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# Alberta 55 plus Cribbage Rules

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## General Information

The rules listed in this section shall be the official rules for any **Alberta 55 plus** event. All Alberta 55 plus Rules are located on our web site at: [www.alberta55plus.ca](http://www.alberta55plus.ca). If there is a discrepancy between any printed rules, the version available on our web site shall prevail.

**Entry Procedures:** Check with your Zone Activity Director for playoff information and date. Contact information is listed on our website at [www.alberta55plus.ca](http://www.alberta55plus.ca)

## Game Courtesies

Rules are made to be followed by all players to make games happen. But often there are unwritten “rules” or courtesies which will make the game much better with fewer problems for all. Whether the game is a friendly recreational event among friends or part of an important tournament, participants should practice good sportsmanship and respect for their competitors.

Rules for many of the activities that 55 plus play are contained in rules books written by provincial, national or international governing bodies. These rules are often referred to but any adaptations to these rules will be listed within each rule.

Common to all card games, there are a few courtesies:

1. There will be a time limit of 25 minutes per game.
2. Do not pick up a dealt hand and say, “That’s a poor deal.” Or “You’re a bad dealer.”
3. Do not pick up cards as they are dealt. More misdeals are caused by hands moving on the table than any other cause.
4. There should be no lead-directing comments and gestures are not good card manners.
5. No rule book allows the throwing in of hands with “No ace, no face”.
6. Adequate time must be allowed to the opposition to see a trick or hand before it is placed away.

Note: Some localities have rules and games which are played by their own standards. We do not wish to interfere with these “house” situations but encourage all participants to practice the above-listed courtesies.

## Dress Code

Avoid the use of strong perfumes, colognes or shaving lotion to prevent an opponent sneezing, being choked up or coughing at the wrong time. To keep Alberta 55 plus activities consistent, where there is no Dress Code Rule it is expected of each participant to reflect the professionalism of themselves and their sport.

## Age Groups / Events

All participants must fall within the age group indicated by December 31 of the Event year. All participants in Zone Playoffs must be Active Members.

Age	Events	Participants Advancing to Provincial Games
55+	Open Singles	2 per Zone
70+	Open Singles	2 per Zone
55+	Open Doubles	4 per Zone (2 pair)
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER ZONE = 8</b>		

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# Alberta 55 plus Cribbage Rules

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## 1. The Rules

The rules listed in this section shall be the official rules for all ALBERTA 55 PLUS sanctioned events.

## 2. Two-Handed Play

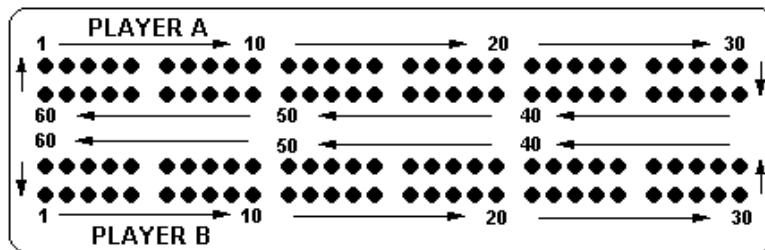
Two players use a standard 52-card pack. Cards rank K (high), Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 A (low)

## 3. Object

To be the first to score 121 points or over, accumulated over several deals. Points are scored mainly for combinations of cards either occurring during the play or occurring in a player's hand or in the cards discarded before the play, which form the *crib*.

## 4. Board and Pegs

- a) The score is kept by means of a board and pegs. Starting at one end of the board – usually to the left of the first dealer – players peg their scores as they occur using their two pegs alternately: the forward peg shows the player's latest score, and the rear peg shows the previous score.



- b) When a player scores, the rear peg is moved in front of the forward peg by the same number of holes as the score to show the new total. This enables scores to be easily checked and acts as a visible statement of the progress of the game. Players peg up on the outside of the board and back on the inside. The winner is the first to *peg out* by exceeding 120.
- c) Every attempt will be made to use 'regulation cribbage boards' during play. For instance, boards shaped in a '29' may not be used. At the Provincial Games level, only pegs provided by the Host Community can be used.

## 5. Deal

- a) The first deal is determined by cutting the cards. The player cutting the cards must complete the cut. The player cutting the lowest card deals and has the first crib. (Cards rank K [high] Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 A [low]) If the cards cut are equal, there is another cut for first deal. The deal then alternates from hand to hand until the game is over.
- b) The dealer shuffles and deals 6 cards face down to each player one at a time. The un-dealt part of the pack is placed face down on the table. At the end of each hand, the played cards are gathered together and the whole pack is shuffled by the new dealer before the next hand.

## 6. Discard

- a) Each player chooses two cards to discard face down to form the crib. These four cards are set aside until the end of the hand. The crib will count for the dealer – non-dealer will try to throw cards that are unlikely to make valuable combinations but must balance this against keeping a good hand for himself. The dealer, on the other hand, may sometimes find it pays to place good cards in the crib, especially if they cannot be used to best advantage in hand.

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## 7. Start Card

- a) Non-dealer cuts the stack of un-dealt cards, lifting the upper part without showing its bottom card. The dealer takes out the top card of the lower part, turns it face up and, after non-dealer replaces the upper part, places it face up on top of the pack. This turned up card is called the *start card* – it will count for combinations as part of both players' hands as well as of the dealer's crib.
- b) If the start card is a jack, the dealer immediately pegs 2 holes – this is called *Two for his heels*.
- c) The jack as a start card cannot be counted for pegging if player's peg is past the 115<sup>th</sup> hole.

## 8. Play of the Cards

- a) Starting with the non-dealer, the players take turns to play single cards. You play your own cards to form a face-up pile in front of yourself, keeping them separate from the other player's cards. In this stage of the game, the total pip value of the cards played by both players must not exceed 31. The pip values of the cards are:

Ace = 1; 2 to 10 = face value; Jack = 10; Queen = 10; King = 10.

- b) As each card is played, the player announces the running total – for example the non-dealer plays a king and says “10”, the dealer plays an 8 and says “18”, the dealer plays a jack and says “28”, and so on. If a card is played which brings the total to exactly 31, the player pegs 2 claiming *Thirty-one for two* as he does so
- c) A player who cannot play without exceeding 31 does not play a card but says *Go*, leaving his opponent to continue if possible, pegging for any further combinations made. Bringing the total to exactly 31 pegs 2, but if neither player can lay a card without going over 31, then the last player to lay a card pegs *one for the go* or *one for the last*.
- d) The cards that have been played are turned over and a fresh round of play starts with the unplayed cards in exactly the same way. The opponent of the player who played last in the previous round (scoring *Thirty-one for two* or *One for last*) plays first in the new round. This second round of play again continues until neither can play without going over 31. The last player again scores “1 for last” or “31 for 2”, and if any player has cards left, there is a further round. Play continues for as many rounds as necessary until all players' cards are exhausted. Towards the end, it may happen that one player has run out of cards but the other still has several cards. In that case the player who still has cards simply carries on playing and scoring for any combinations formed until all his cards have been played.

**Please note:** it is **never** possible to score “one for last” and “31 for 2” at the same time. They are **alternatives**. If you make exactly 31 for two points you do **not** get an additional “one for last”.

**Tactical note:** it is often worth keeping low cards in hand for this phase of the game, especially when there is a strong possibility of being able to peg out before one's opponent.

## 9. Score During the play:

A player who makes any of the following scores during the play pegs them immediately.

**15:** if you play a card which brings the total to 15 you peg 2 claiming *Fifteen two*.

**31:** as mentioned above, if you play a card, which brings the total to exactly 31, you peg 2.

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**Pair:** If you play a card of the same rank as the previous card (e.g. a king after a king) you peg 2 for a pair. Note that (for example) a 10 and a queen do NOT make a pair even though they are both worth 10 points.

**Pair Royal:** If immediately after a pair, a third card of the same rank is played, the player of the third card shall score 6.

**Double Pair Royal:** Four cards of the same rank, played in immediate succession. The player of the fourth card scores 12.

**Run:** A run or sequence is a set of 3 or more cards of consecutive ranks (irrespective of suit) – such as 9 – 10 – jack or 2 – 3 – 4 – 5. Note that ace is low so, for example, ace-king-queen is not a run. The player of a card, which completes a run, scores for the run; the score is equal to the number of cards in the run. The cards do not have to be played in order, but no other cards must intervene.

Example: cards are played in the following order: 4-2-3-5-6. The player of the 3 scores 3 for a run, then the player of the 5 scores 4, and the player of the 6 scores 5.

**Last Card:** If neither player manages to make the total exactly 31, whoever played the last card pegs 1.

Note that to score for pair, pair royal, double pair royal or run, the cards must have been played consecutively during a single round of play. If **one** player had to say “go” while the combination was being formed, the combination is still valid, but if **both** players are unable to play, causing a new round of play to be started from zero, all combinations are started afresh.

## 10. The Show

Players now retrieve the cards that they put down during the play and score for combinations of cards held in hand. First the non-dealer’s hand is exposed and scored. The start card also counts as part of the hand when scoring combinations. All valid scores from the following list are counted.

**15:** any combination of cards adding up to 15 pips scores 2 points. For example, king, jack, five, five would count 8 points (four fifteens as the king and the jack can each be paired with either five). You would say *Fifteen two, fifteen four, fifteen six, fifteen eight*. In this case you would also peg *Two for the pair* (of fives), making 10.

**Pair:** A pair of cards of the same rank scores 2 points. Three cards of the same rank contain 3 different pairs and thus score a total of 6 points for *pair royal*. Four of a kind contain 6 pairs and so score 12 points.

**Run:** Three cards of consecutive rank (irrespective of suit), such as ace-2-3, scores 3 points for a run. A hand such as 6-7-7-8 contains two runs of 3 (as well as two fifteens and a pair) and so would score 12 altogether. A run of four cards, such as 9-10-J-Q scores 4 points (this slightly illogical – you might expect it to score 6 because it contains two runs of 3, but it doesn’t. The runs of 3 within it don’t count – you just get 4), and a run of five cards scores 5.

**Flush:** If all four cards of the hand are the same suit, 4 points are scored for flush. If the start card is the same suit as well, the flush is worth 5 points. There is no score for having 3 hand cards and the start all the same suit. Note that there is no score for flush during the play – it only counts in the show.

**One For His Nob:** If the hand contains the jack of the same suit as the start card, you peg *One for his nob*.

**Nineteen:** It is impossible to score nineteen in hand or in crib. Nineteen is proverbially used as a term to indicate a worthless hand.

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Note that when scoring a hand, the same card may be counted and scored as part of several different combinations. For example, if your hand is 7 8 8 K and the start card is 9 you score *Fifteen 2, fifteen 4 and a pair is 6, and a run is 9 and a run is 12* – 12 holes to peg, with each of your 8s forming part of a fifteen, a pair and a run.

After non-dealer's hand has been shown and the score is pegged, dealer's hand is shown, scored and pegged in the same way. Finally, the dealer exposes the four cards of the crib and scores them with the start card. The scoring is the same as for the player's hands except that a flush in the crib only scores if all four crib cards and the start card are of the same suit. If that happens, the flush scores 5.

**Muggins:** "Muggins" will not be allowed. The score will be based on the actual card count.

## 11. Winning the game

As soon as someone reaches or passes 121, that player wins the game. This can happen at any stage – during the play or the show. It is not necessary to reach 121 exactly – you can *peg out* by scoring 2 more when you were on 120 and still win. All that matters is that your opponent's pegs are both still on the board.

No penalty or extra premium for a skunk.

As soon as player pegs out, no further counting can be done

## 12. Irregularities

- a) Misdeal. There must be a new deal by the same dealer if a card is found faced in the pack, if a card is exposed dealing, or if the pack is found imperfect.
- b) Wrong number of cards. If one hand (not crib) is found to have the wrong number of cards after laying away for the crib, the other hand and crib being correct, the opponent may either demand a new deal or may peg 2 and rectify the hand. If the crib is incorrect, both hands being correct, non-dealer pegs 2 and the crib is corrected.

## 13. Error in Pegging

If a player places a peg short of the amount to which he is entitled, he may not correct his error after he has played the next card or after the cut for the next deal. If he pegs more than his announced score, the error must be corrected on demand at any time before the cut for the next deal and his opponent pegs 2 as a penalty.

## Four-Handed Play (Doubles)

All the scoring features are identical to the two-handed version. Partners sit opposite each other. One member of the partnership is elected to peg and the other two players cut for first crib. Cards are dealt clockwise one at a time, five to each player.

Each player puts one card in the dealer's crib. Dealer then offers the un-dealt stack to the opponent on his left to cut for *start*. ('Cut back for crib, forward for start). When three players are forced to say "go", the fourth player earns the point for last card. In the show, counting begins at the dealer's left and ends with the dealer.

## 14. Strategy

- a) The best balking cards are kings and aces, because they have the least chance of producing sequences. Tenth cards are generally good, provided that the two cards laid away are not too near (likely to make a sequence). When nothing better offers, give two wide cards – at least three apart in rank.

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- b) Proverbially, the safest lead is a 4. The next card cannot make a 15. Lower cards are also safe from this point of view, but are better treasured for go and 31. The most dangerous leads are 7 and 8, but may be made to trap the opponent when they are backed with other close cards. Generally speaking, play on (toward a sequence) when you have close cards and off when you do not. However, the state of the score is consideration. If far behind, play on when there is any chance of building a score for yourself; if well ahead, balk your opponent by playing off unless you will surely peg as much as he by playing on.

## 15. Tie Break

For tie-breaking purposes, actual winning and losing scores must be recorded during round robin play (i.e. losing scores not to be subtracted from winning scores).

**During playoffs** (club/area/zone) a single round robin format shall be used. If not possible, a modified round robin may be used. **It is recommended that tie-break procedures be clearly outlined before play begins.**

- a. When round robin or modified round robin completed, calculate total Win/Loss points to determine winner. (A win shall count two (2) points; a loss shall count zero (0) points.). Player/team with most Win/Loss points is declared winner.
- b. If after the round robin, two or more players are tied, a winner shall be declared based on total points scored by those tied in all games played. Note: it is recommended that a calculator be used to determine total points scored.
- c. If tie still exists, go to “who beat who” in round robin (amongst those tied).

**At the Provincial Games**, tournament play shall be a double round robin each day of competition (two rounds of seven matches per day for a total of 14 matches per day. Each day, each competitor will play two consecutive matches with all other competitors and will cut for the deal before each match.). When round robin play completed, calculate total Win/Loss points to determine winner. (A win shall count two (2) points; a loss shall count zero (0) points.). Player/team with most Win/Loss points is declared winner.

Please note the following tie-break information. **It is recommended that tie-break procedures be clearly outlined before play begins.**

- If after the round robin, two players are tied, a winner shall be declared based on total points scored by those tied in all games played.

**Note:** it is recommended that a calculator be used to determine total points scored.

- If tie still exists, go to “who beat who” in round robin (amongst those tied).
- If a tie still exists, then the two players would playoff in a single game.

If after the round robin, more than two players are tied among those eligible for medals, the following tie-breaking procedures will apply. If three-way tie exists, go to total points scored by those tied, in all games played in round robin.

- If tie still exists, go to “who beat who” in round robin (amongst those tied).
- If a tie still exists, then the two players would playoff in a single game.

**Note:** these tie-break procedures may constitute a change from those used to break ties in Cribbage at previous Alberta 55 Plus Games.