines or may be disqualified for casting an invalid vote and be replaced by a substitute elector. No elector has ever been prosecuted for failing to vote as pledged. However in 2016 several electors were disqualified and replaced, and others were fined, for failing to vote as pledged. There were no faithless electors in 2020.

If no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes (270), the Presidential election leaves the Electoral College process and moves to Congress.

The House of Representatives elects the President from the three Presidential candidates who received the most electoral votes. Each State delegation has one vote and it is up to the individual States to determine how to vote (the District of Columbia is not a State, has no State delegation in the House, and cannot vote). To be elected a candidate must receive at least 26 votes (a majority of the States).

The Senate elects the Vice President from the two Vice Presidential candidates with the most electoral votes. Each Senator casts one vote for Vice President (the District of Columbia is not a State, has no Senators, and so does not participate in the vote). A candidate must receive at least 51 votes (a majority of Senators) to be elected.

If the House of Representatives fails to elect a President by Inauguration Day the Vice-President Elect serves as acting President until the deadlock is resolved in the House.

Death of a Candidate

1. After the party's convention but before election day
The parties have different rules:
 - The Democratic National Committee has the power to fill the vacancy on their party ticket after the chair consults Democratic governors and congressional leaders.
 - The Republican National Committee could reconvene a national convention or select the alternative candidate itself.If there is not enough time for a replacement candidate to appear on the ballot the party could instruct voters and electors to treat the names on the ballot "as hieroglyphics".
2. Between the general election and the meeting of electors
Individual States may have their own requirements that govern how electors must vote at the meeting of the electors. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan added in a

footnote in a 2020 case “nothing in this opinion should be taken to permit the states to bind electors to a deceased candidate”. If the electors haven’t met when the vacancy occurs, they could vote for a replacement candidate designated by the party. The electors could also decide to back the deceased candidate, when the 20th Amendment would apply - “If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice-President elect shall become President”.

3. Between the meeting of electors and the counting of electoral votes in Congress There is some debate over when a winning candidate becomes president-elect. It could be after the electors vote on 17th December or it could be when Congress counts the electoral votes on 6th January. According to a 2020 Congressional Research Service memo "The balance of scholarly opinion holds that the president and vice-president-elect are chosen once the electoral votes are cast". If the candidate with a majority of the electoral votes is considered “President elect” before the counting of electoral votes in Congress the Vice President-elect would become the president-elect under the 20th Amendment.
4. Between the counting of electoral votes in Congress and the inauguration The Vice President-elect becomes President under the 20th Amendment.

Other Elections on 5th November

The 2024 General Election also includes all the seats in the House of Representatives (whose members are elected for two years) and 34 seats in the Senate (whose members are elected for six years, one third being elected every two years).

Sources:

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Further sources on the possibilities of post election problems:

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