

Bones

A game for 2 to 4 players

Required to play

- 1 set of regular dominoes (28 tiles), in an opaque sack or bag
- 2 playing dice + 3 marking dice (see below)
- 1 game board
- 6 playing pieces (“tokens”) / player
- Paper for scoring, pencils

Set-up

- The dominoes are placed in the bag, which is shaken vigorously.
- The game board is placed in the middle of the table, with the marking dice set to one side
- Players are given 6 tokens each
- Space is cleared to roll the dice

Objective

To score points by matching either the sum or lay-out of the pips on a given domino by rolling two dice. The game is over when either all dominoes have been used up, a certain number of rounds has been played or a certain number of points has been reached. Players must agree on these and other house rules before starting play. The winner is the player with the highest number of points at the end of the game.

Rules of play

Players roll both dice to determine who goes first; the person with the highest roll plays first. The first player takes three dominoes out of the bag and places them face up in the spaces provided on the game board (marked “bones”). The aim is to match *either* the sum *or* the exact lay-out of the pips on **any one** of the three dominoes, using six or less throws of the dice.

Players mark the result of each throw on the game board with one of their tokens. If they match the *sum* of a domino, they score the value of all rolls thus marked, and take *only* the matched domino off the board, into their “hand”. The other dominoes remain in play on the board. If they match the *lay-out* of a domino, they get to take *all three* dominoes *and* score their rolls.

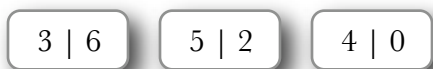
Once a player does roll a match, he may stop rolling, take the domino and score his turn, or — if he has not used up all his rolls or markers — continue playing in the hope of rolling an exact match, in which case his score is *doubled*. Note that *if he fails* to roll an exact match, he **forfeits all points** scored during that hand, even those scored when the first match was rolled. After a player has scored his hand, the dice and domino bag are passed to the next player. If a player *fails* to roll a match, the dominoes remain in play and the dice are passed to the next player.

Blanks

If the double blank tile is pulled, the player keeps it and takes another tile. Blanks act as jokers; they need to be defined before play and marked using the *marking dice*. To do so, a player pays one marker per blank and rolls one die to “fill in the blank”. A player who has the double blank may use this tile *instead of markers* to pay for defining up to two blanks.

Example:

Player A pulls the following tiles:



Since one of them is a blank, he must pay one marker to define the value of the blank before he can start his turn. He rolls a 3 and places one of the marking dice on top of the blank so that the three faces up: \boxtimes (the remaining marking dice are set aside to avoid confusion). To score, he must *either* roll a 7 (4+3 or 5+2), a 9 (3+6) or $\boxtimes \boxtimes$, $\boxtimes \boxtimes$ or $\boxtimes \boxtimes$, to match the lay-out of the pips. If he rolls a 7, he can take either the 5|2 or the 4|3; on a 9, he could take the 3|6. If he were to match the pips on any one tile, he could keep all three.

Note that a blank’s assigned value is *removed* once that domino is taken by a player; for the purposes of scoring the tiles at the end of the game, it is therefore advisable to take a tile *without* a blank instead. In this example, the player should take the 5|2. However, a tile that remains in play retains its assigned value.

Bartering for markers

If a player runs out of markers before rolling a match, but still has at least one roll left, he may barter for a marker from another player — in return for a domino or a share of the potential points. If no deal is reached and the last throw produces no match, no points are scored for that hand.

Example:

A player has paid two markers to define values for two blanks and rolled four times without scoring a match. He has therefore run out of markers, but still has 2 rolls available in his turn. He may now ask “Who will barter for markers”?

Note that he does not have to accept any offers. If a deal is made and the player succeeds in rolling a match or exact match, he must pay the lender the agreed price and return the bartered markers.

Scoring

Players keep a running total and score each hand as it is completed by adding the rolls marked by their tokens on the game board. At the end of the game, players try to lay out their dominoes end to end, so that their pips match on either side, much as in regular *Dominoes*; tiles that cannot be placed do not count. Players now add the pips from their connecting tiles to their running score to determine the final tally. The player with the biggest total wins.