

How to Play Texas 42 Dominoes

Number of Players: 2

Domino Set Required: Double-six

Texas 42 is a domino game that is played like a card game. In fact, unlike most domino games, there is no connecting of dominoes at all. The object of the game is to win tricks; 42 is a bidding game. Forty-Two is based on the card game Auction Pitch, and requires considerable skill in bidding and gameplay.

Tricks & Honors

Each hand is played as a series of seven "tricks", and each trick is worth one point. In addition, each of the dominoes whose pips add up to 5, or a multiple of five, has special values. These are known as the "honors":

- 0-5 = 5 points
- 1-4 = 5 points
- 2-3 = 5 points
- 4-6 = 10 points
- 5-5 = 10 points

The honor points are won by the player taking the trick in which they are played. Together the 7 tricks and 5 honors make up 42 points, hence the name of the game.

Setup

After shuffling the dominoes, each player draws seven tiles to make up their hand. There is no boneyard.

Bidding

The player holding the 0-1 tile bids first. Each player may either bid or pass. Each bid must be a number from 30 to 42, and must raise the previous bid. If the bid is maxed out (42), it may be doubled (84), and then doubled again (168). Bids of 42 or greater are made only by taking all 42 points. If no one bids, the tiles are reshuffled and dealt again. The highest bidder names the trump suit (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or doubles).

Game Play

The highest bidder leads, and must play a trump, and call out which of the numbers on his domino is the trump suit. Each player must follow suit if he can. If he cannot follow suit (that is, if a player does not hold a tile containing the trump suit), then he may play any tile. The trick is won by the heaviest trump, and the winner of the trick leads the next. A double is always the heaviest tile in its suit.

In subsequent tricks, the lead may either be a trump (containing the trump suit), or a non-trump (not containing the trump suit). If the lead is a trump, then the other players must play trump cards if they can. If the lead is a non-trump, then the suit is the higher of the two ends, and the other players must either play from that suit, or play a trump. A trick is won by the heaviest tile of the suit led, or the heaviest trump.

Scoring

If the highest-bidding player meets his bid, both sides score their totals. If the highest-bidding player fails to make his bid, his side scores nothing, and his opponents score their own totals plus the bid. If the bid was 42 or higher, then the score is the bid. If the bid was 84 points, and the bidder made 42 points, then he scores 84 points. If he did not make 42 points, the opposing team scores 84.

Winning the Game

A game is 250 points.