

Cribbage Tournament Rules

AMERICAN
CRIBBAGE
CONGRESS



2020 edition

cribbage.org

Aims and Objectives of the American Cribbage Congress 5

Code of Ethics 6

Judge Protocols 8

Rule 1. The Mechanics of Playing Cribbage 9

- 1.1. Object of the game
- 1.2. Number of players
- 1.3. The cards
- 1.4. The cribbage board
- 1.5. Outline of playing sequence
- 1.6. Definitions
- 1.7. Scoring chart

Rule 2. Mixing the Cards 16

- 2.1. Proper mixing
- 2.2. Pone's right to shuffle once
- 2.3. Dealer's right to shuffle last

QUICK REFERENCE

- exposed cards 21, 31
- false claim of game 37–39
- incorrect announcements 36
- playoff brackets 56–57
- renege 34–35
- scoring chart 15–16
- too many/too few chart 24

Rule 3. Cutting the Pack 17

- 3.1. Procedure for cutting the pack
- 3.2. Winner of the deal
- 3.3. Cutting before each deal

Rule 4. Dealing 19

- 4.1. Order of dealing
- 4.2. Dealing the cards
- 4.3. Exposed cards
- 4.4. Incorrect number of cards in hand or crib
- 4.5. Imperfect pack

Rule 5. The Crib 28

- 5.1. Placement
- 5.2. Exposure
- 5.3. Crib Card Retrieval

Rule 6. The Starter Card 30

- 6.1. Cutting
- 6.2. Exposing more than one card
- 6.3. Scoring when the starter card is a Jack (His Heels)

6.4. Placement of deck after cut

Rule 7. The Play 32

7.1. The order of play

7.2. Scoring

7.3. Renege

7.4. Incorrect announcements

Rule 8. Pegging 36

8.1. Recording score on board

8.2. Zero hand or crib

8.3. Pegging incorrectly to the player's disadvantage

8.4. Pegging incorrectly to the player's advantage

8.5. Improperly removing pegs

8.6. Etiquette in touching pegs

8.7. Pegging with opponent's pegs

8.8. Recording score in wrong track

8.9. Pegging a "go" before announcement

8.10. Failure to place peg in game (out) hole

Rule 9. Counting and Recording Scores 43

- 9.1. Exposure while counting
- 9.2. Order of counting
- 9.3. The starter card
- 9.4. Mixing hand with other cards
- 9.5. Assistance in counting

Rule 10. Muggins 47

- 10.1. When in effect
- 10.2. Situations that apply
- 10.3. Situations that do not apply
- 10.4. Calling muggins

Rule 11. Penalties 49

- 11.1. Scoring penalties
- 11.2. Mispegging a penalty
- 11.3. No penalty on a penalty
- 11.4. Refusal to conform to the rules

Rule 12. Scorecards 51

- 12.1. Recording scores on scorecards

12.2. Resolving scorecard discrepancies during cross-checking

Rule 13. Playoffs 53

13.1. Forfeitures during playoffs

13.2 Playoff brackets and byes

Rule 14. Miscellaneous 55

14.1. Situations not covered in these rules

14.2. Amendments

Appendix: Cross-Checking Guidelines 55

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AMERICAN CRIBBAGE CONGRESS

Sir John Suckling, a British poet and knight, invented cribbage about 1635. Cribbage has survived, with few changes, as one of the most popular games in the English-speaking world. However, as the game developed across the United States, local variations crept in. There was no standardization of playing rules in the tournaments that were beginning to appear all over the nation.

In August 1979, the American Cribbage Congress Inc. (ACC) was founded as a nonprofit corporation to promote the game of cribbage, to develop many programs

for the benefit of its members, and to promulgate friendships among cribbage players everywhere. Administering to the needs of cribbage players on the North American continent, the ACC conducts a well-rounded program that includes the following:

- *Cribbage World* magazine, published monthly
- Tournament Trail (sanctioned tournament list)
- National rating system for tournament players
- Grass Roots programs for local cribbage clubs
- All American awards (top ten players yearly)
- \$100 award for perfect 29-hands
- Lapel pins for 28-hands and 29-hands
- ACC Hall of Fame
- Program for players under 19 years of age

CODE OF ETHICS

Cribbage is a pastime that provides social opportunities to display true sportsmanship and respect for others, without rancor, animosity, or overwhelming self-interest during

competition. In view of these goals, the following are considered to be some of the unacceptable practices and are grounds for suspension or expulsion from the ACC:

- marking or deforming cards for identification or manipulative purposes
- controlling the location of the cards in the pack before cutting for first deal or when dealing
- secreting cards for later retrieval, including surreptitiously dropping excess dealt cards from the hand
- changing or altering scorecards
- intentionally playing poorly for the purpose of enhancing the record of an opponent
- actions or conversation unbecoming a member of the ACC (drunkenness, abusive language, etc.)
- initiating a violation of rules for the purpose of gaining an advantage, whether actually gained or not, even though the rules specify a penalty for the violation
- communicating about the play of someone else's game in such a way that it affects the outcome
- allowing an opponent to continue pegging backward after the initial occurrence(s)
- using one's position as ACC judge to purposely intimidate an opponent
- actions detrimental to the objectives of the ACC including but not limited to any

- form of discrimination related to age, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation
- leaving a tournament prior to completing all of the games required in the tournament (see Tournament Director Manual)

By honoring all ACC rules, a player will have guidelines for good sportsmanship and fair play, resulting in an enjoyable experience for all participants.

JUDGE PROTOCOLS

- Judges should not allow players to begin an explanation of what caused the problem for which they were summoned until two judges are present.
- If judges are called to rule on a situation where one of the players is a judge, that player should not display or open the rulebook in an attempt to convince his/her opponent which rule applies to their situation. This is a form of intimidation and is unacceptable.
- Judges should not leave their own game until the hand currently being played is completed. Once a hand has been dealt, a judge may not leave to adjudicate another game until the play of the hand is completed. Before leaving his/her game, the judge should verbally state who has the next deal when he/she returns from the judging call.

- d. Judges should allow each player to explain his/her version of what transpired without interruption by the other player.
- e. At least one of the judges responding to a judge call must have a rulebook in hand when making the judging call.
- f. Judges are not allowed to judge a situation wherein they are a party to the dispute.
- g. When the judging situation involves a penalty and/or muggins points, the judges should monitor the pegging of those points to ensure there are no errors.
- h. A senior judge should be appointed as head judge whenever possible by the tournament director.
- i. Whenever possible, in a sanctioned tournament, a judge should not judge a situation involving a family member, club member, roommate, or traveling partner.

RULE I. THE MECHANICS OF PLAYING CRIBBAGE

1.1. Object of the Game

Be the first player to score 121 points (see rule 8.10).

1.2. Number of Players

The basic game is for two players, and these rules apply to only the two-handed game in tournaments sanctioned by the ACC. Three-handed and four-handed versions of the game are played with essentially the same rules.

1.3. The Cards

- A standard pack of 52 playing cards is used. (Jokers are discarded.)
- The four suits are considered equal.
- The rank and value of the cards are as follows:

card	K	Q	J	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	A
value	10	10	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

1.4. The Cribbage Board

The cribbage board is used to show the score accumulated by each player during the play of a game (front peg) and the amount of the latest incremental score (difference between front and rear pegs). All ACC-sanctioned and satellite tournaments must be played on “long boards”—that is, sixty holes up and sixty holes down.

1.5. Outline of Playing Sequence

The following listed sequence is an outline of the actions performed in playing a game of cribbage and is intended for the benefit of those learning the game. It does not include any detailed playing rules, which are specified elsewhere in rule 1 and thereafter.

- a. If the qualifying round has a cut-for-deal format, the pack is cut to determine which player deals first in the game; the low card wins. If the qualifying round has alternate-deal format, there is no cut to determine the first dealer. In an alternate-deal situation, the tournament director must announce the procedure to be followed in determining the first dealer and how subsequent first deals are to be determined.
- b. The dealer shuffles and, after a mandatory cut by the pone (nondealer), distributes one card alternately to each player, beginning with the pone, until each has six cards.
- c. Each player discards two cards to form the crib, which belongs to the dealer.
- d. The pone cuts the remainder of the pack to select a starter card, which is used in counting the value of each player's hand and the crib.
- e. Play of the cards:
 - (1) Players alternately play (place face up on the table) one card at a time, starting with the pone. The cumulative value of the cards played is announced as each card is played.

- (2) When a player cannot play a card without the cumulative total exceeding 31, that player calls “go,” and the opponent continues to play all cards possible (not exceeding a 31-count). The player who calls “go” plays first in the following 31-count sequence.
- (3) Points are scored during this play of the cards (see scoring chart in rule 1.7).
- f. When both players have played all their cards, the pone’s hand is counted and pegged by the pone (see scoring chart). The dealer then does the same for the dealer’s hand and then for the crib.

1.6. Definitions

<i>crib</i>	Four cards (two from each player) set aside for the dealer to score after the dealer’s hand.
<i>cut card</i>	(1) The starter card or (2) the card cut by either player at the start of the game or match to determine the dealer.
<i>dead hole</i>	Hole number 120, which is one point short of the game hole.
<i>flush</i>	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.
<i>game hole</i>	Hole number 121.

go	Called by a player who cannot play a card without exceeding the cumulative count of 31. See rule 1.5.e.(2) for more details.
hand	(1) The six cards dealt to each player or (2) the four cards remaining after discarding to the crib.
his heels	Jack as the starter card counts two points for the dealer. Sometimes called “nibs.”
judge	A person authorized by the ACC and appointed by the tournament director to answer questions and settle disagreements between players relating to the rules of play.
match	One or more playoff games between two players, the outcome of which is a match winner and a match loser.
muggins	The scoring of certain points that one’s opponent fails to peg. It has <i>no</i> relationship to penalties. Muggins is played at the option of the tournament director, but must be listed on the tournament flyer and announced prior to the beginning of play.
nobs	Jack of the same suit as the starter card, in either the hand or crib, counts one point.
pair	Two cards of the same rank, such as two Aces.
peg	(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.
pegging	The recording of earned points by advancing the rear peg in front of the front peg and releasing it.

<i>pone</i>	The opponent of the player who deals.
<i>score</i>	Any points earned by a player.
<i>scoring</i>	The earning of points.
<i>shuffle</i>	A random mixing of the cards, which could include riffing.
<i>skunk</i>	To win by 31 or more points.
<i>starter card</i>	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.
<i>stink hole</i>	Hole number 90, which is one point short of avoiding a skunk.
<i>straight (or run), single</i>	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).
<i>straight, multiple (only in counting hands and crib)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double run: two three-card or four-card straights, including one pair; for example, A-2-3-3 or A-2-3-3-4 • double-double run: four three-card straights, including two pairs; for example, 8-8-9-9-10 • triple run: three three-card straights, including three of a kind; for example, J-Q-Q-Q-K

street

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.

1.7. Scoring Chart

<i>cards</i>	<i>points earned . . .</i>	
	<i>during play</i>	<i>in hand or crib</i>
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 a 31-count exactly	2	—
	final card played (without reaching 31-count)	1	—

**Only one of these scores can be earned with the play of a single card.*

RULE 2. MIXING THE CARDS

2.1. Proper Mixing

The pack must be mixed or shuffled at least three times (including mechanical card shufflers) with the cards face down or otherwise hidden from both players. The shuffler is not permitted to look at the bottom card after the last shuffle. If the shuffler should do so, the nonshuffler is to remind the shuffler of the prohibition and score a two-point penalty. The pack shall then be reshuffled by the offender.

2.2. Pone's Right to Shuffle Once

The pone has the right to shuffle the pack once per deal (legally mixing the cards as described in rule 2.1).

2.3. Dealer's Right to Shuffle Last

The dealer has the right to make the last legal shuffle.

RULE 3. CUTTING THE PACK

3.1. Procedure for Cutting the Pack

- a. Prior to cutting the cards to determine the first dealer of a game, each player should shuffle the pack, and the player who shuffled last must allow the opponent to cut first.
- b. When cutting for the first deal of a game, the first player shall remove no less than four cards and not more than half the pack. The second player shall remove no less than four cards and shall leave at least four cards.
- c. When cutting before each deal and for the starter card, no less than four cards shall be taken from the top and no less than four left on the bottom.

3.2. Winner of the Deal

- a. Each player's cut card is the card at the bottom of the cards in hand, not the card on top of the remainder of the pack. The player cutting the lower-rank card deals the first hand of the game.
- b. If both players cut a card of equal rank, the entire pack shall be reshuffled. Players shall then cut again.
- c. If a player exposes more than one card, said player shall cut again.

3.3. Cutting before Each Deal

- a. A cut is required before each deal. The dealer shall place the pack on the table (board) for the pone to cut. Neither player is permitted to look at the bottom card of the top pack. Should either do so, there is a two-point penalty, and the pack shall then be reshuffled and cut again. When cutting, the cards must be taken off together; they may not be taken off individually.
- b. While cutting before each deal, the top pack must be placed under the bottom pack; no "middle cuts" are allowed. It is not permissible to distribute the cards from a portion of the deck. The dealer shall not look at the bottom card of the pack at any time

- after the cut. Should dealer do so, the pone is to remind dealer of the prohibition and score a two-point penalty. The pack shall then be reshuffled and cut again.
- c. Should the cut be forgotten before any of the pone's cards are picked up, the pone may remind the dealer that the cut was not offered. The pack shall then be reshuffled, and the cut made. There shall be no redeal after any of the pone's cards are picked up.

RULE 4. DEALING

4.1. Order of Dealing

- a. The dealer of the first game of a match (see definition in rule 1.6) shall be determined by cutting the pack (see rules 3.1 and 3.2).
- b. If a player deals out of turn and the error is discovered before both players have played a card, the deal is void and the correct player redeals. If discovered thereafter, the hands shall be played, and the nondealer deals the next hand in that game.
- c. In the first deal of the game, once the deck has been cut and dealing begins, it is assumed the cut for deal was made and play continues.

4.2. Dealing the Cards

- a. After the cards are shuffled and cut, the dealer distributes one card at a time, face down from the top of the pack alternately to each player, starting with the pone, until six cards are dealt to each player. It is not permissible to distribute the cards from a portion of the deck.
- b. The pone has a responsibility to observe the dealing and to call attention to any irregularities.
- c. The pone shall not reach for or touch the cards before the distribution is completed, except to use the hand or arm as a backstop to prevent cards from falling off the table while being dealt.
- d. Changing decks during qualifying play is prohibited, except for irreplaceably damaged cards. Midway through the qualifying round, the tournament director must replace the deck with one of the same color at each stationary (anchor) position. In playoffs, a player may request a different deck after any game in a match, but each player is limited to one deck change per match.

4.3. Exposed Cards

- a. If the dealer exposes a card or cards while dealing, the cards shall be reshuffled and redealt.
- b. During the deal, if the pone looks at any of the cards or causes a card or cards to be exposed, there will be no redeal (see rule 4.2.c).
- c. If a card is found face up in the pack during the dealing, the cards shall be reshuffled and redealt.

4.4. Incorrect Number of Cards in Hand or Crib

- a. Before both players have discarded to the crib:
 - (1) If both players were dealt the correct number of cards and one player discarded the wrong number of cards to the crib (but before the other player discarded), the player who discarded the wrong number of cards may retrieve the discards and then discard the correct number to the crib.
 - (2) If both players were dealt the same number of cards, but less than the correct amount, the distribution of cards shall be continued until both hands are correct. If the pone was dealt the correct number of cards, but the dealer has one less and

this is confirmed by both players, then the dealer takes the top card from the pack to complete the hand.

- (3) If either player was dealt the wrong number of cards other than as specified in rule 4.4.a.(2), there shall be a redeal by the same dealer. The player with the wrong number of cards must allow the opponent to confirm the error. If the player does not, such as placing the cards face down on the pack, etc., the offender is assessed a backward penalty equal to ten points or enough to put both pegs “off the board,” whichever is less. If the applicable backward penalty is less than ten points, the opponent is awarded points equal to the difference.
- b. After both players have discarded to the crib: when an error is discovered, judges must be called to interpret this rule and select the appropriate actions specified in rule 4.4.c. Players must not move any pegs or any cards after the error is discovered unless directed to do so by the judges.
 - (1) Before the starter card is turned, if it is discovered that the wrong number of cards is held in either hand or crib, the action specified in column A of the table in rule 4.4.c shall be followed.

- (2) After the starter card is turned, if it is discovered that the wrong number of cards is held in either hand or crib, the action specified in column B of the table in rule 4.4.c shall be followed.
- c. Table of actions to be taken: the table on page 24 lists all combinations of the incorrect number of cards in both hands and in the crib and the corresponding action to be taken. Columns A and B list the number of the action to be taken when the error is discovered either before or after the starter card is turned. The judges will follow the actions defined in rule 4.4.d.
- d. Actions:
- (1) The same player redeals.
 - (2) If the judges, in private conversations with the players, are able to determine which two cards each player discarded to the crib, those four cards will form the crib. If only one, two, or three cards can be verified as discards, they become part of the crib and a judge blindly draws from the remaining discards to complete a four-card crib. If no cards can be verified as discards, a judge blindly draws from the discards to form the crib. Any remaining cards are returned to the deck. Both hands and the crib are counted, and play continues.

TABLE OF ACTIONS FOR RULE 4.4.C

<i>situation</i>			<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>pone's hand</i>	<i>dealer's hand</i>	<i>crib</i>	<i>before starter turned</i>	<i>after starter turned</i>
correct	correct	correct	play on	play on
correct	correct	too many	1	2
correct	correct	too few	3	3
correct	too many	correct	1	9
correct	too many	too many	1	4
correct	too many	too few	5	4
correct	too few	correct	6	7
correct	too few	too many	8	8
correct	too few	too few	1	7
too many	correct	correct	1	9
too many	correct	too many	1	9
too many	correct	too few	5	13
too many	too many	correct	1	9
too many	too many	too many	1	9
too many	too many	too few	5	9
too many	too few	correct	1	12
too many	too few	too many	1	12
too many	too few	too few	1	10
too few	correct	correct	6	7
too few	correct	too many	11	11
too few	correct	too few	1	7
too few	too many	correct	1	12

too few	too many	too many	1	12
too few	too many	too few	5	12
too few	too few	correct	1	7
too few	too few	too many	1	8
too few	too few	too few	1	7

- (3) Play stops at time of discovery. Without exposing any cards in the crib, add the needed cards to the crib from the top of the pack. Play continues, and both hands and the crib are counted.
- (4) Pegging and play continue. All of the pone's pegging points count. Any points pegged by the dealer before or after discovery do not count. The pone's hand is counted; the dealer's hand is dead. The crib is counted if it is correct or has too few cards. The crib is dead if it has too many cards. But if the pone has cut the cards before the dealer has discarded to the crib, and the starter card has been turned by the dealer, then see and apply rule 6.1.a.
- (5) The excess card(s) in the hand(s) are placed in the crib by the player(s). If the hands and the crib are not correct now, apply the appropriate rule.
- (6) Add the necessary cards to the hand from the top of the pack to make the hand correct. Play continues.
- (7) Play continues, and both hands and the crib are counted without correction.

- (8) Play continues, and both hands are counted without correction. The crib is dead.
- (9) Play stops at time of discovery, and all points pegged during the play are retracted. Both hands and the crib are dead, and the same player redeals.
- (10) Play stops at time of discovery, and all points pegged during the play are retracted. The required number of cards is taken from the top of the pack and placed in the short crib. The pone's hand is dead. The dealer's hand and crib are counted.
- (11) If the judges, in consultation with the dealer, are able to determine which two cards the dealer discarded to the crib, those cards are set off to the side. Then the dealer blindly draws two of the remaining three cards to form the crib. If the judges are unable to verify the cards discarded by the dealer, a judge mixes the five cards and the dealer blindly draws four cards to form a crib. Play continues, the pone counts his or her short hand, and the dealer's hand and (new) crib are counted.
- (12) Play stops at time of discovery, and all points pegged during play are retracted. Hands or crib with the correct number of cards or those with too few cards are counted. Hands or crib with too many cards are dead.
- (13) Pegging and play continue (regardless of time of discovery) until the dealer plays his or her last card. If discovery occurs when the pone plays the excess card(s),

pegging is retracted to the point of the playing of the dealer's last card or continues until the dealer plays his or her last card. The dealer's pegging points count. Any points scored by the pone during the pegging are retracted. The pone's hand is dead. The dealer's hand is counted. The crib is counted if it is correct. If the crib has too few cards, a judge mixes all of the pone's cards, and the dealer blindly selects the needed card(s) to complete the crib; the crib is then counted.

4.5. Imperfect Pack

- a. If a pack is found to have a defect that could affect play, such as a card with a bent corner or a card with a visual defect on the back surface, etc. before either player picks up a card, the defective card must be replaced or a new pack substituted and the cards shall be reshuffled and dealt by the same dealer. If the defect is discovered after either player picks up any dealt cards, the hand shall be played to its conclusion before any replacement.
- b. If two cards or more of the same rank and suit appear during the play or the scoring of the hands, the play stops at time of discovery. Any points pegged or scored are retracted and the hands and crib are dead. The same player redeals with a different deck.

- c. A card found on the floor or elsewhere that is determined to belong to the deck in play shall be returned to the deck between deals.
- d. A deck determined to be incomplete shall be replaced between deals.

RULE 5. THE CRIB

5.1. Placement

- a. The crib belongs to the dealer and shall be placed with cards face down on the dealer's side of the board.
- b. Cards placed face down on the table for the crib and released by the fingers, except for the situations in rule 4.4.a.(1) or 5.1.c, may not be retrieved and examined. The penalty is two points. If the two cards were not mixed with the hand, those two cards must be returned to the crib. See rule 5.2 if the discard was mixed with the hand.
- c. Prior to the turn of the starter card, if only one player discards to the wrong side of the board, that player is permitted to retrieve the card(s) and reevaluate the selection.
- d. If all four cards are discovered to be on the pone's side, they shall be moved to the dealer's side, without exposure, unless the starter card has been turned and each player has played at least one card. In that event, the crib becomes the property of the player

on whose side it lies and the other player becomes the pone and next dealer in that game.

5.2. Exposure

- a. The crib may not be examined or exposed until the specified time to count it (see rule 9.2). The penalty for a violation is two points. The nonoffending player must be allowed to view the cards in the crib.
- b. If either player examines the crib before discarding to it, there is a two-point penalty. Then the nonoffending player blindly selects two cards from the offender's hand, looks at the two cards, then places them in the crib. The two cards represent the offender's discard. Play continues.
- c. If the dealer interchanges the hand and crib, and if discovered before play begins, the dealer plays the correct hand. But if discovered after play begins, the dealer continues to play the crib and any points pegged by dealer are retracted. In either case, the penalty of two points applies, and at the time of discovery the pone may also see the cards in the intended crib.

5.3. Crib Card Retrieval

Either dealer or pone may retrieve their discards to the crib, without penalty, if they do so before the opposing player has discarded.

- a. No cards may be retrieved from the crib by either dealer or pone once both players have discarded to the crib.
- b. If either dealer or pone discards too many or too few cards to the crib, see rule 4.4.a.(1).

RULE 6. THE STARTER CARD

6.1. Cutting

- a. Only after both players discard to the crib shall the pack be cut by the pone to determine the starter card. If the starter card is turned face up by the dealer before he or she discards to the crib, the starter card must be returned to the pack, the dealer then discards to the crib and reshuffles the pack, and the pone cuts the starter card. No penalty is assessed. Rules 4.4.c and 4.4.d.(4) do not apply.
- b. The pone shall not look at the bottom card of the upper pack when making the cut. The penalty is two points. The dealer must be shown the exposed card.

- c. The dealer shall turn the top card of the lower pack and place it as the starter card, face up on top of the complete pack. If the card is placed in the dealer's hand and is not seen by the pone, there will be a two-point penalty. The pone blindly removes two cards from the dealer's hand, looks at them, and selects either one as the starter card. The other card is returned to the dealer's hand, and play continues.
- d. If the cut card (on top of the bottom pack) is found to be face up, it shall be turned over, the entire remaining pack (40 cards) reshuffled, and the cut made again.

6.2. Exposing More than One Card

- a. If the dealer exposes more than one card in turning the starter card, the correct (top) card becomes the starter card.
- b. In the above instance, both players have the right to see the exposed card(s) before it is returned to the pack.

6.3. Scoring When the Starter Card Is a Jack (His Heels)

- a. When a Jack is turned up, the dealer is entitled to two points.
- b. The dealer may peg out into the game hole by turning a Jack starter card.
- c. If the dealer plays a card before pegging the two points, the dealer forfeits them.

6.4. Placement of Deck after Cut

After the starter card has been turned, the deck must be placed on the dealer's side of the board.

RULE 7. THE PLAY

7.1. The Order of Play

- a. The play of the cards starts immediately after the turn of the starter card.
- b. The pone shall play the first card face up on the table, announcing its value. If the dealer leads the first card and the pone plays on it, the cards shall be returned to the hands, and any points scored are retracted without penalty. The pone shall then lead to restart play. However, if play continues beyond the first card from each player, the order of play is considered to be correct, and any points scored are awarded.
- c. Each player in turn shall play a single card and announce the cumulative value (the count).
- d. Each played card shall be positioned so as to overlap that player's previously played cards while keeping the identity of all cards visible. Played cards shall not be turned over before all cards of both players are played and the hands counted and pegged.

- e. A single card that is released by the fingers is considered played, whether or not the count is announced, and may be retrieved only if it would cause the count to exceed 31, and any pegging that has taken place on this play is an overpeg (see rule 8.4.c). If the count exceeds 31 and the player claims the game, that is an overpeg and false claim of game (see rule 8.4.b).
- f. If two or more cards are played together, the card that corresponds to the announced count is deemed to be the card played, and the other(s) shall be retrieved. If the count is not yet announced or does not correspond with any of the cards, the player may play any one of the cards and retrieve the other(s) without penalty.

7.2. Scoring

- a. Points are earned during the play of the cards for the following single card or combination of consecutive cards played. The player playing the last card that forms a combination earns the points (see scoring chart in rule 1.7):
 - (1) pair
 - (2) three of a kind
 - (3) four of a kind
 - (4) straights of three or more cards in any sequence

- (5) a cumulative count of 15
 - (6) the last card before player calls “go” (i.e., cannot play a card that would not make the count exceed 31)
 - (7) a cumulative count of 31
 - (8) the final card played, not making a cumulative count of 31
- b. A player may peg any points earned during the play of the cards and is permitted a reasonable time to do so (i.e., a polite pause). Then, either player may play another card, call “go,” call muggins, or announce the total of his or her hand. When a player’s opponent has no more cards or calls “go,” the other player may play all playable cards in succession and announce the points scored before pegging the total at one time.

7.3. Renege

A renege is a failure to play a card or cards that could have been played before a player calls “go” or “31.” (You cannot call a renege when a count is 21 or less.) Judges must be summoned to correct this action.

- a. A player may correct a “go” call before either player plays a card or pegs a point. Thereafter, in the case of a single renege, when any renege card is played, the opponent may claim a renege up to the time s/he plays their next card or announces the count

of their hand. In the case of a double or triple renege, no matter which renege card is caught first during that hand—a double renege is always a double renege, and a triple renege is always a triple renege.

- b. Any cards played after the renege occurs or after the pegging of a “go” shall be retrieved by the judges, and any points pegged are retracted by the judges. The nonoffending player receives two points for each card that singly could have been played. For example, if the count is 25 and a player whose turn it is holds A-5-6 and does not play any of the three cards before saying “go,” that is a triple renege, and the opponent is awarded six points (two for each playable card).
- c. The nonoffending player decides if the renege card(s) will be dead or played. The nonoffending player does not get to see the value of the renege cards remaining in the offending player’s hand, only having the right to decide if the renege card(s) will be dead or played.
- d. Play continues, and all cards in both hands and crib are counted, including those declared dead during pegging.
- e. Exception: if a player calls “go” and their opponent then pegs out, the game is over. It is not a renege if that player had cards that could have been played.

7.4. Incorrect Announcements

- a. If a player announces an incorrect cumulative count, he or she may voluntarily correct it prior to the opponent's playing of the next card or calling "go." A person who calls "go" to an incorrect announcement may withdraw the "go" and correct the count before the opponent pegs or plays another card. Thereafter the incorrect count is accepted for the rest of that series and any points pegged as a result are considered earned.
- b. If a player's incorrect count announcement is not corrected voluntarily but is challenged by the opponent before the opponent plays the next card or calls "go," then the count shall be corrected. Also, if the offending player pegged points that would not have been earned with the correct count, the player is considered to have overpegged and the provisions of rule 8.4 apply.

RULE 8. PEGGING

8.1. Recording Score on Board

Beginning with the outside track, a player shall record his or her first score by placing a peg in the hole corresponding to that score. Subsequent scores are recorded by advancing

the rear peg over the front peg by “leapfrogging” the number of holes consistent with the score to be recorded.

8.2. Zero Hand or Crib

If a zero-count hand or crib is held, the pegs must not be touched.

8.3. Pegging Incorrectly to the Player's Disadvantage

If the wrong number of points is pegged to the pegger's disadvantage (i.e., underpegging a forward score or overpegging a backward penalty), a correction is not permitted after the player's fingers are removed from the peg.

8.4. Pegging Incorrectly to the Player's Advantage

- a. False claim of game: a false claim of game may not be corrected. Judges must be called. If a player does not have sufficient points to win the game and performs actions similar to those listed below, he or she has falsely claimed the game and judges must be summoned:
 - (1) Pegging into the game (out) hole and releasing the peg.

- (2) Placing his or her peg into the game-record holes (used on some boards to record the number of games won in a match).
 - (3) Advancing a game-record peg.
- b. Penalty for false claim of game: if a player falsely claims the game, the following steps are to be taken before play resumes:
- (1) The offender's front peg shall be placed in the hole corresponding to the points actually scored. If both pegs were removed, refer to rule 8.5.b.
 - (2) The offender's opponent is awarded points equal to the number overclaimed (i.e., up to the game hole).
 - (3) The offender is assessed a 15-point backward penalty (even if the nonoffender reaches the game hole as a result of #2 above).
- c. If the wrong number of points is pegged to the pegger's advantage (i.e., overpegging a forward score or underpegging a backward penalty), but less than enough to claim the game and before either player plays the next card or indicates acceptance of a pegged hand or crib, then:
- (1) Upon discovery by the opponent, the peg shall be moved back to the correct hole, and the opponent scores the amount of the error.

- (2) If the offender discovers the error, he or she may move the peg back to the correct hole without penalty, but must tell the opponent before doing so.
- d. During play of the cards, if an incorrect pegging claim is not made before a new cribbage action occurs, the score stands as pegged. A cribbage action would include (1) when either player plays another card, (2) when either player pegs his/her hand or crib, or (3) when judges cannot review the situation to make a call because some or all of the cards have been collected and mixed together.

8.5. Improperly Removing Pegs

- a. If a player removes only his or her front peg when a score is not yet pegged (a peg is removed when it clears the top of the hole), then:
- (1) If the mistake is recognized before the peg is released, then the peg in the hand becomes the rear peg and only the latest score may be recorded (i.e., only the previously recorded score is forfeited).
- (2) If the player completes recording the score in the wrong direction and releases the peg, both pegs shall remain where they are and that score and the previous score are forfeited. If a player pegs from first street back to fourth street, upon discovery the peg on fourth street is placed behind the peg on first street. In the event that

both pegs end up on fourth street, upon discovery they shall be removed from the board and the player shall start from the zero hole again.

- (3) If the mistake is not recognized until the player uses the front peg to peg forward and releases it, then the front peg is placed behind the rear peg, and the latest score may be recorded (i.e., only the previously recorded score is forfeited), and there is no penalty added for overpegging.
- b. If a player removes both pegs when there is a score to be recorded, players shall determine where the front peg should be placed. If the players cannot agree on the placement of the front peg, judges shall be summoned to decide the matter. Once the judges have determined placement of the front peg, the score of the hand may be pegged without penalty.
- c. Once all hands have been pegged on one deal, both players' back pegs must stay in place until needed to be used to peg in the next deal. Moving the back peg closer to the front peg to avoid pegging backward is a two-point penalty and the peg must be returned to its correct position.

8.6. Etiquette in Touching Pegs

After notifying the opponent, a player may adjust (tighten) his or her own loose peg or correct an overpegged score. There is no penalty for accidentally touching an opponent's peg (no harm, no foul) (see rule 8.7 if necessary).

8.7. Pegging with Opponent's Pegs

If a player picks up an opponent's peg to record a score (forward or backward), the peg shall be returned to its former place. The nonoffender receives two penalty points. The offending player may then record the proper score using his or her own back peg.

8.8. Recording Score in Wrong Track

If a player records an otherwise correct score but places the peg in the wrong track on his or her side of the board or in opponent's track, it shall be moved to the proper track without penalty.

8.9. Pegging a “Go” before Announcement

A “go” may be pegged if previous play had made it clear that a “go” is warranted. If a “go” is pegged before the opponent has announced “go,” the cards remaining in the opponent’s hand determine if the “go” is warranted and may be taken, or whether the player has overpegged and a penalty for overpegging is involved, included the provisions of rule 8.4.a.

8.10. Failure to Place Peg in Game (Out) Hole

In all ACC events except match play, a player must peg out; if the player does not peg out, the opponent must remind him/her to do so (this rule does not apply in muggins tournaments).

- a. If the player refuses to peg out, judges must be called. Judges will confirm the player’s refusal to peg out and rule that the game is not over. That player forfeits their score. Play continues.
- b. If a player concedes a game to an opponent (in match play only), that concession is equivalent to the player pegging out. In a qualifying round, play continues.

RULE 9. COUNTING AND RECORDING SCORES

9.1. Exposure While Counting

While counting a hand or crib, the cards shall remain on the table, plainly visible to the opponent.

9.2. Order of Counting

The counting and pegging of the hands and crib shall be done in the following sequence. Each step must be completed before the next is started.

- a. The pone shall count his or her hand first, announce the total, and peg the score. Pone shall leave the cards face up until any claim of overpegging is resolved or until the dealer indicates acceptance of the pone's pegging by counting his or her hand.
- b. Next the dealer counts his or her hand, announces the total, and pegs the score. Dealer shall then place dealer's hand on the pone's side of the board, still face up. The pone indicates acceptance of the dealer's score either by accepting verbally or by mixing the hand with other cards.

- c. If the dealer should count his or her hand and peg it correctly before the pone pegs his or her score, there is no penalty, but the dealer must retract the points, allow the pone to peg his or her score, and then the dealer may peg his or her score.
- d. Finally, the dealer exposes the crib, counts it, announces the score, and pegs it. Absent any verbal or other action of disapproval of the count by the pone, dealer shall place the crib and remaining cards face up on pone's side of the board for shuffling and subsequent deal. However, the dealer may correct a score announcement until the pone mixes the dealer's cards with the rest of the deck. At that point, no score correction is allowed.
- e. If the dealer examines and counts the crib *before* counting and pegging his/her hand, all crib points are retracted and the hand is counted and pegged. Then the crib is counted and pegged. There is no penalty for this action. In the event counting the crib out of order results in pegging into the out hole, *no false claim of game occurs*.

9.3. *The Starter Card*

- a. The starter card must remain segregated from the hands and crib while they are being counted and scored. If either player places the starter card in his or her hand or crib or mixes it in the pack, judges shall be summoned. The judges shall retrieve the card

and place it on top of the pack. The offender is penalized two points. If the judges decide that the players cannot agree on the starter card, then:

- (1) The judges shall assist in the reconstruction of the five-card hand or crib based on the players' statements and/or evidence of pegging in order to determine the starter card.
 - (2) If the evidence is inconclusive, the judges shall direct the nonoffender to blindly remove two cards from the affected hand or crib, look at them, and select either one as the starter card. The other card is returned to the involved hand or crib, and play continues.
 - (3) If the starter card has been mixed with the pack and cannot be retrieved as in #1 above, a judge shall shuffle the pack, the nonoffender will cut, and a judge will turn the new starter card.
- b. After the pone counts his or her hand and before the dealer begins to count his or her hand, the pone may remove the pack, leaving the starter card in the approximate area where the pack was.

9.4. Mixing Hand with Other Cards

- a. If a player mixes his or her hand with the crib or pack before it is counted and pegged and before the opponent confirms the count (see rule 9.2), the player forfeits the count of the hand.
- b. If the crib is involved and the dealer mixes the crib with the pack, the dealer forfeits the crib count.
- c. If the pone mixes the crib with the pack, the pone is penalized two points and the dealer is permitted to retrieve the crib and peg its value. If there is disagreement on the cards, judges must be summoned.
 - (1) The judges shall assist in the reconstruction of the hands in an attempt to determine which cards were placed in the crib.
 - (2) The cards that the players recall shall be retrieved. If a full crib cannot be recalled, a judge shall shuffle the remaining pack and from the top add the number of cards required to constitute a full crib.

9.5. Assistance in Counting

No aid from an individual or from the use of any material may be used to assist in determining scoring while pegging or counting the hands or crib.

RULE 10. MUGGINS

10.1. When in Effect

- a. Muggins is the only optional rule (see definition in rule 1.6).
- b. Officials in charge of tournaments, Grass Roots, or other forms of organized play must announce in their flyers and prior to beginning of play that muggins is in effect.
- c. When muggins is in effect, pegging out (reaching the game hole) is mandatory.

10.2. Situations That Apply

Except for the situations listed in rule 10.3, muggins is applied to the underpegging of the full value of any points during the play or scoring of the points in the hand or crib.

10.3. Situations That Do Not Apply

- a. The omission or underpegging of a penalty.
- b. The omission or underpegging of a muggins score.
- c. The dealer's failure to peg two points for turning a Jack as a starter card.
- d. Points lost by a player by pegging backward.

10.4. Calling Muggins

- a. The caller shall state, “Muggins for X points.” During the play of the cards, the score(s) not pegged or underpegged shall be identified. Muggins may not be pegged until both players agree. If the opponent does not agree, judges shall be summoned. If the judges determine that the play was not a muggins, the opponent will be awarded the points taken as a penalty. If the true amount of underpegging is determined to be other than the amount originally claimed, the caller is entitled only to the lesser of the claimed or true amounts. In no case shall the amount of points awarded for muggins exceed the actual number of holes that could have been pegged had the scoring been correctly done. The muggins points shall be scored after the judges render a decision.
- b. For points missed during the play of the cards, a muggins call must be made:
 - (1) After the player finishes underpegging the score or, if no score is pegged, after the player forfeits the score (see rule 7.2).
 - (2) Before the scoring player pegs a subsequent score or the pone’s hand is pegged.
- c. For points missed in a hand or crib:
 - (1) The dealer must call muggins after the pone finishes pegging the score or states there is no score and before the pone’s hand is mixed with other cards or the total count of the dealer’s hand is announced.

- (2) The pone must call muggins after the dealer completes pegging the hand (or crib) score or states there is no score and before the pone mixes the hand (or crib) with other cards.
- d. The zero-count hand or crib: once a player claims no count in a hand or crib, muggins may be called immediately. After the player's opponent says the word "muggins," the player may not correct his or her count.

RULE 11. PENALTIES

11.1. Scoring Penalties

- a. The opponent of the offending player scores penalty points unless they are specified to be backward penalties, in which case the offender pegs backward the amount of the penalty.
- b. The retraction of scores already pegged and correction of scores overpegged (see rules 4.4, 7.3, and 8.4) are not considered penalties; they are corrections. As such, any additional rules relating to incorrect pegging are not applicable.

11.2. Mispegging a Penalty

The incorrect pegging of penalties is subject to the same rules as apply to other scores (see rules 8.3 and 8.4).

11.3. No Penalty on a Penalty

Under no condition shall a penalty be inflicted due to an error in calling or pegging a penalty.

11.4. Refusal to Conform to the Rules

- a. If either player disagrees with the decision of the first two judges, a third judge may be summoned. The decision rendered by the three judges is final.
- b. Any player who willfully refuses to conform to any ruling after having been informed of it by three judges is not permitted to continue playing in the event and must be removed by the tournament director or designee. Any game or match in progress is forfeited, and the opponent is awarded a win by ten spread points (when applicable).

RULE 12. SCORECARDS

12.1. Recording Scores on Scorecards

When recording scores on the scorecard, players must use only blue or black ink. Other colored inks are not acceptable for this purpose and must be used only by authorized persons when making corrections to the scorecards. In the game-points column, wins shall be recorded as 2 or 3 (for a skunk), and losses shall be recorded as 0, X, /, or —. Finally, any single-digit point spread must be preceded by a zero on the scorecard.

12.2. Resolving Scorecard Discrepancies during Cross-Checking

Do *not* consult the players to adjudicate scorecard errors. During cross-checking of scorecards, if two scorecards record different results, the discrepancy must be resolved as follows:

- a. Disadvantage is always to the apparent qualifier. For example, qualifier A claims a 21-point win; opponent claims a 16-point loss; qualifier A's card changed to 16-point win.
- b. Disadvantage can be to two apparent qualifiers. For example, qualifier B claims a 17-point win; qualifier C claims a 16-point loss; qualifier B's card changed to 16-point win and qualifier C's card changed to a 17-point loss.

- c. If the point spread is marked on only one card, this number is accepted for both cards and recorded on the blank card.
- d. If both cards record a win or if both cards record a loss, with one having points in the plus column and the other having points in the minus column, the one in the plus column gets the win.
- e. If both cards record a win or if both cards record a loss, with the spread points in the same column, it is a loss for both players, and the spread points are moved to the negative column (if necessary).
- f. If only one card records a win but both cards put the spread points in the same column (whether win or loss), the win stands and the spread points on the incorrect card are changed to the appropriate column.
- g. Make sure that game-point and spread-point totals are adjusted, if necessary.
- h. “No harm, no foul”: if an apparent qualifier’s discrepancy is already to his or her disadvantage, no change is necessary. For example, qualifier D claims a 15-point win; opponent claims a 20-point loss; no change is necessary, and both cards stand as recorded.
- i. If scorecard errors result in a change in the fact or position of qualifying, the tournament director informs the affected player, with the relevant scorecards as evidence.

RULE 13. PLAYOFFS

13.1. Forfeitures during Playoffs

If a qualifier does not appear at the time scheduled to begin the playoffs, the tournament director will allow five minutes before forfeiting the first game to the opponent. Additional forfeitures will be made every fifteen minutes until a match is completed or until a qualifier appears. In any case, nonappearing qualifiers are still entitled to receive any prize money and MRPs that would have been awarded to the losers in that round.

13.2 Playoff Brackets and Byes

Information about ACC-sanctioned tournament procedures can be obtained from any of the regional tournament commissioners. The ACC requires that the following procedures be adhered to in a sanctioned tournament (unless an exemption is granted):

- a. All qualifying scorecards must be checked using a cross-checking system and tallying players' totals.
- b. One in four entrants must qualify for playoffs. Any fraction is rounded up to the next whole player (e.g., a tournament with 121, 122, 123, or 124 entrants will have 31 players in the playoffs). Do not round up to the next full bracket.

- c. The charts on pages 56–57 display the only approved bracketing for playoffs. Sections with multiple columns are read as if succeeding columns appear under the first column (e.g., in the 256-player bracket, the 5/60 pairing is below the 8/57 pairing; 3/62 is below 4/61; and 7/58 is below 6/59).
- d. Playoffs without a full bracket award first-round byes to the highest qualifier(s). To compute the number of byes:
- (1) Determine the number of qualifiers (rule 13.2.b).
 - (2) Determine the size of the next full bracket (a power of 2: that is, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, etc.).
 - (3) Subtract (1) from (2) to determine the number of byes.
 - (4) Examples:

<i>number of entrants</i>	<i>number of qualifiers</i>	<i>next full bracket</i>	<i>number of byes</i>	<i>explanation</i>
108	27	32	$32 - 27$ = 5 byes	top 5 qualifiers get byes and 22 qualifiers play in first round
132	33	64	$64 - 33$ = 31 byes	top 31 qualifiers get byes and 2 qualifiers play in first round
60	15	16	$16 - 15$ = 1 bye	top qualifier gets a bye and 14 qualifiers play in first round

- (5) The second round of the playoffs must have a full bracket.

RULE 14. MISCELLANEOUS

14.1. Situations Not Covered in These Rules

In the event of a situation that is not resolved by these rules, the head judge's decision shall be final for that tournament (see rule 11.4).

14.2. Amendments

Recommendations for amendments to these rules shall be submitted in writing to the Rules Committee, which will discuss, prepare, and present all relevant proposals to the board of directors for final approval.

APPENDIX: CROSS-CHECKING GUIDELINES

1. General considerations:
 - a. Detailed information is available from the ACC regional tournament commissioner.

Playoff Brackets

**12-16
players**

1

4

2

3

==

**17-32
players**

1

8

4

5

3

6

2

7

**33-64
players**

1

16

8

9

5

12

4

13

3

14

6

11

7

10

2

15

65-128 players

1

32

16

17

9

24

8

25

5

28

12

21

13

20

4

29

3

30

14

19

11

22

6

27

7

26

10

23

15

18

2

31

129–256 players

1

64

32

33

16

49

17

48

9

56

24

41

25

40

8

57

5

60

28

37

12

53

21

44

13

52

20

45

29

36

4

61

3

62

30

35

14

51

19

46

11

54

22

43

27

38

6

59

7

58

26

39

10

55

23

42

15

50

18

47

31

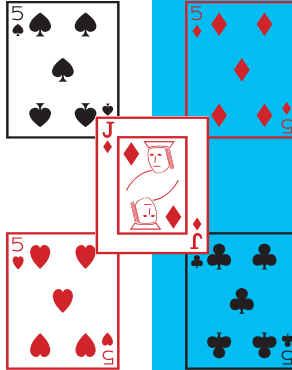
34

2

63

- b. Avoid “serpentine” seating arrangements that make the room one big table.
 - c. A private location for cross-checking is always an asset.
 - d. Too much help is preferable to too little help.
 - e. Corrections made while cross-checking should be initialed by the checker.
2. Determine the number of qualifiers (rule 13.2.b).
 3. Collect all players’ scorecards. Count them to be sure.
 4. Separate cards by game-point totals, disregarding seating assignments. Place in four piles: definite qualifiers, probable qualifiers, probable nonqualifiers, and definite nonqualifiers (the “dead zone”). Check player’s game points and games won to be certain that the two numbers are not transposed (e.g., 14 game points with 29 games won).
 5. Check game-point totals for all but the “dead zone” by going down the plus spread column and mentally adding game points. Compare with the player’s recorded total, and correct it if necessary.
 6. Check point-spread totals in the piles of definite qualifiers and probable qualifiers. Make any needed corrections.
 7. Tiebreakers are, in order:
 - a. game points

- b. games won
 - c. net point spread
 - d. plus points
 - e. head-to-head results from the current tournament's qualifying round (if available)
 - f. if head-to-head results are unavailable, one-game playoff (cut for first deal)
8. Segregate the number of needed qualifying cards plus one extra (the presumed "high nonqualifier"). Take note of the high nonqualifier's score.
 9. Separate all of the scorecards by table number, but keep the qualifying and nonqualifying in separate piles. Put each pile in order by seating assignment.
 10. Cross-check in pairs, by tables, with one checker reading to the other. Usually, the person with the qualifying cards reads to the other checker what should be recorded on the nonqualifying cards (e.g., "Seat 5, game 8, lost by 15").
 11. Check dead-zone cards after each table is cross-checked to be sure that no qualifying cards have been overlooked.
 12. Assemble qualifiers' scorecards in order.
 13. Before posting or announcing playoff pairings, recount and recheck dead-zone cards again.
 14. Post the names of the qualifiers.



Copyright ©2020 by American Cribbage Congress Inc.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.