

Overview / objective

Liar Dice is played with 5 poker dice, a dice cup and dice board. It is based on the hierarchy of hands used in a game of poker. Knowledge of these hands is helpful but not essential. Each of the 5 dice has Ace, King, Queen, Jack, ten and nine on its six sides and the values after rolling are used to form a 5 card poker hand.

Liar Dice is best played by 3 or more players over multiple rounds with each round resulting in a loser. All players start the game with the same total stake being a certain number of tokens, chips, matchsticks or coins. The loser in each round must surrender one unit of their stake. A player is eliminated from the game when they have exhausted their stake and have no tokens, chips, coins etc left. The winner is the last player standing or the player that has not exhausted their stake.

Options: It should be decided at the start of the game whether the loser of each round surrenders a unit of their stake to the pot or to the player who out bluffed them and caused them to lose that round. If playing for money and the stake is surrendered to the pot in each round, it should be decided at the start of the game if the ultimate winner keeps the pot or not.

Starting a round

Players sit around a table and each player rolls one dice. Highest roller starts the first round. To start, all five dice are shaken in the dice cup and the cup is quickly up-ended onto the dice board so that all dice remain hidden under the cup and sit on the dice board. The player that rolled is then allowed to peek at the dice and they do this by tilting the cup backwards so that only they can see what they have rolled. It is recommended to do this with both hands so that other players may not see anything from the side. Because the values on the 5 dice represent a 5 card poker hand, the player must then declare a poker hand to the player to their left. It is important to note that the hand they declare can either be the hand they actually rolled or something higher or lower than what they actually rolled. i.e. a player may lie about what they have under the cup. To keep things simple, let's assume for now that the player rolled a pair of tens (10,10,K,Q,9) and wishes to declare this as their hand. With all 5 dice remaining hidden under the cup, the player then slides the dice board in front of the player to their left and declares their hand out loud, "a pair of tens".

Continuing a round

A player receives the dice board from the player to their right with that player's hand having been declared out loud. At this stage they have two choices:

OPTION 1 - END THE ROUND BY LIFTING THE CUP: A player should end the round when they do not believe that the player before them has a hand at least as good as what was declared. This concept is important. This means that if the hand formed on the dice is what the player called (or better), then the non-believing cup lifter loses the round. In

the example above, if the player had declared a pair of tens and actually had a pair of tens (or something better such as two Jacks or three of a kind) then the player that lifted the cup loses the round. However, if the hand revealed is worse than a pair of tens (e.g. a pair of nines) then the player that declared this hand is caught out and loses the round. Whoever loses a round must surrender one unit of their stake.

OPTION 2 – CONTINUE THE ROUND BY PEEKING UNDER THE CUP: A player should continue the round when they believe that the player before them has a hand equal to or better than what they declared. To do this the player peeks under the cup by tilting it backwards. The player must then decide which dice will be retained and which will be rolled. In deciding what to do, the player's objective is to pass the dice board to the next player whilst declaring a hand that is higher than the hand just called by the player before them. In more detail, the player choosing to continue must do following:

A) Decide how many dice will be retained. Retaining a dice means that it is not rolled as part of their turn and the value showing on that dice (as rolled by the previous player) remains face up on the dice. A player may retain all five dice, retain some and roll the rest, or start afresh and roll all five dice. For example if a pair of tens was rolled by the previous player, the current player may choose to retain the two tens and roll the other three dice in the hope that another ten or another pair is rolled.

B) Decide to retain in or out of the cup. Before rolling, decide whether retained dice will be retained outside of the cup (visible to all on the dice board) or retained under the cup (hidden). Note, a player may not manipulate retained dice and the dice must have the value rolled by the previous player remain face up. In our example, let's assume the player decides to visibly retain the two tens and they do this by sliding them out from under the cup so that all can see them. Note, it is typical (and usually safer) to retain dice publicly outside of the cup and privately roll the other dice under the cup. More advanced players may choose to do the opposite and retain some dice privately under the cup and roll the other dice publicly on the board outside of the cup, although it must be said that this strategy can be risky. It is also allowable to retain some dice inside the cup and retain others outside the cup, but any dice not retained in this instance must be rolled outside the cup. As the game is about trying to bamboozle your opponent, this is a good tactic if you want to mix things up and behave in an unpredictable manner.

C) Roll all dice not retained. If all retained dice are visible outside of the cup, the player rolls the other dice privately under the cup and then peeks at them to see what they have rolled before declaring their hand. Alternatively, if any dice have been retained under the cup, the player rolls the other dice publicly outside of the cup so all can see what was rolled. Note, a player who chooses to

retain all 5 dice will not roll any dice at all and in this case they may simply pass the dice board on unaltered or they may decide to expose one or more of the previously hidden dice by moving dice out of the cup before declaring their hand. In our example since the player has retained two tens outside of the cup, they roll the other three dice under the cup and peek at them. They may then choose to fake a smile, exaggerate their excitement or express genuine disappointment before declaring their hand. The aim is to confuse your opponent and cause them to do what you want them to do.

D) Declare a hand that is higher than that declared by the previous player. In our example, the player (after peeking at the three dice just rolled under the cup) must now declare any hand higher than a pair of tens. The player might conservatively call three tens or two pair (10s and 9s) because both hands are relatively likely when combining the retained pair of tens with the three dice just rolled. If the player has been unsuccessful in actually improving their hand they may also tactically choose to call something even better (e.g. a Full House of 3 Kings and two tens) in the hope that the player after them thinks that they would only call such a good hand if they had achieved it. Note, the values of any dice that form part of the hand are always expressed. It is not sufficient to call Full House or two pair - dice values of the two pair or full house must be specified. It is not however necessary to state the values of any dice that are not used in the hand being declared. Whatever their choice, the player slides the dice board to the next player and states their hand together with any banter, expression or dead-pan poker face of their choice.

Ending a round

The round continues in this fashion with the dice board being passed clockwise from player to player and the declared poker hand getting higher with each player’s turn. The round always ends when a player decides to end the round and reveal all hidden dice by lifting the cup. Whoever lifted the cup in a round, starts the next round, whether they were successful or not.

Tips & tactics

A player is never compelled to retain any of the dice (even if they were retained by the player before them) and given a tricky situation, a player always has the last resort option of picking up all 5 dice and rolling them all under the cup from scratch in the hope that they get lucky or they can bluff their way out of it.

Experiment with the strategic art of under-calling. Under-calling is where a player deliberately calls a hand that is worse than the hand they actually have. Under-calling is not dangerous for the player making the call but it can put power in the hands of the player after you as they do not have to do anything to the dice at all in order to successfully achieve a hand higher than the one just called. Under-calling

can be used to strategically target a particular player further down the order.

Take a chance with over-calling. Over-calling can be risky because you do not want the player after you to lift the cup. That said, if you can bluff your way through it you have put the player after you in quite a predicament.

Bullshit and banter are permitted and in fact encouraged. Provided that the game is always played in a fun and friendly spirit, players may say whatever they like during the game in order to mess with each other’s heads. This includes speaking up during another player’s turn. The playful banter is part of the tradition and fun of liar dice.

Above all, please persist with this game. It is simple to learn but can take a little time before you truly get it. Once the concept and nuance of the game “clicks”, it is one of those games that will bring a lifetime of good times and laughs with your mates.

Hierarchy of Hands (low to high)

<i>Hand Order</i>	<i>Ranking within hand</i>
One Pair	Low to High: two 9s, 10s, Jacks, Queens, Kings, Aces.
Two Pair	Highest top pair wins e.g. two Aces, two 9s beats two Kings, two Queens. If top pair is tied, highest bottom pair wins e.g. two Jacks, two 10s beats two Jacks, two 9s.
Three of a Kind	Low to High: three 9s, 10s, Jacks, Queens, Kings, Aces.
Straight	Low: King High Straight (K, Q, J, 10, 9) High: Ace High Straight (A, K, Q, J, 10)
Full House	Highest triple wins e.g. three Aces, two 9s beats three Kings, two Queens. If higher triple tied, highest pair wins e.g. three Jacks, two 10s beats three Jacks, two 9s.
Four of a Kind	Low to High: four 9s, 10s, Jacks, Queens, Kings, Aces. In Liar Dice the 5th dice is always called. Eg 4 Kings and a 10 beats 4 Kings and a 9.
Five of a Kind	Low to High: five 9s, 10s, Jacks, Queens, Kings, Aces.
Note:	As there are no suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs, spades), flush, royal flush and straight flush are not possible in Liar Dice.

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