

## **Triple Play! Baseball Card Game**

Rules version 1.1 by Richard Gibson ©2011

**Number of Players:** 2

**Playing Time:** ~30 minutes

**Object of the Game:** The player with the most runs at the end of 9 innings is the winner of the game. Alternatively, if a player is up by 10 or more runs at the end of the fifth inning or at the end of a later inning, then the leading player is declared the winner (mercy rule).

**Setup:** The game is played with a standard 52-card playing deck. Separate the deck into red and black cards; one player will be red and the other black. Each player places their Jacks, Queens, Kings and Aces face up in front of them and shuffles the other 18 cards for their face-down draw pile. Each player may also want to separate their Jacks and Queens from their Kings and Aces as Jacks and Queens will be used when batting (the bench players) while Kings and Aces will be used when pitching (the bullpen). You will need pencil and paper to keep score and to keep track of the innings. It may also be useful to mark bases on the table; pennies or other coins work well enough.

**Game Play:** Flip a coin or rock-paper-scissors to determine home team. The game is played in half innings, with one player pitching and the other batting. At the start of each half inning, both players draw 3 cards from their draw pile. To determine the outcome of the first play, the batter chooses one card from her 3 card hand and holds the card face-down on the table. The pitcher then plays one of his cards face up on the table. Next, the batter turns her card face up and the “winner” of the play is determined; the winner is simply the player who played the highest valued card. Then, subtract the lower valued card from the higher valued card and look up the outcome in the appropriate outcome table at the end of this rule sheet. Higher valued cards generally represent better swings or better pitches, while lower valued cards represent weaker swings or pitches. However, lower valued cards represent faster runners (see “Stealing” below) and the lowest cards can defend against the highest valued cards. Note that ties are under the pitcher wins outcome table. After each play of a card, the pitcher discards his card into a face-up discard pile and the pitcher and batter must replenish their hand back to 3 cards if necessary. Neither player is allowed to look through the discard pile at any time. Note that it may be possible for the pitcher to still have at least 3 cards in hand (see “Relief Pitchers”); in this case, no new card is drawn. Every time the pitcher gets an out, he should take the corresponding card from the batter and keep it face up in front of himself to keep track of the outs. Also, any runners that score should be kept in a face-up pile to keep track of runs for the inning. Play then continues in this manner until 3 outs are made by the pitcher. Once this is accomplished, runs are counted and both players reshuffle their 18 card draw pile for the next half inning. Note that there is no run limit per inning. In the rare chance that the batter must draw a card but her draw deck is empty, all of her runners that scored should be counted before being shuffled up to replenish the draw pile. In a similar situation, the pitcher shuffles up his discard pile into a new draw deck.

**Stealing:** If the batter has a runner on first base with second base open, or a runner on second base with third base open, the batter can halt the flow of game play and declare that she is stealing. Each player then plays one card from their hand (in the same manner as before; batter holds card face down, then pitcher plays, then batter reveals) and the outcome is determined as follows:

1. Add the value of the runner stealing (i.e. the card that is on base, not the card played by the batter) to the value of the pitcher's card.
2. If stealing 2<sup>nd</sup> base, add 5 to the value of the card played by the batter; if stealing 3<sup>rd</sup> base, add 3 to the value of the card played by the batter.
3. Compare the results; if the batter's total is tied with or higher than the pitcher's total, and the ranks of the two cards played differ, then the runner is safe. Otherwise, the runner is out.

Note that if the batter has runners on first and second and decides to steal, then treat it as stealing 3<sup>rd</sup> base and the runner at 1<sup>st</sup> automatically follows the other runner (and will be safe at second regardless of the outcome at 3<sup>rd</sup>). Also note that the batter may not steal home. Furthermore, note that when the ranks of the two cards played match, the runner is automatically out. The card played by the batter to steal should be placed at the bottom of her draw deck.

**Pinch Hitters:** (Note that this option is not available while stealing). If the batter has a bench player available, she may declare to call a pinch hitter. First, the batter chooses which bench player to use (a Jack, the Queen of Diamonds/Clubs, or the Queen of Hearts/Spades). The batter then discards the number of cards corresponding to the bench player chosen: 1 card for a Jack, 2 cards for the Queen of Diamonds/Clubs, or 3 cards for the Queen of Hearts/Spades. The discarded cards go to the bottom of the batter's draw deck in any order she chooses and she does not have to reveal her discarded cards. The batter then replenishes her hand to 3 cards. The corresponding bench player is removed from the game (turn face down). Play then resumes as normal.

**Walking:** (Note that this option is not available while stealing). Once the batter has decided which card to play and while that card is still being held face down, the pitcher may, instead of playing a card, declare that he is walking the batter. The card held face down is then flipped over and goes to first base while all other runners on base do not advance, unless forced to by the batter or runners behind them. The batter then replenishes her hand by drawing a card. Note that the pitcher's hand will be the same for the next play; i.e. no new cards are awarded to the pitcher.

**Pinch Runners:** (Note that this option is not available while stealing, but can be performed immediately before stealing). If the batter has at least one runner on base and an available bench player, she may call for a pinch runner. First, the batter chooses which bench player to use. The batter may then either replace one of her runners with a card from her hand, or draw a number of cards corresponding to the bench player used (1 card for a Jack, 2 cards for the Queen of Diamonds/Clubs, or 3 cards for the Queen of Hearts/Spades. If the former is chosen, the batter replenishes her hand to 3 cards. In the latter case, the batter chooses one of the drawn cards and places the others not chosen at the bottom of her deck. The chosen card then replaces one of her runners (batter's choice). In either case, the old runner goes to the bottom of her deck and the bench player chosen is removed from the game. Note that the batter cannot declare that she is stealing until she has replaced the card running the bases and places the old card at the bottom of her deck (allowing time for the pitcher to call a reliever if he chooses to).

**Relief Pitchers:** (Note that this option is not available while stealing). If the pitcher does not want to play any of the cards in his hand and has a player in his bullpen available, he may call for a relief pitcher. First, the pitcher chooses which reliever to use (a King, the Ace of Diamonds/Clubs, or the Ace of Hearts/Spades). The pitcher then discards his entire hand to his face-up discard pile and draws a number of cards corresponding to the reliever used: 3 cards for a King, 4 cards for the Ace of Diamonds/Clubs, or 5 cards for the Ace of Hearts/Spades. The reliever chosen is removed from the game and play continues as normal. Note that the reliever does not have to reveal his discarded cards to the other player (except for the card that ends up on the top of the discard pile).

**Variant:** Do no reshuffle after each half inning. Instead, after 3 outs, the previous batter forms an initial discard pile from her outs, scored runners, and runners left on base. The previous pitcher shuffles his discard pile and places the cards at the bottom of his deck. Players replenish to 3 cards and continue.

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**Outcome Tables:**

For these tables, runners' speeds are one of slow, average, or fast:

10's and 9's are slow runners

8's, 7's and 6's are average runners

5's, 4's, 3's and 2's are fast runners

*Batter Wins Outcome Table*

Resulting Difference	Real Baseball Play	Outcome
1	Base hit	Batter goes to first; fast runners advance 2 bases and other runners advance 1 base
2	Base hit to right field	Batter goes to first, fast and average runners advance 2 bases and slow runners advance 1 base
3	Double	Batter goes to second; fast runners advance 3 bases and other runners advance 2 bases
4	Bases-clearing double	Batter goes to second; all runners on base score
5	Triple / Home Run	If batter is average, batter goes to third base; otherwise, batter scores on a home run. All runners on base score.
6	Home Run	Batter and all runners on base score
7	Foul Ball	Nothing happens. Batter's card goes to bottom of deck.
8	Strikeout	Your batter struck out! No runners advance.

*Pitcher Wins Outcome Table*

Resulting Difference	Real Baseball Play	Outcome
0	Sacrifice	Batter is out and all runners advance one base
1	Ground ball out / 6-4-3 double play	Lead forced runner is out (Ex. If runners on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> but not 2 <sup>nd</sup> then runner at first is out) and remaining runners and batter (if not out) advance one base. <u>If there is a runner at 1<sup>st</sup> and the batter is slow, the pitcher may choose to take a double play where the runner at 1<sup>st</sup> and the batter are out while other runners advance 1 base.</u>
2	Pop out / Sacrifice Fly	Batter is out. If there are less than 2 outs and a runner at 3 <sup>rd</sup> , that runner scores. If there is a fast runner at 2 <sup>nd</sup> , that runner advances to 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
3	Ground ball in the infield; possibly a double play	The pitcher has two choices: 1. Lead forced runner is out. Runners behind the out and batter (if not out) advance one base. Other runners stay. 2. If the batter is not fast and there is a runner at 1 <sup>st</sup> , then the pitcher may turn a double play: put the runner at 1 <sup>st</sup> and the batter out while remaining runners advance one base.
4	Double Play ball	In addition to the two choices directly above, the pitcher has a third choice: 3.If bases are loaded and the batter is not fast, then runner at third and batter are out while remaining runners advance 1 base.
5	Line drive double play	Batter and lead runner are out. If no runners on base, then just the batter is out.
6	Triple Play	The name of the game! Batter + any runners on base are out.
7	Foul Ball	Nothing happens. Batter's card goes to bottom of deck.
8	Error	Error! Batter and all runners advance one base.