CRIBBAGE

Cribbage was created by the english poet Sir John Suckling in the early 17th century, as a derivation of the game "noddy". While noddy has disappeared, crib has survived, virtually unchanged, as one of the most popular games in the English-speaking world.

Players - Two. In tournament play we will play best out of 3 games for the win.

Cards - A regular pack of 52. Jokers are removed. Suits are equal in status. The cards rank: K (high), Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A. The suits plays little part; the cards are used chiefly as numbers. Each face card represents 10, each ace 1, each other card its index value.

The Cribbage Board. Scores accrue so rapidly that a special scoring device is used, a Cribbage Board. The board is an oblong panel having four rows of 30 holes each, plus some extra game holes at one end. Each player uses two pegs, which at the outset are placed in the game holes. Each item of score is marked by jumping the rearward peg ahead of the other by a corresponding number of holes. The pegs are marched away from the head of the board (the end with and game holes) along an outer row of holes, then back along an inner row. The game is played twice around for a total of 121.

The Deal Players cut for the first deal with the player cutting the lowest card (the ace counts as one, and is the lowest card) dealing first. If the cutters tie, the cards are re-shuffled and re-cut. The dealer shuffles, offers the deck to his opponent to cut and deals cards singly. Each player receives six cards, dealt one at a time.

The Crib. From his hand each player selects two cards. These four cards are placed face down near the dealer. They form the crib, an extra hand that belongs to the dealer.

The Starter. After the crib is laid away, the non-dealer cuts the rest of the pack, and the dealer turns up the top card of the lower portion. This card is the *Starter*. If it is a jack, the dealer pegs (scores) 2 points (*Heels*).

The Play. In playing his cards, each player retains possession of them, merely exposing them face up in a pile in front of himself.

The non-dealer begins by playing any card, announcing its point value, as "Ten" if he leads a face card or ten. Dealer then plays a card, announcing the total of the two cards, as "Seventeen" if he plays a seven. Play continues alternately, the new total being announced each time, until the player in turn is unable to play without carrying the total over thirty-on. He must then say "Go". The other pegs for the go (as explained below); then the player who called the go must lead again for a new series of plays. The count begins again at zero, and again the total must not be carried beyond thirty-one.

After go is called, the other must play additional cards if he can do so without exceeding thirty-one. Thus the same player may play two or three times in succession. For making exactly thirty-one the player pegs 2; for a go at less than thirty-one he pegs l. Playing the last of all (of the eight in play) counts 1 for last, or 2 if it makes thirty-one.

Scoring in play.
Other points may be scored in play besides the go's. These are as follows:

Fifteen. For making the count of fifteen, peg 2

Pairs. For playing a card of same rank as the just played, peg 2. (Paring goes by rank, e.g, a king with a king, not with a queen, though both have the point value of 10) For playing a third card of a rank peg 6, and for playing the fourth peg 12.

Runs. For playing a card that is in sequence of rank with two or more played just previously, peg the number of cards in the run (sequence). For example, if the cards played are 4, 6, 5, the last player pegs 3 for *run* plus 2 for *fifteen*. The cards need not be played in sequential order to score for *run*, so long as no foreign cards intervene. For example, if the cards played are 4, K, 6, 5 there is no *run*.

Showing.
By showing is meant counting and scoring a hand. The hands are shown in strict order: non-dealer, dealer's hand and crib.The starter is treated as a fifth card belonging to each of these three hands.
The combination that scores are as follows:

Fifteen.   For each combination of cards that total fifteen, score 2. "Combination" here is meant in strict sense. thus, a hand (with starter) of 9, 8, 7, 7, 6 has three combinations of fifteen: 9 and 6, 8 with one 7. 8 with the other 7. A hand of J, 5, 5, 5, 5, has no less that eight combinations of fifteen; four of J and 5, four of three 5's. This hand, when the J also scores as *his nobs*, makes 29, (the largest possible score.)
Pairs.   For a pair, score 2; for three of a kind (called pair royal or "proil") 6, and for four of a kind (double pair royal) 12.
Runs.   For each combination that makes a run of three or more, peg the number of cards in the run. In the hand 9, 8, 7, 7, 6 there are 8 points for two runs of four, using the 7's in turn.
Flush.   For four cards in hand (not crib, and excluding the starter) of the same suit, score 4, or 5 if the starter is also of the same suit. For crib and starter all of the same suit, score 5. (There is no score for a four-flush in the crib.)
His Nobs.   For a jack in hand, of same suit as the starter, score 1. The jack scored as starter by dealer is called his heels.

Muggins is the practice of watching your opponent miss points during the game and then adding them to your own score. Our goal is to teach the game and have fun. It might turn new or inexperienced players off if they are continually mugged. Being mugged once seems to fluster people and can slow down a game considerably. We may or may not mention uncounted points to each other, it's up to you. It seems like more fun to me to win because I played smartly rather than because the other person has not learned to count everything yet. *Exception: If both players agree to play muggins.*

Game. When a player pegs into the same hole that gives him 121 points - he wins the game forthwith - nothing more is scored. If the loser has not passed the halfway mark - has not reached 61 - he is lurched and loses a double game.

Strategy of cribbage

The choice of cards to give the crib is often easy. Count all the points in the six cards, then lay away the two picked to leave the maximum possible score in the remaining four. But sometimes this course would put points or valuable cards in the crib, so that if the crib is not yours you may do better to deplete your hand somewhat in order to *balk* the crib. Dangerous cards to put in the adverse crib are fives, sevens, and eights, and near cards - two in sequence or in sequence-but-one. The best balking cards are very high, very low, and wide cards generally - separated in rank by two or more.

Sometimes you are forced to split combinations, even when the crib is yours. As a rule, keep a run of three or more, splitting a pair instead, if necessary. Holding a run gives you maximum chance of increasing your count by help of the starter.

In the play, the main principle is to try to prevent your opponent from making fifteen, or a run, unless you can riposte with a score. Obviously, the safest opening lead is a four, because opponent can then neither make fifteen nor pass fifteen and so deprive you of a chance to make it. (He might pair your four - but against pairs there is no defense).

A card counting ten (ten or face card) is supposed to be a bad lead, but actually is no more dangerous than a seven, eight, or any other middle card. In act, a ten card is a good lead if you have a five; if your opponent makes fifteen, you make a pair. Similarly, a lead from two cards that total fifteen (9 and 6, 7 and 8) is good.

After a lead, the question sometimes arises whether to play on or play off, that is, play a near card making sequences possible, or play a wide card. Naturally you should play on only if you can extend any sequence that you opponent might make.

When no other considerations supervene, play your high cards first, saving low cards to eke out a go.

Irregularities in Cribbage

New Deal - There must be a new deal by the same dealer if a card is exposed in dealing, or if before non-dealer lays away to the crib, it is found that a wrong number of cards was dealt.

Wrong Number of Cards   If a player is found (too late for a new deal) to have an incorrect number of cards in his hand, the opponent may either have the hand corrected or may let it stand and peg 2. A short hand is corrected by drawing cards from the stock; a long hand is corrected by discarding cards drawn from it by the opponent. If the crib has the wrong number of cards it must be corrected and non-dealer pegs 2.

Failure to Play   If a player calls go when able to play, or fails to play when able after opponent calls go, the card or cards he could have played are dead and opponent pegs 2. Dead cards are unplayable; the owner must complete his play with a short hand; but the cards are counted in showing.

Error in Scoring   A player may correct his own error in announcing his score before he has pegged it, but a score once pegged may not be changed except of demand of opponent. A player may demand correction of an incorrect amount pegged by his opponent, provided that he does so before making his next play, or showing his own hand, or gathering the cards, etc.

AdditionalTournament Rules

Proper etiquette   Proper Etiquette is to count aloud, taking the categories in the order given above, and indicating the source of the scores briefly. For example, in scoring K, K, 10, 5, 4, the player would say "Fifteen two, fifteen four, fifteen six, and a pair makes eight". It is proper to announce the scores for certain combinations in toto, as pairs royal and double pair royal (call "six" or "twelve"; do not count the separate pairs). Other standard combinations count as follows for runs and pairs alone (exclusive of fifteens and other items):

Double run, as K, Q, Q J, scores 8
Double run of four, as K, Q, Q J, 10, scores 10.
Triple run, as K, Q, Q, Q, J scores 15.
Quadruple run, as K, Q, Q, J, J scores 16.

(Q)   If a person plays the "Last Card" and it totals 31...does he get the two points for the 31 AND the 1 point for "Last Card"?
(A) No, a 31 for two is actually a 31 for 1 and a point for the "GO", it has been shortened in the 400 years of cribbage to just be a 31 for 2. Since you are not allowed to score both a "GO" and a "LAST CARD" you are only awarded 2 points for a "Last Card" 31.

(Q)   If I receive a "GO", are there any rules governing my play. For example, say the play has reached 25 and I am given a "GO", and I have a five and a four. Can I save the five and play the four, or am I obligated to get as close to 31 as I can?
(A)   You are not obligated to get as close to 31 as you can. It is up to your discretion whether you play the 4 or the 5. For example, play the 4 if you think your opponent will lead a 10 next round, or play the 5 to avoid a "5 trap" and limit your opponent's pegging. You are only required to play any card in your hand that can be played without the count going over 31. In tournament play you can be assessed a 2 point penalty for EACH card in your hand that could have been INDIVIDUALLY played below a 31. In your example, if you said "GO" you would be penalized 4 points for having the 4 and 5 in your hand because either one was playable.

(Q)   If a Dealer asks for the opponent to cut the deck before dealing, the Dealer gets a peg or two.
(A)   Not in tournament cribbage, the ACC requires that a cut occur before every deal.

(Q)   What are the skunk and stink holes.
(A)   The Skunk hole is hole 90 or 31 from the end. The Stink hole is hole 120 or 1 from the end.