ARCFRONT Quick-Start Guide

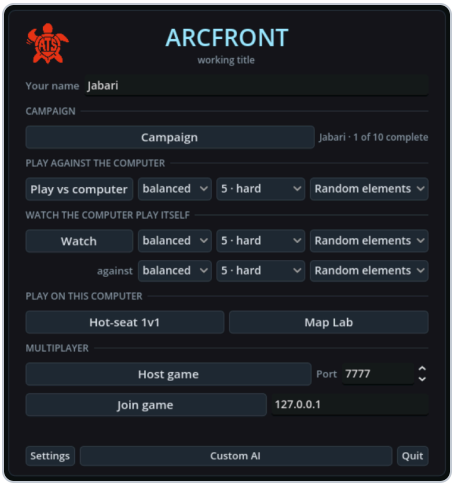
Playtest build · Windows
Real-time strategy · successor to *Netstorm: Islands at War*

What is Arcfront?

Each player starts on an island with a Core. You harvest Flux from Arcite Crystals, extend your reach with Relays, and build stationary weapons and towers to destroy the enemy Core. Nothing moves except projectiles and flying units launched from docks: the whole game is about **where you build**. Weapons fire on their own at targets in range.

> **Goal:** destroy every enemy Core. The last team with a Core wins.

The main menu



- **Your name** at the top is your player name. Campaign progress is saved under it.
- **Campaign** Training runs and story missions (see below). Your progress shows beside the button.
- **Play vs computer** Pick a personality (balanced, berserker, goblin, turtle, baron, ace), a difficulty (1 novice, 2 easy, 3 casual, 4 normal, 5 hard) and the computer's elements. **New players: start on easy or casual.**
- **Watch** Set up two computer players and watch them play each other. A good way to learn.
- **Hot-seat 1v1** Two people share one computer. `Tab` switches player.
- **Host game** / **Join game** Multiplayer (below).
- Map Lab, Settings and Custom AI can be ignored for now.
- Every match opens with a 10-second countdown to look around the map. Nothing can be placed or chosen until it ends.

Multiplayer

1. The host clicks **Host game**. The port (7777 by default) is in the box beside it.
2. Everyone else types the host's address in the box next to **Join game** (`address` or `address:port`) and clicks it.
3. Everyone lands in a **lobby**. The leader picks the mode (1v1, 2v2 or free-for-all). Players click **Sit here** on a seat. The leader can fill empty seats with **Add computer**, then clicks **Start match**.

A match needs at least one human, and both teams need a player. Each player gets 3 pauses. A disconnected player is waited for up to 60 seconds, then dropped.

- **Same network (LAN):** join with the host's local IPv4 address. On Windows, run `ipconfig` and look for "IPv4 Address" (usually `192.168.x.x`).
- **Over the internet with Tailscale** (free, no port forwarding): both players install Tailscale and sign in to the same tailnet, or the host shares their machine with the friend. Join with the host's Tailscale IP: the `100.x.x.x` address shown in the Tailscale app.
- The game uses **UDP port 7777**. If Windows Firewall asks when you host, allow it.

Controls

Left click	Select / place	Mouse wheel	Zoom	`Home`	Jump to your Core
`Shift` + left click	Place another	`Shift` + wheel	Zoom to cursor	`P`	Pause
Right click or `R`	Rotate before placing	Middle mouse / `Space` + drag	Pan	`−` / `+`	Game speed
`Esc`	Cancel / stats	Minimap click / drag	Move camera	`M`	Mute

Campaign

Click **Campaign** on the main menu. It starts with **two training runs** that teach the basics with the workshop units. They're optional, but a good place to start. After them come **eight contracts**, two per element. Play the elements in any order. Each element's second contract opens after its first. More of the campaign is on the way.

How it works

Costs in Flux · **1 pulse = 4 seconds**

- **Flux** is the only resource. You start with **100**. Your Core pays **5 Flux every pulse** and never runs out. Each **Nodejack** built on an Arcite Crystal adds **1 Flux per pulse** until the crystal runs dry. You have 5 starting crystals holding 225–325 Flux each, and new crystals (200 Flux) appear across the map during the game. Richer crystals are teal or silver instead of cyan. On the minimap, a claimed crystal shows as a square in the owner's colour with the crystal colour in the middle.
- **Influence:** you can only build where your influence reaches. Your Core and your **Relays** give influence, and each Relay extends your reach further out. Relays are fragile (600 HP; the Core has 5,000 HP). They are how both sides expand and push toward each other.
- **Elements:** choose your first element at any time (free). A second element opens for everyone at **6:00** (also free). Elements are permanent once chosen. Each element gives its own Relay and its own units. Element units need influence from a **Relay of their own element plus one more source** of any kind (your Core counts as one). Workshop combat units and Claim Beacons need two sources of any kind. Relays and Nodejacks need one.

Air: fast, fragile firepower, hunting flyers, a one-way shield.

Water: anti-air, fire that ramps up, a regenerating tower.

Fire: heavy damage: volleys, bombers, very long-range blasts.

Earth: splitting and piercing shots, the toughest tower.

- **Claim Beacons** claim a whole island: no enemy can build on it while the Beacon stands.
- **Towers** (Shieldpost, Aegis Vane, Tideglass Ward, Ironroot Bastion) block enemy fire aimed at the units behind them. Aegis Vane can't be damaged from its facing side, except from above. Tideglass Ward regenerates. Ironroot Bastion has 3,800 HP and is immune to aerial attacks.
- **Targeting:** weapons pick the closest target in range and keep firing at it until it is destroyed. Tidewatch Array, Cinderfan and Stormrays don't lock on. Attackers start firing 4 seconds after they finish building.
- **Launchers** (Skimmer Bay, Stormray Dock, Ashdrop Rack) send flyers at distant targets. Anti-air units (Picket Turret, Gale Repeater, Tidewatch Array) can shoot flyers down.
- **Building** takes longer the farther you build from your Core, up to 2× as long. Destroyed units are not refunded.
- **Win:** destroy every enemy Core.

Units

UNIT	FLUX	ROLE
Infrastructure		
Relay (Air / Water / Fire / Earth)	20	Gives influence of its element. Fragile.
Nodejack	35	Harvests the Arcite Crystal it is built on.
Claim Beacon	40	Claims the island: no enemy may build on it. Needs 2 influence sources.
Workshop (common) available to everyone · each needs 2 influence sources		
Crossrail	20	Medium range. Fires straight lines in all four directions.
Picket Turret	15	Short-range 360° turret, stronger against flyers (anti-air). Cheap, fragile.
Shieldpost	25	**TOWER** Cheap, standard blocker.
Skimmer Bay	25	**LAUNCHER** Long-range clean-up: its fragile Skimmer attacks from above.
Air fast and fragile		
Gale Repeater ↻	25	Rapid fire in a 60° arc, short-to-mid range. Anti-air. Powerful but fragile.
Stormray Dock ↻	40	**LAUNCHER** Stormrays hunt from target to target.
Aegis Vane ↻	40	**TOWER** Immune to damage on its facing side (not from above).
Water sustained pressure		
Surge Driver ↻	30	Long single line. Fire rate ramps up while locked on.
Tidewatch Array	25	360°, mid range, doesn't lock on. Anti-air.
Tideglass Ward	40	**TOWER** Slowly regenerates.
Fire heavy damage		
Pyrelance ↻	60	Huge, slow blasts down one very long line.
Cinderfan ↻	25	Five-line fanned pellet volley (90°). Doesn't lock on.
Ashdrop Rack ↻	35	**LAUNCHER** Ashwings drop one splash bomb. Can't hit close targets.
Earth tough, hits groups		
Crossfault ↻	30	Line shots split sideways on impact, hitting neighbours.
Shockbore ↻	30	Slow wave pierces and damages everything in its line.
Ironroot Bastion	40	**TOWER** Huge HP. Immune to aerial attacks.

↻ = aimed: fires in one direction, so rotate it (right click or R) before placing.