

忍のがっこう (Shinobu no Gakkō)

Players: 3-5

Age: 10+

Overview

It's a climbing game where you play two types of hands - "Heaven cards" and "Earth cards". The goal is to play all the cards in your hand. Collect strong cards and sets to prepare your hand. However, if any cards remain, you will lose points accordingly. The person with the highest score after three rounds is the winner.

Components

65 cards, 1-13, in 5 suits

5 summary cards

1 lock token

1 shuriken token

Setup

① If playing with 3 players, remove all ninja cards 12 and 13 (10 cards in total) and put them in a box. If playing with 4 or 5 players, use all ninja cards.

② Shuffle the cards to be used and distribute 15/13/11 cards to 3/4/5 players. This will be your hand.

③ Each player divides their hand into "Heaven cards" and "Earth cards". Each hand may have as many cards as they like. Hold the "Heaven cards" in your hand so that other players cannot see them, and place the "Earth Cards" in front of you, face down. When everyone has divided their hands, everyone turns their "Earth cards" face up at the same time.

④ Randomly reveal two of the undealt cards and line them up vertically, in ascending order, in a place where everyone can see them. If the same numbers are revealed, place them side by side and reveal a new card, until they're different. In this case, the rank that has more than one card will be locked (This will be explained later).

⑤ Determine the starting player using an appropriate method.

How to Play

From the starting player, clockwise, each player must perform one of the following actions for each of their hands:

- A) Play cards on the table
- B) Take cards from the table
- C) Pass

The player can perform the same action in both hands.

Example 1) Take cards from the table to the "Earth hand" and play cards to the table from the "Heaven hand".

Example 2) Take cards from the table to both "Heaven" and "Earth" hands.

Example 3) Take cards from the table to the "Earth" hand and pass with the "Heaven" hand.

A) Playing Cards

These are the rules for playing cards on the table:

- Ranks must be lower than the lowest or higher than the highest cards already on the table.
- Number of cards must be equal or higher than the previous cards (might be different on both ends)
- Ranks must not be consecutive.

B) Taking Cards

These are the rules for taking cards from the table:

- You must take cards from one of the ends.
- All of the same rank will be collected in a single action.
- You can't collect if there is **3 or more of the same number**, or if there's only one card rank.
- Number of cards must be equal or higher than the previous cards (might be different on both ends)
- Ranks must not be consecutive.

Locking Cards

If both ends have a different number of cards, the end with more cards becomes locked and cards cannot be taken or played in that end. Place the lock token over it.

When both ends have the same number of cards, remove the lock token. If the unlocked end gets more cards than the locked one, the lock token changes position. Both of these may happen during a player's turn.

Example: "Heaven" hand: 3 "4s" and 1 "11" = -7 points. "Earth" hand: "2", "7", and 2 "9s" = -5 points. Total score is the worst of them: -7 points.

The winner of the round becomes the starting player for the next round.

End of the Game

The game ends after 3 rounds. The player who has the most points is the winner.

C) Passing

You can pass on your turn for one or both of your hands, even having cards to take/play.

Pass is a soft pass, you can play after passing when it's your turn again.

Cleaning the Table

If, after a player plays cards on the table, every other player passes or collect cards (no one plays cards), all cards are discarded and the last player that played a card starts with a clean table and can play any card(s),

Use the shuriken token to track the players that plays the last card(s).

End of the Round

The round ends when one person has played all their cards - both "Heaven" and "Earth". This person wins the round.

Calculate the points and record them individually:

- Victory: + 5 points.
- Defeat: Score the worst hand between "Heaven" and "Earth". Cards worth -1/-3/-6/-10/-15 for each set of 1/2/3/4/5 cards.