

GAMES AND GAMBLING

In the Elizabethan Era

Compiled By Lynda Clinton

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Cards

In fact, by the 1400's, playing cards were a "growth industry" in Europe, and the history of their production reflects the history of the early printing industry. By 1420, German and Swiss cardmakers were producing packs in thousands, first by stencil, and wood-blockprinting, and later by metal-engraved plates for higher-priced decks.

However, by the reign of Edward IV, cards had reached sufficient popularity in England for the government to pass a statute in 1463 prohibiting the importation of cards in order to protect the local printing industry. For a long time, card games seem to have been merely a holiday pastime indulged in during the twelve days of Christmas. In 1495-6, an edict signed by Henry VII "expressly forbids the practice of card-playing by servants and apprentices, excepting during the Christmas holidays, and then only in their master's houses."

Note: Scottish money is worth about one-quarter of the English in the same denominations. That is, a Scottish pound is worth about five English shillings. Irish money is worth even less, and they may want to pay you in nails. (Be wary when gaming with either.)

Cheating Words

The Bent: To bend a card slightly during play, so that it can be found while dealing, or cutting.

The Breefe: A cheat in which certain cards are cut larger either in length, or width so they can be located by touch when cutting the deck.

Col: A "mark" or sucker.

Gulls: the mark

The High Game: Palming, or hiding cards during play, and then bringing them back into the game during a distraction such as "accidentally" dropping a card.

Karrows: 14-18 century hard core Irish gamblers, mostly card sharps. They would gamble away everything they had, to the point where they might leave in the night wearing only straw.

Leading to the "Rothenburg Statute" which states that people may only gamble what they have with them, and may only gamble away their outer clothing.

A Rook: A "sharper"- or cheater at games.

The Slick: Preparing a deck before the game by using a "slick-stone" to smooth the surface of the chosen card so the sharper can easily cut the deck to that card. Placing the thumb on top of the deck and the fingers on the bottom, the deck could be made to slide apart at the chosen card.

The Spurr: Marking a card during play by gently notching an edge with your fingernail so it can be recognized.

Cards

One & Thirty

A pre-cursor to Black Jack, this card game uses three cards and counts to thirty one and is for two, or more players.

The dealer distributes three cards; face down, to each player, starting on his left. Starting with the eldest hand (first hand dealt), each player may discard one card (face-up), and replace it with top card on the deck, or the previous card on the top of the discard pile.

The goal is to come closest to 31- with three cards all in the same suit.

Aces are worth 11, Face cards are 10, and all other cards are worth their face value.

A 3-of-a-kind (obviously in mixed suits) is counted as 30.5 points

Players may continue discarding and replacing one card at a time until a player knocks twice on the table.

After a player knocks, all others may discard and replace one last time.

The hands are shown and the hand closest to 31 wins. A player who reaches 31 exactly wins automatically.

Bone-Ace

Another ancestor to modern Blackjack for up to 8 players

The dealer deals three cards to the first player: two cards face down, and the third card face up. He continues dealing around the table three cards to each player in the same fashion.

Play is divided into two parts:

The “Bone,” or first part of the game

The player who is dealt the highest ranked card face-up wins the “Bone” and receives one coin (or previously agreed stake from each of the other players.)

In the case of a tie, the player with the “elder hand” wins. Aces are high and worth eleven points, and the Ace of Diamonds, or “Bone-Ace” beats all other cards.

The second part of the hand

The player whose hand comes closest to 31points, without going over, wins.

Face cards are valued at 10 points each; Aces 11 points each; other cards are worth their face value

Bankafalet

A very simple “higher-card-wins” gambling game from Cotton that is played “everyone against the dealer.”

The deck is cut into as many equal piles as there are players. Each player turns over a card. The dealer then pays one coin to every player who turned up a card higher than the dealer’s card. Everyone who turned over a card ranked lower than the dealer’s pays the dealer a coin.

Aces are high and rank above kings. In the case of ties, suits are ranked (highest to lowest): Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs and Spades. More piles can be dealt than there are players, and players may place money on unclaimed extra piles, as well as on their own.

Dominos

History

While dominos appear to be independently invented in both China (1120AD) and Europe, they were not common until the early 1700's in Europe. There is a set of dominos from the 1600's in the Rjiks Museum in Amsterdam, meaning they were known at the time of Elizabeth, but may not have been commonplace.

Made of bone, wood or ivory, they are related to six-sided dice, the common double-six sets contain 28 tiles.

Theatrically speaking, those who traveled, such as sailors, or those gaming houses in larger towns would have known of these and likely played.

There are differing types of Domino games: Block (play what is dealt), Draw (play a hand plus drawing more), Trick (as in card games such as: Hearts, Cribbage, etc.)

Most games are for two-four players, however, up to five can play (with hands of five), it simply leaves fewer dominos in the "bone yard" which is the draw pile for those who have no current playable tiles.

Games can be played with every one playing independently, or the play can be done in teams.

Games are most often played like cards, in that it is not usually limited to one hand. It can be agreed-to in advance if it is a one-hand of dominos, who is the winner, high score or first out; when playing multiple hands, there is generally an agreed-to score to reach for winning.

Block

A game for 2-4 players (2 players draw seven, 3+ draw five)

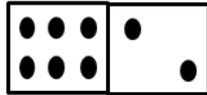
First player places their domino in the center of the table.

Game play is clockwise; the second player matches either side of the domino or “knocks.”

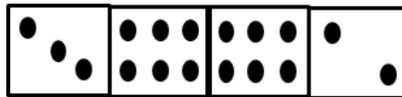
Game play continues until someone empties their hand or game play is blocked.

If play is blocked, players add up the pips in their hand, lowest score wins.

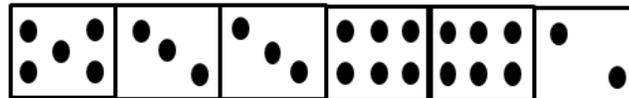
The points in the opponents hands are scored to the winner, play continues until a score of 121 is reached. For ease in counting 100 (or 200) can be used. Frequently a cribbage board is used for keeping score.



First Move 6/2



Second Move 3/6



Third Move 5/3

All Fives

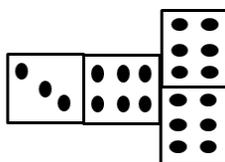
Is a Draw Domino game called “Muggins,” “Snuff” or “Fives Up” and uses a scoring system based on multiples of five. (A variant of this called “Threes Up” or “All Threes” follows the same rule set, but are scored on threes as opposed to fives)

The dominos are placed face-down on the table and “shuffled.”

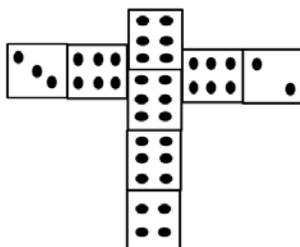
Players draw five or seven dominos, dependent on the number of players and agreed-upon starting quantity.

The initial hand starts with the highest double, the “spinner,” and play continues clock-wise from there. The spinner is the only domino that can be played on all four sides. If no one has drawn a double, the highest scoring domino is played, the first; the first double played becomes the spinner.

Play continues, placing like-to-like numbers until one of the players has played their hand.



Second move



In this example, a six, four, three or two may be played

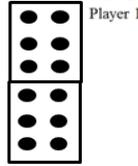
If a player’s hand contains nothing they can play, they must draw from the “bone yard”/“bone pile” until they have a tile they can play OR the bone yard is empty. If there are still no tiles they can play, they player must “knock.”

The remaining player-hand tiles are shown and, in quantities of five, are added for the winner’s score.

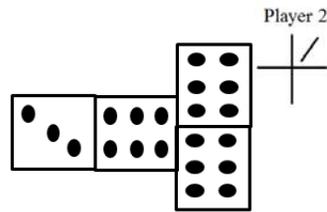
The next game starts with the winner playing the first domino, then moving clock-wise around the table.

Scoring

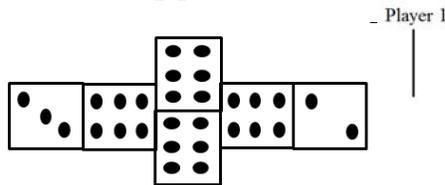
Scoring for this game is done in multiples of five and is easily tracked using a scoring system of lines (5 pts) and circles (10 pts). These are referred to as “Houses,” each completed House represents 50 pts. For an example of scoring during game play:



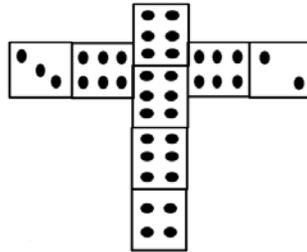
12 pips, no score



15 pips, score 15

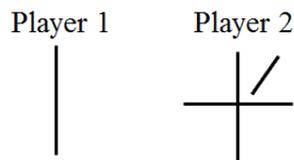


With the double six now blocked for scoring (but available for play), this has 5 pips (3 and 2) score 5



Having played on one of the open sides of the spinner, the total number of pips here is 9, no score. If the next player could produce the 6-1 domino, they would score 10.

At the end of these four moves, the score would look like this:



A completed “house”

Dice

Dice have been around for a long time, mentioned in the Bible and in use all over the world made of sheep knuckle bones, terracotta, wood, etc.

The first written records of “loaded” dice are found in India, about 2000 years ago. Dice could be “loaded” with mercury, or any number of things to cause certain numbers to come up more frequently. Dice were also shaved or bristled (pig bristle) for cheating.

Licensed gambling houses were in existence by at leads Henry VIII reign; limited to Christmas during Mary’s reign; back again under Elizabeth

Licenses had to not permit apprentices, cheaters or suspected cheaters entry to the establishment

Cheating Words

Box: A dice cup used for shaking dice.

Bristle dice: A pig bristle embedded in the center spot of the five, its point just flush with the surface of the die. On a cloth surface, the point was supposed to catch and slow the roll.

Chance: Taking your throw, or chance at the dice.

Cozen, Cozenage: To Cheat.

Cozener: Cheater

Cozening: Cheating

Fobbed: Cheated

Fullums: High, or Low fullums are mis-marked dice on which certain numbers are repeated.

Knapping: Possibly to throw the dice so that one strikes another, stopping the bottom dice from tumbling.

Mark: Usually a neutral score that wins nothing but allows the player to continue to roll the dice.

Nick: A winning roll, or a “natural” in modern Craps.

Out: A losing roll.

Run a Millstone: Possibly to cause dice to land one on top of the other, as an upper millstone grinding grain turns on the lower stone. See also “Knapping.”

Slurring: A method of cheating, throwing the dice gently so they slide, without tumbling.

Stabbing: Using a rigged dice cup.

Topping: A method of cheating by palming.

Dice

As Many on One As On Two

Three dice are used; the first player rolls a single die, and then tries to match that number by rolling the other two dice.

For example if the first die is rolled 6 then in order to win you must to roll a combination of 5-1, 4-2, or 3-3 on the other two dice.

Pair & Ace

Players first cast three dice to decide who rolls first.

If a player rolls a pair and an ace (one) he wins, and if not his opponent tries. The first to roll a combination of pair with an ace wins.

Novem Cinque

This game has been clearly dated as early as 1552 in A Manifest Detection of Diceplay. The name of this very simple game translates as “nine - five” and it describes the “Outs” for the game.

It requires two dice, and any number of players. The players each place equal wagers, and then take turns casting the dice.

Rolling a five, or a nine is an Out. That player is out of the game, and loses his money.

Play continues around the table, eliminating players who roll five, or nine. The winner is the last person remaining who has not thrown an Out.

The stakes can be raised at any time by mutual agreement of the remaining players.

If all players should roll Outs on the first time around the table, no one wins, and the game is replayed

Inn & Inn

For 2-3 players, played with four dice. Players each ante an agreed amount into the pot. The first player rolls all four dice trying to roll pairs.

Scoring:

The caster rolls an “Inn:” “doublets” -2 of a kind. The caster adds another coin to the pot.

Inn & Inn: All Doublets. Two pairs, such as 2 aces + 2 sixes, or 4 of a kind. The Caster wins the current pot.

Out: no doublets, or pairs.

Three players: if the caster rolls an “out” the other two players split the pot. Two players: the opponent wins the pot if the caster rolls two outs

Knucklebones

Roll the bones, high score wins!

Easiest to shake bones up in a cup and then up-turn the cup on a table as opposed to the “traditional” rolling of dice.



"Flat" side:
1 Point



"Concave" side:
3 Points



"Convex" side:
4 Points



"Twisted" side:
6 Points

Shut the Box

The Game



At the start of the game all levers or tiles are "open" (cleared, up), showing the numbers 1-9 (some variants have 10 or 12). During the game, each player plays in turn.

A player begins his or her turn by throwing or rolling the die or dice into the box. If 7, 8 or 9 is still open, the player must roll both dice. Otherwise, the player may choose to roll one die or both dice.

After throwing, the player adds up the dots (pips) on the dice and then "shuts" (closes, covers) any combination of open numbers that equals the total number of dots showing on the dice. For example, if the total number of dots is 8, the player may choose any of the following sets of numbers (as long as all of the numbers in the set are available to be covered):

- 8
- 7, 1
- 6, 2
- 5, 3
- 5, 2, 1
- 4, 3, 1

The player then rolls the dice again, to shut more numbers. The player continues throwing the dice and shutting numbers until reaching a point at which, given the results produced by the dice, the player cannot shut any more numbers. At that point, the player scores the sum of the numbers that are still uncovered. For example, if the numbers 2, 3, and 5 are still open when the player throws a one, the player's score is 10 ($2 + 3 + 5 = 10$) [Variant of scoring states the score as 235]. The board is reset and play then passes to the next player.

After every player has taken a turn, the player with the lowest score wins.

If a player succeeds in closing all of the numbers, he or she is said to have "Shut the Box" -- the player wins immediately and the game is over.

There are several methods of scoring. In the traditional pub gambling game, you add up all the levers left uncovered. The game pays out after one round (one turn per player who paid into the pool). If you manage to "shut the box" you win instantly and get double the stake from each player.

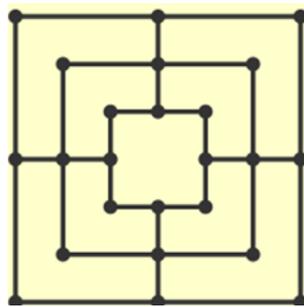
In other scoring methods, you play multiple rounds, with players adding points to their previous score. As players reach forty-five (or other set number) they go 'bust' and must drop out of the game. The game then ends when only one player remains in the game. He or she is the winner.

Nine Men's Morris

The board consists of a grid with twenty-four intersections or points. Each player has nine pieces, or "men," usually colored black and white. Players try to form "mills" (three of their own men lined horizontally or vertically) allowing a player to remove an opponent's man from the game. A player wins by reducing the opponent to two pieces, or by leaving him without a legal move.

The game proceeds in two phases:

1. placing men on vacant points
2. moving men to adjacent points



Nine Men's Morris Board

Phase one: placing pieces

Nine Men's Morris starts on an empty board. The game begins with an empty board. The players determine who plays first, then take turns placing their men one per play on empty points. If a player is able to place three of his pieces in a straight line, vertically or horizontally, he has formed a mill and may remove one of his opponent's pieces from the board and the game. Any piece can be chosen for the removal, except a piece not in an opponent's mill. Once all pieces have been placed, phase two begins

Phase two: moving pieces

Players continue to alternate moves, this time moving a man to an adjacent point. A piece may not "jump" another piece. Players continue to try and form mills, and remove their opponent's pieces in the same manner as in phase one. A player may "break" a mill by moving one of his pieces out of an existing mill, then moving the piece back to form the same mill a second time, or any number of times; and each time removing one of his opponent's men. The act of removing an opponent's man is sometimes called "pounding" the opponent.

The game is over when either one player has less than two men or when both players have a single mill each which constitutes a draw.

Shove a Ha'penny

The Game

Each player shoves five coins up the board in each turn. To prepare each coin to be pushed, the player positions the Ha'penny at the front of the board with the rear of the coin just sticking over the front edge of the board. Any part of the hand can then be used to shove the coin up the board. If a coin does not actually reach the first line on the board, that coin does not count as having been played and can be shoved again.

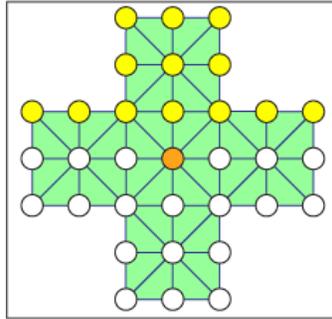
At the end of the turn each coin that is completely within a 'bed' (between two horizontal lines and within the bordering vertical lines) scores a point for that player in that bed. The points are scored with chalk marks in the squares at either end of the bed on the edge of the board, one player owning the right side, the other, the left. The aim is to get three chalk marks in each of the squares - three scores in each of the nine beds. However, once three scores have been made in a bed, any further scores in that bed will be given to the opponent instead, unless the opponent already has three scores in the bed. The one exception to this is the winning point which must be scored properly by the winning player, not given away.

Good players will attempt to cause a coin to knock onto one or more previously pushed ha'pennies in an effort to improve their position as well as trying to make a score with the Ha'penny being played. A little thought is also required - it is not usually a good move to score the third coin in a bed until towards the end of a game.

Fox and Geese

The Game

You will need 14 playing pieces in two different colors (1 fox and 13 geese) to play Fox and Geese.



The object of the game is for the geese to trap the fox and the fox to avoid being trapped. The game is played by two players with one player using the single fox piece and the other having the 13 geese. Don't worry that the fox is outnumbered—it has the special ability to jump.

Place the fox on the center space and place the 13 geese on one side of the board as shown. The game board is setup the same for both game board configurations—with and without diagonals.

All pieces can move to any open space. They move one space at a time along any line. On the alternate game boards, without diagonals, the geese can move down, left and right, but cannot move backwards!

The fox may capture the geese by jumping. No other pieces are allowed to jump



A capture is made by jumping over a piece.

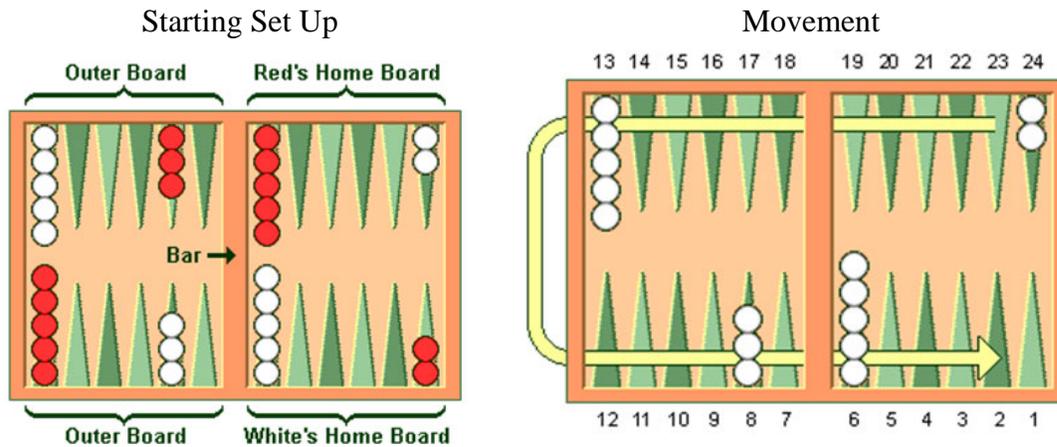
A captured piece is removed from the board.

All jumps are over an adjacent piece to an empty space beyond. Multiple jumps are allowed.

Draw to see who goes first then take alternating turns.

The geese try to crowd the fox into a corner and trap it. The fox tries to capture as many geese as possible. When the fox is trapped (can't move), the game is over and the geese win. The fox wins when it becomes impossible for the geese to trap it.

Tables (Backgammon)



Objective: Be the first to move all of your checkers off of the board. This is a gambling game and the stakes can be raised with the use of the doubling cube (special die).

Movement

Checkers are placed on the points (triangles) and moved counter-clockwise around the board. Movement is based on roll of two six-sided dice. Checkers move the number of points as is the value of the dice. A single checker can be moved the individual values of the dice (1 checker, 2 moves) or two pieces one for each value (2 checkers, 1 move each). If a point has a single opponent's piece on it, that piece can be bumped onto the bar and it will need to come in on space 24 on their next turn; if there are multiple pieces, that point cannot be occupied by your checker.

If you can move your checkers, you must do so, even if it puts your checker in jeopardy. If you have a checker on the bar, it must come in before any other move can be made. If your checker cannot come onto the board from the bar, your turn is over, no other checkers can be moved.

Rolling Doubles: Doubles allow you to move twice as many checkers or times (1 checker 4 times, 4 checkers 1 time or any combination) however, you must be able to move the value of the individual die.

Doubling Cube: This die is labeled with 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 on it and will raise the stakes by that many times.

Backgammon is played for an agreed stake per point. Each game starts at one point. During the course of the game, a player who feels he has a sufficient advantage may propose doubling the stakes. He may do this only at the start of his own turn and before he has rolled the dice.

A player who is offered a double may refuse, in which case he concedes the game and pays one point. Otherwise, he must accept the double and play on for the new higher stakes. A player who accepts a double becomes the owner of the cube and only he may make the next double.

Subsequent doubles in the same game are called redoubles. If a player refuses a redouble, he must pay the number of points that were at stake prior to the redouble. Otherwise, he becomes the new owner of the cube and the game continues at twice the previous stakes. There is no limit to the number of redoubles in a game.

At the end of the game, if the losing player has borne off at least one checker, he loses only the value showing on the doubling cube (one point, if there have been no doubles). However, if the loser has NOT borne off any of his checkers he is **gammoned** and loses *twice* the value of the doubling cube. Or worse, if the loser has not borne off any of his checkers and still has a checker on the bar on in the winners home board, he is **backgammoned** and loses *three times* the value of the doubling cube.

Draughts (Checkers)

1. Checkers is played by two players. Each player begins the game with 12 colored discs. (Typically, one set of pieces is black and the other red.)
2. The board consists of 64 squares, alternating between 32 dark and 32 light squares. It is positioned so that each player has a light square on the right side corner closest to him or her.
3. Each player places his or her pieces on the 12 dark squares closest to him or her.
4. Black moves first. Players then alternate moves.
5. Moves are allowed only on the dark squares, so pieces always move diagonally. Single pieces are always limited to forward moves (toward the opponent).
6. A piece making a non-capturing move (not involving a jump) may move only one square.
7. A piece making a capturing move (a jump) leaps over one of the opponent's pieces, landing in a straight diagonal line on the other side. Only one piece may be captured in a single jump; however, multiple jumps are allowed on a single turn.
8. When a piece is captured, it is removed from the board.
9. If a player is able to make a capture, there is no option -- the jump must be made. If more than one capture is available, the player is free to choose whichever he or she prefers.
10. When a piece reaches the furthest row from the player who controls that piece, it is crowned and becomes a king. One of the pieces which had been captured is placed on top of the king so that it is twice as high as a single piece.
11. Kings are limited to moving diagonally, but may move both forward and backward. (Remember that single pieces, i.e. non-kings, are always limited to forward moves.)
12. Kings may combine jumps in several directions -- forward and backward -- on the same turn. Single pieces may shift direction diagonally during a multiple capture turn, but must always jump forward (toward the opponent).
13. A player wins the game when the opponent cannot make a move. In most cases, this is because all of the opponent's pieces have been captured, but it could also be because all of his pieces are blocked in.

The Elizabethan Money System Quick Reference

Coin	Penny/Pence	Shilling	Pound	Approx \$ equiv *	Notes
Farthing	1/4			\$1	
Ha'penny	1/2			\$2	
Penny	1			\$5	12 pennies to the shilling (remember 12 inches to the foot)
Tupence	2			\$10	
Thrupence	3			\$15	
Groat	4	1/3		\$20	
Six-pence	6	1/2		\$25	
Shilling	12	1		\$50	20 shillings to the Pound (remember ratio 1 - 12 - 20)
Half-Crown (two and six)		2 1/2		\$125	
Crown (gold and silver)		5	1/4	\$250	
Angel		10	1/2	\$500	
Sovereign		20	1	\$1,000	Pound is a value - not a coin
Fine (or heavy) Sovereign		40	2	\$2,000	

*Approx \$ equiv value varied significantly during Elizabeth's 45 year reign. This value is approximated to simplify calculation.

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