

# TE CRIBBAGE

Play is on Thursday mornings starting at 9:30 a.m.  
You do not need to sign up to play and play cost 25¢

## Number of Players

Two, three or four people can play. Two and three people play "alone" or four people can play two against two as partners.

## The Pack

The standard 52-card pack is used.

## Rank of Cards

K (high), Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A.

## The Draw, Shuffle and Cut

From a shuffled pack face down, each player cuts a card, leaving at least four cards at either end of the pack. If two players cut cards of the same rank, each tied player draws again. The player with the lower card deals the first hand. Thereafter, the turn to deal rotates clockwise to the next player.

## The Deal

The dealer distributes cards face down to his opponent(s) and himself, beginning with the opponent to their left and then clockwise around. If two players; each receives 6 cards. If three players, each receives 5 cards and one is placed face down in the crib. If four players; each receives 5 cards.

## Object of the Game

The goal is to be the first player to score 121 points. (Some games are to 61 points.) Players earn points during play and for making various card combinations.

## The Crib

Each player looks at his cards and "lays away" card(s) face down to reduce their hand to four. The four cards laid away together constitute "the crib". The crib belongs to the dealer, but these cards are not exposed or used until after the hands have been played.

## **Before the Play**

After the crib is laid away, the non-dealer to the right of the dealer cuts the pack. The dealer turns up the top card of the lower packet and places it face up on top of the pack. This card is the "starter." If the starter is a jack, it is called "His Heels," and the dealer pegs (scores) 2 points at once. The starter is not used in the play phase of Cribbage, but is used later for making various card combinations that score points.

## **The Play**

After the starter is turned, the non-dealer to the left of the dealer lays one of his cards face up on the table. Players similarly exposes a card moving clockwise around the table and so on - the hands are exposed card by card, rotating except for a "Go," as noted below. Each player keeps his cards separate from those of his opponent.

As each person plays, he announces a running total of pips reached by the addition of the last card to all those previously played. (Example: The non-dealer begins with a four, saying "Four." The next player plays a nine, saying "Thirteen".) The kings, queens and jacks count 10 each; every other card counts its pip value (the ace counts one).

## **The Go**

During play, the running total of cards may never be carried beyond 31. If a player cannot add another card without exceeding 31, he or she says "Go" and the player playing the last card pegs 1. After gaining the Go, the next player clockwise from the last card played must first lay down a card keeping the running total starting with the card played (again without exceeding 31). Besides the point for Go, they may then score any additional points that can be made through pairs and runs (described later). If a player reaches exactly 31, he pegs two instead of one for Go.

The first player who called Go leads for the next series of plays, with the count starting at zero. The lead may not be combined with any cards previously played to form a scoring combination; the Go has interrupted the sequence.

The person who plays the last card pegs one for *Go*, plus one extra if the card brings the count to exactly 31.

## **Pegging**

The object in play is to score points by pegging. In addition to a *Go*, a player may score for the following combinations:

**Fifteen:** For adding a card that makes the total 15 - Peg 2

**Pair:** For adding a card of the same rank as the card just played - Peg 2

(Note that face cards pair only by actual rank: jack with jack, but not jack with queen.)

**Triplet:** For adding the third card of the same rank - Peg 6

**Four:** (also called "Double Pair" or "Double Pair Royal")

For adding the fourth card of the same rank - Peg 12

**Run (Sequence):** For adding a card that forms, with those just played:

For a sequence of three - Peg 3

For a sequence of four - Peg 4

For a sequence of five - Peg 5

(Peg one point more for each extra card of a sequence. Note that runs are independent of suits, but go strictly by rank; to illustrate: 9, 10, J, or J, 9, 10 is a run but 9, 10, Q is not.)

It is important to keep track of the order in which cards are played to determine whether what looks like a sequence or a run has been interrupted by a "foreign card." Example: Cards are played in this order: 8, 7, 7, 6. The dealer pegs 2 for 15, and the opponent pegs 2 for pair, but the dealer cannot peg for run because of the extra seven (foreign card) that has been played. Example: Cards are played in this order: 9, 6, 8, 7. The dealer pegs 2 for fifteen when he plays the six and the player playing the 7 pegs 4 for run when he plays the seven (the 6, 7, 8, 9 sequence). The cards were not played in sequential order, but they form a true run with no foreign card.

## **Counting the Hands**

When play ends, the hands are counted in order: non-dealer's hand clockwise from the dealer (first), the next player clockwise and so on until the dealer's hand, and then the crib (last). This order is important because, toward the end of a game, the non-dealer may "count out" and win before another player has a chance to count, even though their total would have exceeded that of the previous player.

The starter is considered to be a part of each hand, so that all hands in counting comprise five cards. The basic scoring formations are as follows:

### **Combination Counts**

**Fifteen.** Each combination of cards that totals 15 - Peg 2

**Pair.** Each pair of cards of the same rank - Peg 2

**Run.** Each combination of three or more 1 cards in sequence (Peg 1 for each card in the sequence)

**Flush.** Four cards of the same suit in hand 4- Peg 4 (excluding the crib, and the starter)

Four cards in hand or crib of the same 5 suit as the starter - Peg 5

(There is no count for four-flush in the crib that is not of same suit as the starter)

**His Nobs.** Jack of the same suit as starter in hand or crib - Peg 1

### **Combinations**

In the above table, the word combination is used in the strict technical sense.

Each and every combination of two cards that make a pair, of two or more cards that make 15, or of three or more cards that make a run, count separately.

Example: A hand (including the starter) comprised of 8, 7, 7, 6, 2 scores 8 points for four combinations that total 15: the 8 with one 7, and the 8 with the other 7; the 6, 2 with each of the two 7s. The same hand also scores 2 for a pair, and 6 for two runs of three (8, 7, 6 using each of the two 7s). The total score is 16. An experienced player computes the hand thus: "Fifteen 2, fifteen 4, fifteen 6, fifteen 8, and 8 for double run is 16."

Note that the ace is always low and cannot form a sequence with a king. Further, a flush cannot happen during the play of the cards; it occurs only when the hands and the crib are counted.

Certain basic formulations should be learned to facilitate counting. For pairs and runs alone:

- A. A triplet counts 6.
- B. Four of a kind counts 12.
- C. A run of three, with one card duplicated (double run) counts 8.
- D. A run of four, with one card duplicated, counts 10.
- E. A run of three, with one card triplicated (triple run), counts 15.
- F. A run of three, with two different cards duplicated, counts 16.

### A PERFECT 29!

The highest possible score for combinations in a single Cribbage deal is 29, and it may occur only once in a Cribbage fan's lifetime -in fact, experts say that a 29 is probably as rare as a hole-in-one in golf. To make this amazing score, a player must have a five as the starter (upcard) and the other three fives plus the jack of the same suit as the starter - His Nobs: 1 point - in his hand. The double pair royal (four 5s) peg another 12 points; the various fives used to hit 15 can be done four ways for 8 points; and the jack plus a 5 to hit 15 can also be done four ways for 8 points. Total = 29 points.

The following list includes many of the hands that may give the beginner some difficulty in counting. Note that no hand can make a count of 19, 25, 26, or 27. (In the chart below J stands for His Nobs, the jack of the same suit as the starter. Each player must count his hand (and crib) aloud and announce the total

### **Game**

Game may be fixed at either 121 points or 61 points. The play ends the moment any player reaches the agreed total, whether by pegging or counting one's hand. If when a player "goes out" by the count of his hand, the game immediately ends and the remaining players may not score their hand(s) or the crib.

### **The Cribbage Board**

We use continuous track Cribbage boards which, as the name implies, have one continuous line of 121 holes for each player.

The board is placed to one side between two players, and each player takes two pegs of the same color for each player or team. (The pegs are placed in the game holes until the game begins.) Each time a player scores, he advances a peg along a row on his colored row of the board, counting one hole per point. Two pegs are used, and the rearmost peg jumps over the first peg to show the first increment in score. After another increase in score, the peg behind jumps over the peg in front to the appropriate hole to show the player's new score, and so on. The custom is to "go down".

### **Strategy**

**The Crib.** If the dealer is discarding for the crib, he should "salt" it with the best possible cards, but at the same time retain good cards in his hand that can be used for high scoring. Conversely, for the non-dealer(s), it is best to lay out cards that will be the least advantageous for the dealer. Laying out a five would be the worst choice, for the dealer could use it to make 15 with any one of the ten-cards (10, J, Q, K). Laying out a pair is usually a poor choice too, and the same goes for sequential cards, such as putting both a six and seven in the crib. The ace and king tend to be good cards to put in the crib because it is harder to use them in a run.

**The Play.** As expected, the five makes for the worst lead in that there are so many ten-cards that the opponent can use to make a 15. Leading from a pair is a good idea, for it is less likely the next player can make a pair. Leading an ace or deuce is not a good idea, for these cards should be saved until later to help make a 15, a Go, or a 31. The safest lead is a four because this card cannot be used to make a 15 at the next player's very next turn. Finally, when the opponent leads a card that can either be paired or make 15, the latter choice is preferred.

During the play, it is advisable not to try to make a count of 21, for the opponent can then play one of the many 10-cards and make 31 to gain two points.

### **Payout**

The play costs 25¢ and all money collected is awarded based on the number of players. Play ends around 11:30.