

Cribbage and the Navy

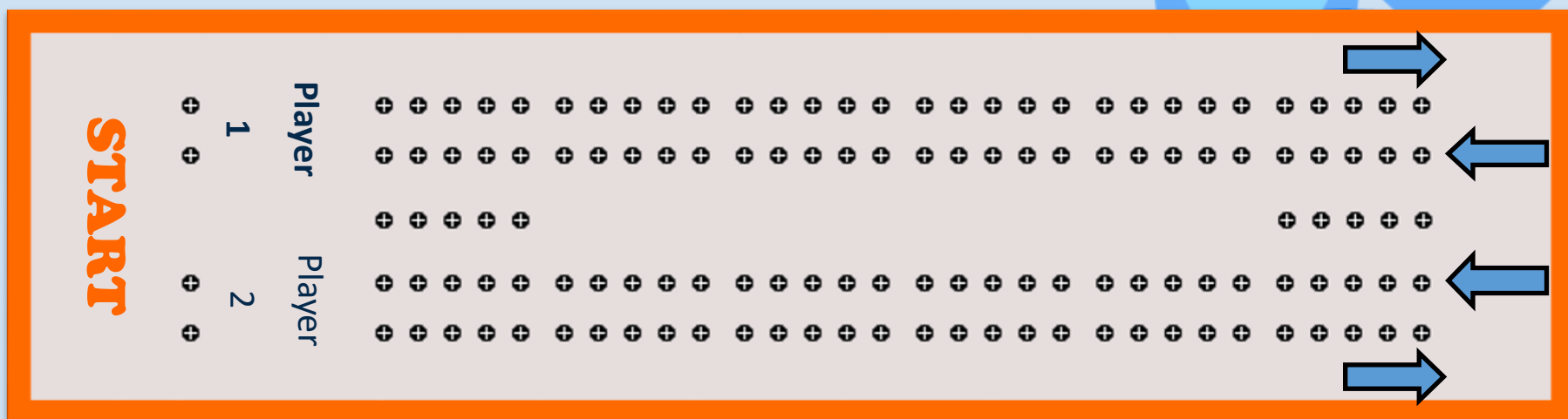
The Submarine Force has many traditions. These traditions are passed from one generation to the next and held in great honor. One of them is rarely talked about outside of the submarine community. It is an honored tradition that has deep ties to the Navy and to one of the Submarine Force's greatest commanders.

In 1943, the USS Wahoo (SS-283) headed out on a war patrol to the shallow waters of the farthest reaches of the Yellow Sea. This would be the first time a submarine would patrol the area. Tensions ran high as the crew headed out. To make them feel more at ease, Commander Dudley "Mush" Morton and his Executive officer Richard "Dick" O'Kane broke out a cribbage board and began to play. As submarine lore goes, Morton dealt O'Kane a perfect 29, the highest possible hand one can get in the game. The crew felt like the hand was a lucky omen. That night, the Wahoo sank two Japanese freighters. Three days later, in another game, Morton dealt a 28-point hand. The following day, they sunk two freighters and a third the next day. O'Kane would leave the Wahoo and the board to command the USS Tang (SS-306) – which went on to break the record for most ships sunk in a patrol. O'Kane would be captured by the Japanese and held until the end of the war. Sixty years later, the lucky cribbage board would find a home once again on the second submarine named USS Tang (SS-563). Ernestine O'Kane sponsored the second Tang.

The game of cribbage was played in the Navy long before WWII, however, the story of Morton's 29 hand solidified its place in submarine lore and tradition. The game itself is believed to have been invented by British soldier and poet Sir John Suckling in the 17th century. English settlers would bring the game to America where it became popular among sailors and fishermen in New England. One sailor's lore says that the game is so old that Vice Adm. Horatio Nelson played on a cribbage board made of bone at the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar. The tradition of playing cribbage on submarines has lived on despite the advent of video games and movies as pastime alternatives. It even has been labeled the unofficial game of submariners!



O'Kane Cribbage Board Passed to USS Olympia (SSN-715)



Learn more! Head over to <https://www.usnautilus.org/the-lucky-cribbage-board>



Cribbage: Rules of Play

GOAL: Be the first to reach 121 points (2 laps of the board)

SET UP:

- To start the game, both players cut the deck, and whoever draws the lowest card is the first dealer. The deal alternates for each round in the game thereafter.

RECORDING POINTS:

- Players each use two pegs to record their points. When points are scored, you put one peg on the board, and subsequent points are scored by hopping over the leading peg with the *trailing peg* so that the board always shows how many points you recorded on your last score.
- Beginning from the start, you move up the outside part of the track and then back down the inside track.

SCORING

Points are scored when players create:

- 2,3,or 4 of a kind: worth points relative to the number of cards (pair is 2 points, three of a kind is 3 points etc.)
- Runs of at least three cards (they do not have to be the same suit) with points according to the number of cards used
- Any combination of cards whose sum is 15- always worth 2 points. Face cards value 10, and Aces value 1 when creating sums.

The Cards:

- If the upcard is a jack, the dealer immediately scores 2 points.

The Count:

- Players can use their opponent's cards with their own to score points off of like cards, runs; reaching a count of 15; the highest sum under 31 (one point); or exactly 31 (two points). Eg: Non Dealer plays a King (10 value); Dealer plays a 5, scoring 2 points for a sum of 15; Non Dealer plays a 7 (sum 22); Dealer plays a 6 (sum 28) scoring 3 points for a 5/6/7 run; Non Dealer plays an Ace (sum 29) and scores one point when the Dealer says "Go".

The Hands:

- Individual cards may be used for multiple combinations. For example, a hand of 6,7,7,8 plus an upcard of Ace would count a pair (7,7) two runs (6,7,8 and 6,7,8), and four sums of 15 (A+6+8, A+7+7, 7+8 and 7+8) totaling $2+3+3+2+2+2+2= 16$ points.
- The points scored in the crib go to the dealer.

ORDER OF PLAY

- One Round of play consists of three parts. Rounds are continued, alternating the dealer, until a player reaches 121 points.

The Cards:

- The dealer shuffles the entire deck, dealing six cards face-down, to both players. The remaining deck is placed face down between the two players.
- The players pick up their hand and discard two cards face-down, leaving a hand of four for each player, and a third hand of four cards called the crib. The crib belongs to the dealer, who now has two hands with which to score points. The crib, however, will not be used until the end of the round.
- The non-dealer cuts the remaining deck, and the dealer takes the offered card and turns it over- placing it face up on top the deck. This is the upcard.

The Count:

- Beginning with the non dealer, choose a card from the hand to lay face up on the table, stating aloud it's numeric value (face cards are a value of 10, and aces are a value of 1)
- The dealer then lays a card from their own hand face up on the table- in a separate pile- and states the SUM of the dealer and non dealer's cards.
- Continue to alternate placing a card face up and stating the total sum between the two piles, until a player reaches a sum of 31 or fewer, and the opponent cannot add a card without going over a sum of 31.
- The player that cannot add a card says "Go" and their opponent lays down another card, either staying under 31, or beginning the count from zero. Continue until each players' full hand of four cards is used. *Note the crib hand is NOT used in the count.

The Hands:

- Beginning with the Non Dealer, each player reveals their four-card hand and including the upcard revealed earlier, tallies their points.
- On the Dealer's turn, the player first tallies their points from their hand with the upcard, and then tallies their points from the crib with the starter. This will be the first time either player sees the complete four-card crib.

