

Draft Cribbage

By Niko Lepka

July 22, 2026

👤 2-4 ♦ Light ⌚ 45-60 min
v1.0.0

Draft Cribbage is an alternate take on Cribbage, where players draft cards Gin Rummy style in an effort to make the best Cribbage hand.

1 Objective

The object of Draft Cribbage is to build the best *Cribbage* hands and reach 121 points before your opponents.

2 Components

To play this game you need the following:

- A standard 52 card deck
- A Cribbage board (optional but nice to have)

3 Setup

1. The last player to have won a game of Cribbage is the dealer for the first round.
2. Set up the Cribbage board like you normally would.
3. The dealer shuffles the deck thoroughly and sets the deck in the middle of the table within reach of everyone.
4. The player to the right of the dealer cuts the deck somewhere and lifts up half the cards.
 - (a) The dealer then takes out two cards from the stack below and puts them into the **two** discard piles next to the deck.

- If the two cards either add up to 15 or form a pair, the dealer immediately scores 2 points.
- (b) The player who cut the deck adds the cut half back on top of the half beneath.
5. The player left of the dealer then begins the game.

Aside If you don't have a Cribbage board, you can also just use a pen and paper for scoring. Using a board is however, more fun.

4 Gameplay

The game is divided into two distinct phases: The Draft and The Show.

4.1 The Draft

During The Draft, players will be building their hands by drawing cards from either the deck or the discard piles. Depending on the number of cards in a player's hand, the way a player drafts cards changes a bit:

Less than 4 cards: When a player has less than 4 cards in hand, each player in turn order, starting with the player left of the dealer, must either

- draw 2 cards from the deck, then discard any one card from your hand to one of two discard piles, or
- draw 1 card from one of the discard piles and discard nothing.

4 cards: As soon as a player has four cards in hand, that player can instead do one of two things:

- They may draw **one** card from the deck, then discard any card (including the drawn one).
- They may draw one card from one of the two discard piles, then discard a **different** card.

If, after discarding, the top of both discard piles add to 15 or make a pair of identical ranks, the player who discarded that card immediately scores 2 points. You **do not** score any points if you reveal a 15 or a pair after drawing from the discard pile, only when *adding* to it.

Note You must discard into an empty discard pile if one exists.

4.1.1 Knocking

Once **all** players have four cards (and at least one discard pile has cards in it), a player may, if they want to, discard a card face-down. This is called *knocking*, and it ends the round.

4.2 The Show

Once a player has knocked, each player, **starting with the player left of the knocker** and going clockwise around the table will score their hand using standard Cribbage hand scoring rules using the top card of the uncovered discard pile as the up-card for their scoring. The up-card counts as a fifth card in their hand.

Note If the up-card is a Jack, the player who knocked gets 2 points for *his heels*¹.

4.3 Scoring

A player's hand is scored according to standard Cribbage scoring rules. You can skip this section if you already know how that works. If not, read along!

Scoring works as follows:

- 2 points for a **set of cards adding up to 15**. Aces count 1, face cards count 10.
- 2 points for each **Pair**.
- 6 points for a **3-of-a-kind**. (Scores like 3 pairs).
- 12 points for a **4-of-a-kind**. (Scores like 6 pairs).
- 3–5 points for a **Straight** of 3 or more cards (one point per card).
- 4–5 points for a **Flush** of 4 or more cards (one point per card). The flush **must** be either the four cards in your hand or the four cards in your hand + the up-card.

¹This is equivalent to turning over a Jack in Cribbage, but more easily weaponised

- 1 point if you have a Jack that matches the suit of the up-card (known as *nobs*).

Note that in Cribbage, you score each combination of cards adding up to things, which means one card can be part of multiple different scoring groups.

Common shorthands include:

- 8 points for a **double-run of 3** (a 3 card straight where one of the numbers is doubled, e.g. A223).
- 10 points for a **double-run of 4** (a 4 card straight where one of the numbers is doubled, e.g. A2334).
- 15 points for a **triple-run** (a 3 card straight where one of the cards is tripled, e.g. JQQQK)
- 16 points for a **double-double-run** (a 3 card straight where two of the cards are doubled, e.g. JQQKK).

The maximum number of points a hand can score is 29.

Important A run only scores its maximum length. If you have a 23456 run, you don't score it as 234, 345, 456, 2345, 3456, and 23456; but instead only as a run of 5 cards.

Scoring Example Eve's hand after knocking is ♠6♥6♠7♦9 with a ♥8 on the uncovered discard pile. She scores 14 points total:

- A pair for 2 (♥6♠6),
- fifteen for 4 (♦9♥6),
- fifteen for 6 (♦9♠6),
- a run for 10 (♠6♠7♥8♦9), and
- a run for 14 (♥6♠7♥8♦9).

4.4 End of the Game

If a player passes 121 points the game ends **immediately** and **no other players may score their hands!** Knock responsibly!

If you want to play a shorter game, play to 61 points instead.

4.5 Keeping Score Between Games

Like in Cribbage proper, a player who first gets to 121 points or more gets 1 Game Point. An opponent who hasn't made 91 points or more is said to have been *skunked*, rewarding the winner with an additional Game Point.

5 Variants

5.1 Muggins

It wouldn't be Cribbage without Muggins. In this variant, if a player misses some of the points they can score in their hand, another player may point them out and score those points instead.

5.2 2v1

In this variant, two players team up to defeat one. The two players share the same score track and must reach 121 points before the lone player reaches 61.

5.3 2v2

Two teams of two players duke it out. In this variant you use one score track per team. The first team to reach 121 points wins.

Credits

- Pyramid Love ( **This here font**) By OtherStudio and Seagull Incident.
<https://seagullincident.com/pyramidlove/>

Special Thanks

Special thanks to these wonderful people for helping bring this game to life

Eva Jacobsen Summer & Jacob Landrum Zoë Cappallo

Version History

0.0.1 Document created.

0.0.2 Added 2 cards discarded during the deal and points earned for making pairs and 15s on said discard piles.

0.0.3 Restructured the gameplay section a bit. Wasn't happy with the phases outlined.

0.0.4 Logo added.

0.0.5 Card draw clarifications added.

0.0.6 Added further clarifications.

0.0.7 Added Muggins variant.

0.0.8 Added 2v1 and 2v2 modes.

0.0.9 Added a cheat sheet to the back.

0.0.10 Clarified that 15s and pairs only happen on discard.

0.0.11 Expanded cheat sheet. Also unified the terminology for the deck. I previously used “deck”, “draw pile”, and “stockpile”. Now it's just “the deck”.

1.0.0 Public Release



Crib Sheet

Less Than 4 Cards in Hand

- a) Draw 2 cards from the deck, then discard 1, or
- b) Draw 1 card from either discard pile without discarding

4 Cards in Hand

- a) Draw 1 card from the deck, then discard 1, or
- b) Draw 1 card from a discard pile, then discard a different card, or
- c) Knock if all players have 4 cards **and** discard has at least 1 card

Knocking

Player left of the knocker scores their cards first.

The uncovered discard pile sets the up-card

Scoring

Name	Points
His Heels (Jack as the up-card)	2*
Nobs (Jack matching suit of up-card)	1
Fifteen	2
Pair	2
Triple	6
Quadruple	12
Run (3–5 cards)	3–5
Flush (4–5 cards)	4–5
Double Run of 3 (e.g. JQQK)	8
Double Run of 4 (e.g. 23345)	10
Triple Run (e.g. JJJQK)	15
Double-Double Run (e.g. 77899)	16

* = Knocker only

Card Values

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

Game End

Game ends as soon as a player hits 121 points.

Nobody else gets to score.