

# Rules to Play Four Hand Cribbage

## Deal

Deal five cards to each player. Each player chooses one card from his/her hand to discard to the crib.

## The Crib

Each player looks at his/her five cards and lays away one in front of the dealer to reduce the hand to four cards. When choosing a crib card, consideration is given to the hand's potential for scoring during the counting phase at the end of the turn. The cards laid away together constitute the crib, which belongs to the dealer but is not exposed or used until after the play.

## The Starter

After the crib is laid away, the player to the dealer's right cuts the pack (the remaining deck of cards) and the dealer turns up the top-card of the lower packet. This card, placed face up on the pack, is the starter. If the starter is a Jack ("His Heels") the dealer pegs (scores) 2 points immediately. The starter card is not used in the play.

## The Play

After the starter is turned, the first round begins. The player to the left of the dealer lays one card face up on the table. Each player clockwise lays a card, forming a stack separate from the other players. As each player lays down a card, the player announces the running total reached by the addition of his/her pips to those previously played, or declares a Go. (Example: Non-dealer begins with a 4, saying "four", the next player plays a 9, saying "thirteen" and so on). The Kings, Queens and Jacks count 10 pips each; every other card counts its pip value with the Ace being 1.

## The Go

During the play, the running total of the cards may never exceed 31. All playable cards must be played, so if a player is unable to add another card without exceeding 31, he/she passes by saying "Go" and the next clockwise player plays.

The player in a round laying the last card pegs 1 point. A new round then begins with the next clockwise player. Besides the point for the last card, the player is entitled additional points for pegging 15, pairs, runs, 31, etc.

## Pegging

The object in the play phase is to score points by pegging (moving the pegs on the cribbage board). In addition to last card, a player may score for the following combinations:

15 pips – for laying a card that makes a running total of 15, peg 2 points

Pair – for adding a card of the same rank as that last played, peg 2 points (note that face cards pair on by actual rank Jack with Jack, but not Jack with Queen)

Triplet – for adding a third card of the same rank, peg 6 points

**Quadruplet** – for adding a fourth card of the same rank, peg 12 points

**Run (Sequence)** – for adding a card which forms with those played previously a sequence of three or more, peg 1 point for each card in the sequence (runs are independent of suits, but go strictly by rank, e.g., 9-10-J is a run, 9 –10-Q is not)

**31 pips** - for laying a card that makes a running total of 31, peg 1 point

It is necessary to keep track of the order in which cards are played to determine whether what looks like a peggable sequence has been interrupted.

## **Counting the Hands (The Show)**

The rounds end when all cards have been played. Then hands are shown, counted and scored. There is no counting of hands if one player pegs to 121 during the play.

The five hands are counted in clockwise order starting with the player to the left of the dealer. The dealer gets to count his hand and crib last. This order is important, for towards the end of a game the non-dealers may “count out” and win before the dealer gets a chance to count, even though the dealer’s hand total would ordinarily exceed that of his opponents.

The starter is considered to be part of each hand in the show so that all hands in counting comprise five cards. Note that when scoring a hand the same card may be counted and scored as part of several different combinations.

## **Scoring**

Points are scored on the cribbage board for the following combinations:

**Fifteen** – count 2 points for each combination of cards that total 15

**Pair** – count 2 points for each pair (two of the same rank)

**Triplet** – count 6 points for each triplet (three of the same rank)

**Quadruplet** – count 12 points for each quadruplet (four of the same rank)

**Run (Sequence of 3, 4 or 5)** – count 1 for each card in the sequence (runs are independent of suits, but go strictly by rank, e.g., 9-10-J is a run, 9 –10-Q is not)

**Flush of 4 or 5** – count 4 points for a hand of cards of the same suit, or 5 points if the starter card is included in the flush

**His Nob (or Nib)** - count 1 point for a Jack in your hand of the same suit as the starter card

After hands and crib have been counted and scored, the cards are gathered and dealt for the next turn. Player to the left of the last dealer is the dealer for the new turn.

## **Winning**

When a player has scored to 121, his/her team is the winner. Play stops immediately.