

# Cribbage mini-unit

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## Objectives:

- Be familiar with the history of the card game of Cribbage.
- Learn the rules of Cribbage.
- Practice skills

## History

The invention of Cribbage, Crib for short, was attributed to the poet Sir John Suckling (1609 - 1642), an English courtier, poet, gamester and gambler by his biographer, John Aubrey. It derives from the earlier game of Noddy.

Originally the five card game was played where only one card was discarded to the crib by each player. Now the six card game is more popular with two cards each being discarded to the crib.

Cribbage was immortalized in Charles Dickens's, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, with the exploits of Richard Swiveller and his self named Marchioness. Richard Swiveller, a somewhat eccentric young man, who liked standing on his head in fits of high emotion, one day observed someone peeping through the keyhole at him at the place where he worked. On suddenly opening the door he found a young girl, dressed in rags, and a prisoner and slave to his employers. Richard Swiveller befriended the girl, who he named the Marchioness, and taught her how to play cribbage. Later on overcome with emotion at recent events, Richard Swiveller takes to his bed seriously ill. On waking he thinks he is still in a dream as he sees the Marchioness, (who having escaped is now nursing him), playing cribbage by herself until he notices that she has omitted to take the two points for a knave and he shouts '2 for his heels!'. The Marchioness jumps up with joy and they live happily ever after playing cribbage into the long winter evenings.

Cribbage is very popular in the United States with many cribbage leagues and clubs in existence, and it is the only game which you can play in an English pub for money. It has also been introduced into Russia with a native Russian (currently the national orienteering champion and ranked 16th in the world) far preferring it to Durak the national card game.

## Vocabulary

<b>crib</b>	Four cards (two from each player) set aside for the dealer to score after the dealer's hand.
<b>cut card</b>	(1) the starter card; (2) the card cut by either player at the start of the game or match to determine the dealer
<b>flush</b>	Four cards of the same suit held in the hand count four points; five cards of the same suit (including the starter card) count five points in the hand or crib.
<b>game hole</b>	Hole number 121.
<b>go</b>	Called by a player who cannot play a card without exceeding the cumulative count of 31; the opponent scores one point, or two if reaching exactly 31.
<b>hand</b>	The six cards dealt to each player or the four cards remaining after discarding to the crib.
<b>His heels(nibs)</b>	Jack, when it is the starter card, counts two points for the dealer.
<b>His nobs</b>	Jack of the same suit as the starter card, either in the hand or crib, counts one point.
<b>judge</b>	A person authorized by the ACC or the tournament director to answer questions and settle disagreements between players relating to the rules of play.
<b>match</b>	One or more games between two players, the outcome of which is a match winner and a match loser. The play of one or more games between two players during tournament qualification play does not constitute a match.
<b>muggins</b>	The scoring of certain points that one's opponent fails to peg. It has no relationship to penalties. Muggins is played at the option of the tournament director, but must be listed on a sanctioned tournament flyer and announced prior to the beginning of play.
<b>pair</b>	Two cards of the same rank, such as two Aces.
<b>peg</b>	(1) A small marker that fits into the holes of a cribbage board and is used for scoring. (2) To record a score by advancing the rear peg in front of the front peg.
<b>pegging</b>	The recording of scored points by advancing the rear peg in front of the front peg.
<b>pone</b>	The opponent of the player who deals.
<b>score</b>	Any points earned by a player.
<b>scoring</b>	The earning of points.
<b>shuffle</b>	A random mixing of the cards, which could include riffing.
<b>skunk</b>	To win by 31 or more points.
<b>skunk, double</b>	To win by 61 or more points.
<b>starter card</b>	The card that is cut and placed on the remainder of the pack and is used in counting the value of each hand and the crib.

<b>stink hole</b>	Hole number 120, which is one short of the game hole.
<b>straight (or run), single</b>	Sequence of three or more consecutive cards in any order during the play of the cards; for example, 3, 5, 6, 7, 4 (counts three when the 7 is played and counts five when the 4 is played).
<b>straight, multiple</b>	(used only in counting hands and crib):
<b>double run</b>	Two three-card or four-card straights, including one pair; for example, A, 2, 3, 3 or A, 2, 3, 3, 4.
<b>double-double run</b>	Four three-card straights, including two pairs; for example, 8, 8, 9, 9, 10.
<b>triple run</b>	Three three-card straights, including three of a kind; for example, J, Q, Q, Q, K.
<b>street</b>	A stretch of 30 holes on the game board. First street consists of holes 1–30, second street of holes 31–60, third street of holes 61–90, and fourth street of holes 91–120.

## Six Card Cribbage

### Scoring

Cribbage is played with an ordinary pack of 52 cards without jokers. Scoring is normally recorded on a traditionally crafted board with four parallel lines of 30 holes each plus 2 game holes. Other cribbage board types exist. Two pegs record the score for each player, the rear peg showing the previous tally, the foremost peg recording the current score. The pegs move up the outside of one side of the board and then back down the inside.

### Objective

The aim of Cribbage is to be the first to move the pegs all the way up and down the board twice and end in the in the game hole. Or put another way, to be the first to score **121 points**. Note that the game ends immediately either player reaches the final hole even if this is during the play or when the dealer pegs "two for his heels". There is no requirement to get exactly 121 - it is simply the first to reach the target score. Competitions are normally played as the best of 3 games, a game being to either 61 or 121. Players take turns to deal the first hand of each game.

### The Deal

Players cut for the deal - lowest card wins. After the first hand, players take turns to deal. The dealer shuffles, asks his opponent to cut and then deals six cards each. Both players discard two cards face down and these two cards are henceforth referred to as "the crib" or "the box". This crib is effectively an extra hand scored for the dealer. So the dealer aims to discard cards into the crib that will give a good chance of a high scoring hand whereas the opponent aims to confound this objective. Most of the skill in the game of Cribbage is down to the choice of cards discarded at this point.

### The Cut

Next the dealer asks his opponent to cut the cards another time. The top portion of cards is placed underneath the lower portion and the new top-most card is turned face upwards. If this card is a Jack, the dealer pegs two points and says "Two for his heels".

### The Play

The opponent begins the Play by laying one of his four cards face up while clearly stating its numerical value. All royal cards count ten, the ace counts one and other cards are worth their pip value. The dealer then lays a card separately in front of him and announces the total of both cards. Play continues like this with each player alternately laying a card on the pile in front of him while verbally keeping tally of the current joint total. However, the total must not go above 31.

When a player cannot play without taking the total above 31, that player says "go" and, if possible, the remaining player must carry on alone until that player, too, cannot play without taking the total above 31. When neither player can play any card without taking the total above 31, the player who laid the last card pegs 1 point saying "One for last". Should either player manage to take the total to exactly 31, that player pegs 2 points instead of 1, saying "Two for thirty-one". Then the cards already played are turned over and the player who did not lay the last card starts a new play.

When one player's cards are exhausted, the other player continues alone. The last card played scores 1 "for last" (unless the amount is 31 in which case 2 points are scored).

During the play, the following events are scored and the appropriate amounts are immediately recorded on the cribbage board.

- If anyone lays down a card which brings the total to 15, 2 points are scored.
- If anyone lays down a card of the same type as the previous one, 2 points are scored ("2 for a pair"). In this context, the numerical value is not used so, for instance, a Jack cannot be paired with a Queen.
- If anyone lays down a third card of the same type, 6 points are scored ("6 for a pair royal").
- If anyone lays down a fourth card of the same type, 12 points are scored ("12 for a double pair royal").
- If anyone lays down a card such that with the two preceding cards, a run can be scored, 3 points are scored. The cards do not have to be of the same suit nor do they have to have been laid in sequential order. Aces count low so Queen, King, Ace is not a run.
- Similarly, if anyone lays a card such that with the three or more preceding cards, a run can be constructed, the number of cards which would make up that run are scored. e.g. suppose cards were laid in the following order: 8,6,4,5,7. The fourth card would score 3 points; the fifth card would score five points.

## The Show

Each player then counts the score of the four cards in his hand plus the turned up card. The non-dealer shows first and this is important because it can often make the difference between winning and losing.

- Fifteen - All combinations of cards that add up to fifteen count 2 points.
- A pair, a pair royal or a double pair royal - count 2, 6 or 12 respectively.
- A run - A point for each card in a run.
- A flush - Four or five cards of the same suit. A point is scored for each card. A 4 point flush can only be scored using cards from the hand. The turned up card can ONLY be used in a five card flush. Note that flushes do not count in the play.
- One for his nob - a jack of the same suit as the turned up card. This is always scored last so that the score is tallied by finishing with the satisfying phrase "and one for his nob".

The highest possible score in the show is 29 points - 3 fives and a Jack in the hand with the turned up card another five of the same suit as the held Jack.

## The Crib

Finally, the dealer counts the score of the cards in the crib plus the turned up card and adds these points to his total.

Scoring is done in exactly the same way as for the show except that a crib can only score a flush if all five cards are of the same suit for five points.

## Example of The Play

The number shows the card laid down while the text shows what would be said while laying down the card. The score for that turn is also indicated.

- 5 - "Five" - 0
- 5 - "Ten and two for a pair" - 2
- 5 - "Fifteen for two and six for a pair royal" - 8
- 6 - "Twenty one" - 0
- 4 - "Twenty five and three for a run" - 3
- 3 - "Twenty eight and four for a run" - 4
- 3 - "Thirty one for two and two for a pair" - 4
- Cards are now turned over and a new play begins
- 3 - "Three" - 0

## The Show - Example 1

Starter - Jack Diamonds;

Hand - Five Hearts, Queen Spades, Queen Hearts, King Clubs

Total score 16. While totaling up this hand, the player would say something like "Four fifteens for eight, two for a pair is ten and two runs for six is sixteen". It's common and perfectly acceptable for beginners to display the various combinations as they mention them; old hands normally wouldn't bother since immediately the hand is shown, the score would be known to all.

## The Show - Example 2

Starter - Queen Diamonds;

Hand - Jack Hearts, Jack Diamonds, Queen Spades, King Clubs

Total score 17. While totaling up this score, the player would say something akin to "Two pairs for four, four runs for twelve and one for his Nob is seventeen".

## The Show - Example 3

Starter - Three Spades

Hand - Ace Hearts, Two Hearts, Four Hearts, Five Hearts.

Total score 11. The player would say something not dissimilar to "Five for a run, four for a flush and two for fifteen is eleven".

Scoring Chart	Points Earned	
	During Play	Hand or Crib
Cards		
Jack turned by dealer as starter card	2	-
Jack in hand or crib of same suit as starter card	-	1
Combinations:		
• Two of a kind (pair)	2	2
• Three of a kind (triple)	6	6
• Four of a kind (quadruple)	12	12
• Straights of three or more cards: per card	1	1
• 15-count (sum of any combination of cards)	-	2
• Four-card flush (only in the hand)	-	4
• Five-card flush	-	5
Reaching a 15-count exactly	2	-
*Reaching 31-count exactly	2	-
*"Go" (without reaching 31-count)	1	-
*Final card played (without reaching 31-count)	1	-
* <i>Only one of these scores can be earned with the play of a single card.</i>		

**Sources:**

American Cribbage Congress, <http://www.cribbage.org/>

The Online guide to Traditional Games, <http://www.tradgames.org.uk/games/Cribbage.htm>

Masters Traditional Games, <http://www.mastersgames.com/rules/cribbage-rules.htm>

History of the Game, <http://www.stanwardine.com/HistoryOfGame.htm>