**Glynn Hill's Thoughts on How 42 Should Be Played**

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**The Basics**

Forty-Two is a popular game, played and enjoyed for generations in Texas. Although there is some luck involved---the drawing of "good" dominoes (hands that have doubles or trumps), the skillful players will consistently win more games than players who do not understand the intricacies of how best to analyze and play the dominoes they draw. The playing of a hand to the very best of your ability, to make the hand or set your opponent through skill most ordinary players wouldn't recognize how to do, is one of the delights of 42 and makes it an unending source of enjoyment. To the beginner, or the player who reached only a superficial knowledge of the game, 42 may seem like a simple game---but to the experienced player, who has gained insight and savvy and developed an understanding of the skill required to be a great player, 42 is one of the best games anyone can play for sheer enjoyment and pleasure, a game that never grows old, but is always fresh and exciting.

Forty-two requires four players--your partner, who sits across the table opposite you, and your opponents, one at your left and the other at your right. Your goal is to make seven marks--whoever does that first wins the game.

There are 28 dominoes. After shuffling (many Texans prefer to say "shake")--after shaking the dominoes, each player draws seven, puts them on their side so that the other players can't see what he has drawn.

The dominoes are classed as suits:

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| **Sixes:** | http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. |
| **Fives:** | http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. |
| **Fours:** | http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. |
| **Treys:** | http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. |
| **Deuces:** | http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. |
| **Aces:** | http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. |
| **Blanks:** | http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-1.gif. |
| **Doubles:** | http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. |

When you have drawn a hand with several dominoes belonging to a particular suit, you will want that as your trump. You compete with the other players for the opportunity to play your trumps by bidding what you think you can make. The lowest bid is 30 and proceeds, 31, 32, 33, etc. up to 42. The player who bids the highest gets to play the trumps he decides to declare. If you make your bid, you get one mark; if you fail to make what you bid, the opponent gets the mark. You can also initially bid 84, if you think it is unlikely you will lose a trick--if you don't lose a trick, you get two marks; if you lose a trick, the opponents get two marks. If you begin the bidding with 84, the player to the left could bid three marks, your partner could bid four marks, your right-opponent could bid five marks. If players think they wouldn't make their bid, or in instances of bidding 84 or more, lose a trick, they would pass.

There are five dominoes that are especially important in 42--they are the ten-count dominoes of http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand the nickel-count dominoes, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. When bidding 41 or less it is vital that you try to get as many count dominoes as you need to make your bid. If you bid 37 and your opponent captures any one of the count-dominoes, you are set--the opponents get the mark. If you bid 34 and your opponents capture http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand three additional tricks, you go set. A trick is the playing of a domino from each of the players. A count-domino (http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif) that is on a trick is counted and the trick itself counts as one point. An example of a trick is these dominoes: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. That counts as six--that's six points toward making what you bid, if you capture that trick; or six points toward keeping you from making the bid, if your opponents get it.

When the player gets the bid and has declared a trump, he puts it at the center of the table. The other players play clockwise one after the other. If you are leading or have captured the trick, you pull the four dominoes over to one side and play another domino; if an opponent captures the trick, he pulls the four dominoes over to his side and proceeds to play a domino. If you want to be exact and precise about it, you can insist that the bidder pull over all the tricks belonging to him and his partner (even when the bidder's partner trumps in, the bidder is the one who pulls the trick over) and if an opponent catches a trick, the opponent pulls the trick over to his side and continues to do so as long as he is leading. But really what difference does it make who pulls over the tricks? The four players have played their dominoes, the trick is completed, just sweep the trick away from the middle of the table and wait for the next play. You don't want to become so engrossed in "don't do this and don't do that" that you squeeze the fun out of 42. If you are not playing in a tournament, you should be relaxed and have fun playing 42 and not be made to feel so self-conscious about nonessential procedure or etiquette that it mars your enjoyment of the game.

You are pleased when you have drawn lots of doubles or high trumps in a suit (http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifhttp://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif)--that would be an 84 hand that is called a "lay-down" because there is no need to bother playing it out--because even if an opponent has the rest of the sixes (http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif) you have three high sixes that will draw them out of the opponent's hand, and because you don't have any "offs," you can't go set. You make your 84 and receive the two marks. An off is a domino that is a not a double or trump or "walker." An off is a domino that can be caught by either your partner or an opponent, if he has the right domino that is able to catch it. A walker is not a double, but is the highest of its suit. If aces are trumps, and http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifboth have been played, then http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifis a walker--if it is led, no domino can catch it, other than a trump. A trump supersedes all other dominoes. You must follow suit--if sixes is the suit bid on and have been declared trumps, then you must play a six if one is led, by either your partner or an opponent. But if your partner or opponent plays a suit to which you don't have one, you can trump it, if you are holding a trump. A trump catches any domino, including a double or walker. Just make sure you have no suit like is led, before you trump. For if you don't follow suit when you should, that is called a "renege." Just the act of reneging can cost you the mark.

The best way to learn to play 42 is watching experienced players and having them show you what to do and not do. You may learn the basics quickly. But it may take a lifetime to become expert at it. Even players who take 42-playing very seriously and have played the game for decades, will still make mistakes, still have things to learn. If you think you have mastered "Forty-Two," think again--you simply don't know what you don't know. If you do take 42 seriously, if you very much care to make the perfect play to each trick, 42 will be game you will dearly love and receive much pleasure and enjoyment--the more skillful you become, the more you will enjoy this great game.

**Tips and Strategy**

Here are some tips and strategy. Some of these could probably be refined or stated better. This player urges you to start refining and stating. Experienced players should record memorable plays they have seen, should share with others the ways of playing they have found successful. Put it on the Internet. If you raise the level of 42 knowledge, the 42 community is benefited. It's a lot more fun to play against experienced, skilled players who have enthusiasm for the game, than those don't take 42 seriously or don't care to play the best they can, or just haven't learned to play well yet. If you can help anyone play better 42 (including this player)--do it!

Players draw for partners: the two who draw two high dominoes play as partners---and the two who draw lower dominoes are partners---or even better, using a bit of masking tape write "1" on two checkers and "2" on two checkers (3's and 4's if there are enough players for another table) and then after shuffling the checkers, let whoever drew the "1's" play together and whoever drew the "2's" play together. It is better because sometimes when drawing dominoes, two people will draw the same number of spots, such as http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifand then have to draw again---with numbered checkers (or just numbered slips of paper) you never have to get into additional drawings to see who will be partners.

After the dominoes are shaken, the four players draw a domino; whoever drew the one with the most spots gets to be the first dealer; the dealer shakes the dominoes again for the player on his left to bid. The bids, like the playing of dominoes, go clockwise around the table. Each player is given opportunity to bid or pass. The dealer gets to bid or pass last. **The dealer always passes a small object such as a checker or button or a dice to the player to his left after shaking the dominoes**---the purpose of this is to remind all around the table who bid first, who will bid next. (*There is a reluctance among some players to pass anything around; perhaps they don't want to admit they can't remember whose bid it is, don't want to concede they need an aid to help; so throughout the games you hear repeatedly over and over "whose bid is it?").* And it is important to correctly know, for a game can be won or lost depending on whether one player can raise the bid of another (if both you and your opponent have a hand that will make 84 and you bid first, and your opponent gets to bid three marks after you, he gets the marks; so it is important, not to just guess whose bid it is, but to do whatever is necessary to know for sure). The object ought to be placed directly in front of the person who has it; some people will place the object at the corner of the table, making it unclear whose bid it is. Instead of passing a checker or button around, there is a player who preferred to use a little plastic boat (Captain Hook sitting in it) or a little bear. He pointed it, after the completion of every hand, to indicate whose bid it will be, whose time it is to shake the dominoes. It could be an arrowhead or anything similar; the advantage to that is it doesn't require anyone who sneers at passing a button or checker around to do so--all is needed is someone willing to keep up with whose bid it is by using the pointer. Perhaps the best object to pass around would be a die because on any bid from 31 to 36 you can turn the cube correspondingly to the right spots, which would remind everyone exactly what was bid. What would be helpful is for a 42 player to invent an automatic device, perhaps activated by the sound of the shuffling dominoes, that lights or points to the one whose bid is next after each shaking of the dominoes. This would provide a great service for the game of 42, and perhaps make some money for the inventor. Another useful device would be to have a stand on which a camcorder could be placed directly over the 42 table, to record all the games, so especially memorable plays and good times could be preserved.

The highest bidder declares what he has chosen to be his trumps and starts the game by playing the first domino. The first domino played is the trump--if the bidder puts out http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, then you know he has made fives his trump (unless he states he is bidding on doubles). If he doesn't play a double, he must verbally state and/or point the end of the domino he wants to be his trump toward his partner (if he is leading http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifas his first domino and wants ones as his trump he points the "1" end of the domino toward his partner; that tells all around the table aces is the trump, which can be helpful to hard-of-hearing people or anyone who just didn't understand what was spoken). Each player must follow suit, if he can, to the trump declared by the bidder. This pointing of a domino toward one's partner is done only as the initial lead to indicate what the bidder has named as trump; there is no special requirement afterwards about how the dominoes are pointed, just so they are placed on or near the center of the table for all players to see.

You bid what you think you will make. If you think you can get both ten-count dominoes and two five-count dominoes within five tricks, you would bid 35. You don't tell what your trumps are until after you have won the bid (the other players have bid less than you did or passed). The different bids are: 30, 31, 32, 33, etc. on up to 42. Bids above this must be in multiples of 42 as 84 (two marks), 126 (three marks), 168 (four marks), 210 (five marks). When playing a 42, 84, 126, four-mark or five-mark hand do not cover or "stack" any of the dominoes unless there has been agreement among the majority of players that such covering or stacking will be permitted (**it is probably better and fairer for it not to be permitted**). Even when stacking is allowed, the bidder should have the option not to do so, if he'd prefer not to stack. Before bidding 126 (three marks), 84 must be bid by a previous bidder; before bidding five marks, four marks must be bid. The won or loss of bids from 30 to 42 counts as one mark, 84 as two marks, 126 (three marks)---if the player to your right has bid 168 and you have the last bid, then you can bid five marks. The loss of one trick sets 42, 84,126, 168 (four marks), or a five-mark bid---and the dominoes are immediately shaken. It is easy to determine what will set a bid. Just subtract the amount bid from 42. That is the maximum you can lose and still make your bid. If 31 is bid, then 31 from 42 is eleven. http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon a single trick will not set 31, for that is ten plus the trick (eleven). If your opponent bid 35, subtract 35 from 42; seven is the maximum he can lose and still make his bid; if he loses eight, he is set.

The score is kept by putting vertical marks on paper. Three marks then a dot or hyphen, then three more marks with the final mark being a diagonal mark through the six (111\*111). The dot or hyphen provides neat separation of the marks, making the score easy to read with just a glance. Seven marks finish the game. Never use the letters A L L as substitutes for marks (a simple vertical mark is the easiest to read on paper; some scorekeepers make the third line in the "A" difficult for people with less than perfect eyesight to easily see). On each game always write down the names of who are partners---*one of the chief delights of 42 is at the end of all playing to determine who played the best, who is the champion, who won the most games---keep a record of it, or post it in the playroom, so good playing can be recognized, so all players can aspire to that recognition by playing to the best of their ability and continuing trying to improve as 42 players.*

After the dealer has finished shaking the dominoes, you draw seven dominoes and look for the suit that you have the most dominoes. If you have http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, you see you have more sixes than any other suit--and so you would probably name sixes as your trump--you might decide to bid 34 on sixes and lead out http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif(the "6" end pointed toward your partner). You are hoping your partner will catch it with http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifand have two leads (doubles or a double and a walker) so you can rid your hand of your offs http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. But if your opponent catches your http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, he will try to set you by getting in as much count (some people prefer to say "game") as quickly as possible. It is unlikely your opponent will be able to catch your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, so he may lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifif he has it, or perhaps lead a small five in hopes his partner has http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand you will have a five-off that you must play, which will set you. Or if he has http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, he may lead it to try to get http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifand if he has http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, may lead it to try to get http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, or http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifto get http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gif. After each game one of the winners shakes the dominoes; each new game begins with having one of the losing opponents bid or pass first.

If it is not possible to follow suit, then you can play a trump, count-domino, or an off---any domino you choose. It is very important that you never renege.

You may want to get your trumps in as soon as possible, or you may want to leave a trump out, trusting your partner has it and will trump in later with it, which can be a big help. If you are sure you and your partner are the only ones with trumps and you have an off in your hand, NEVER (well, almost never) take away your partner's trump; for example: if you bid 84 on sixes and had these dominoes: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifand you saw your partner played http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifand nobody else played a trump, then you know your partner has http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. You intended to make your bid by walking http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifafter leading your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; you had intended to play all five of your trumps then http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifat the last; but now that you see no one has a trump but you and your partner, you do not play as you had intended. The first play is http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, the next becomes http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand then http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif---that will get your partner in the lead, and hopefully he will have either a double to lead or a walking http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. Of course if http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifcame on the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifyou led, you would then get your partner's http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, as you no longer have a need for it--you would just lay your dominoes down, showing that there is no way you can go set. The reason you would not immediately play your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifafter you've led http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifis that it could be your partner had http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifand your opponent, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. It's likely your partner has at least one double, which will enable you to get rid of your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifand make your bid.

But when you led http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, if you saw that your partner didn't play a five, you would immediately lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, as you know your partner could trump it and you would make your bid. (Instead of making sixes your trump, you could have bid on fives, but if an opponent has http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifand two more fives, you would likely go set). Here is a similar example:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. |

You bid 84 on sixes and play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.

You intended to play all your sixes, then http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand lastly http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. If you play that way now, you show you need a lesson in proper Forty-Two playing. Obviously your partner is holding http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif--do you now lead a small trump to get your partner in the lead? No, because it is possible that your partner does not have a double. It is better (less risky) for you to lead whatever doubles you have and then depend on your partner to help you with his trump. Leading whatever doubles you have is a better strategy than immediately leading a small trump because your doubles may pull out key dominoes from your opponents' hands that will enable your partner to either have a walker or be able to help you, should he be so unfortunate as not have a double in his hand. Certainly you do not want to now play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand take your partner's trump away from him! That would be playing poor 42. You now play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifto try to draw in http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, should one of your opponents have it (an opponent might be backing up http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif--if you take away his http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, maybe he'd be forced to play http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifwhen you lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif). Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif. Your-partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. You now play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. You see that your left-opponent and your partner played a five. But you cannot risk leading your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifbecause your left-opponent may be the one with the http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif(you think surely your partner will have one double to help you). Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. Your partner doesn't have a walker or a double for you. So what does he lead? Does he think to himself, "Too bad I can't help my partner; I'll just toss out any of these and just hope my partner can trump it"? If he is a good 42 player he doesn't think that. He looks at the dominoes that have been played and sees that you have two trumps and a domino that must be an off. He remembers when you played http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, just he and your left-opponent played a five. He looks at the dominoes again and sees the fives that have not been played are http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. He knows you don't have http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif; if you did, you would have already thrown your dominoes down, for your http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifwould be a walker. Therefore your left-opponent must be the one with http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. Your partner sees if he leads his http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifthat wouldn't help you. But if you have http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, possibly he could draw in your left-opponent's http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, which would enable your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifto walk. Your left-opponent may also have http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand not have to play http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, but your partner leading his http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifis the best shot at helping you your partner can do. If your partner is playing really sharp 42, he will know that you have two trumps and one off; he can count the doubles that haven't been played and see that they are http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. By observing what has already been played and what is in his own hand, he can see that your off is either http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. If you have http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, your opponents might as well stick a fork in you: you're done! Your opponents are not going to throw away both http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand let your http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifwalk. The only possible way your partner can help you now is to hope that your off is the http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifand that he can pull in http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, which will enable you to walk your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. So he plays: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. You thank your partner for the very good play he made! Your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifwalks and so you now have two more marks! Forty-Two is so sweet when played well! But let's change the above-example just a little to this:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. |

You bid 84 on sixes and play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Do you now think to yourself, "I see that my partner has a trump, the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif; if only his trump hadn't been so small, I could have put him in the lead and he might have helped me so much--but since I can't get him in the lead, his trump his useless; I may as well continue leading all my trumps and doubles down to my http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif"? Surprisingly, even among longtime players, just such a faulty notion emerges. Absolutely you do not want to take away your partner's trump! Depend on him to use his trump should your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.giffail to walk after you've led your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. In this example, if you make the blunder of taking away your partner's trump, you will go set. Whereas if you simply leave him with his trump, play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifyour partner will trump your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, which will prevent your opponent from catching it with his http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. You easily make your 84 bid.

Some people seemed "programmed" to play their 84 hand one way only--down to the last trick, no matter what their partner has played. You are not a machine or a computer; you can adapt, be flexible. You bid 84, say on treys, with only one off, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. On your first play of http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifyour partner throws in http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. As soon as you see you have taken any remaining trumps out of your opponents' hands, and as long as you holding at least one trump, you lead your http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. DON'T play all the way down to the last trick to lead your http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your partner has told you, the very first play, that he has http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. He's telling you to come on and lead your four-off, if you have one. If you don't quickly lead a four-off, then he may conclude that isn't what you have as your off, and just might discard http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, thinking you don't have a four for an off, or you would have responded.

**Be quick to respond to the "messages" your partner sends you.** Suppose you've bid 35 on aces.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.  Left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. |

You lead http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. There is no way to tell where the http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifis, so you decide not to leave it out. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Your partner chooses to play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. Now you ask yourself, what kind of partner are you playing with? Is he one of those who just likes to give his partner http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifas soon as he can, or is he a sharp player who is telling you that he has the http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif? You know your partner is a good player, so you do not lead your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif(for it is possible your partner might have no six protecting his http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif; and you certainly don't want to take the chance of taking away his http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif). So trusting your partner knew what he was doing by playing http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifon your http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your partner will catch it with http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand give you two walking fives as leads. You make your bid. That was good playing by both you and your partner. He told you he had http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif--and no, that is not cheating or "talking across the board"--that is just good 42. There were no verbal hints about it--you are certainly allowed to play any domino you want, as long as you're not reneging. You played good 42 by quickly responding with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. |

Your partner bids 34 on fours. Your right-opponent was thinking about bidding 34 on deuces; but decides not to bid 35. He passes. You pass. Thirty-four is just what your left-opponent wanted to bid too. He's willing to lose http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifto an opponent, maybe the opponent who catches with http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifwill lead http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifto which he will play his http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifand if he can get rid of his http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifwith hopefully only one nickel-count having come on, he thinks he would make a 34 bid. To bid 35 on this hand is stretching; but he's come to play Forty-Two and at times he will bid a little more than he thinks his hand is actually worth. He says he will bid 35. He leads http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif. You don't have a trey or a count-domino to give your partner. What do you play? Do you think, "I may as well just play one of my little dominos, probably http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifor perhaps http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gifand hope someone later will lead into my http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif." You could think and play that way. Or you could play sharp 42. Play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. You are telling your partner (and of course your opponents also) that you have http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. What he does with information is up to him. No doubt he intended to play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. But he considers that you played http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. He knows if he leads http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifthe bidder will have to use a trump to catch it (and it just might be the bidder will have a six-off). If the bidder has no six and can trump it, the bidder, if he has a five-off, will still have it to run into the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. So your partner chooses to keep his http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifin reserve and lead his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Your left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifand goes set. If you had not thrown in http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifon the first play your partner would have led http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; your left-opponent would have trumped it and led http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. His partner would have caught it with http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, then led one of his doubles to which your left-opponent would have played http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif--he would have made 41. But you were able to set him because you played sharp 42. Most 42-players would have just unthinkingly played http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, would never have imagined to play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifon the first trick. You get the mark or your opponent gets the mark, depending on how you play. It's sharp 42 playing versus mediocre playing. The fun in 42 is playing to the best of your ability, playing better than your opponents, seizing opportunities to play in ways they don't know to do or would never even consider doing.

**Bidding on Doubles**

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. |

You bid 31 on doubles and lead http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif(even though you have the highest trump, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, it is often best not to initially lead your highest trump. If you run into a situation in which an opponent has all your trumps, you don't want him to come out with a higher trump than you have--to guard against that possibility, experienced players often will, as in this example, initially lead a smaller trump).

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Notice your partner didn't play any of his deuces. That's because http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifis not now considered to be a deuce; it is a trump in the suit of doubles. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto try to set you as quickly as possible.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif(you had to follow suit to the five that was led--you could not play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, for that would have been a renege).

You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif(the loss of one more trick will set you; so http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifas a count domino is now irrelevant). Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. Partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Left-opponent: sets you with his http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif.

You didn't make 31, even though you had four trumps and a high http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. But if you had bid 36 on your two sixes, you would have made your bid. There are many possibilities in 42. Evaluating, analyzing how best to play your dominoes is what makes 42 so interesting.

When doubles are declared trump and a player does not have a double to play to the double that was led, he may play any domino he chooses. Some people have it when doubles are trump, if you don't have a double you must follow suit to the double led (if http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifis led and you don't have a double, you must play a four---that is incorrect). Here is an example why it is not correct to play like that:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. |

Your left-opponent bids 31 on doubles. He leads http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Your left-opponent now plays http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand you are ready to put on your http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand set the 31 bid. It would be incorrect to have you play one of your aces to his http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. It must be if doubles are the trump, and you don't have a double, then you are free to play whatever you want whenever a double is led. In the above example, don't be confused into thinking that when the http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifis led that it's an ace---when doubles was declared trump, then it ceased being an ace---it has now become one of seven of the suit of doubles (if you bid on blanks and you lead http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gif, you don't expect the other players to start playing their sixes on it if they don't have a blank, do you?). If blanks are trumps and you don't have a blank, you are not required to play a six to http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gif, or a five to http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gif, or a four to http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif. The same logic must apply when bidding on doubles. If doubles are trump, then you can play any domino in your hand when a double is led if you do not have a double. Otherwise you follow suit just as in regular 42. People bid on doubles so rarely many 42 players have not understood about it. If a player leads http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif(and you're holding http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif) you must play your http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif--you cannot trump the http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifwith either your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. You must follow suit.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. |

You bid 34 on deuces. You only have three trumps. You don't want an opponent to wind up with a higher trump than you have; so to try to prevent that, you lead http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, rather than your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.

Your right-opponent will try to hit you as quickly and hard as he can: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Left-opponent: a 42 player wants to protect his count-dominoes; your left-opponent is protecting his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifand two sixes--if he now plays http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifon the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifthat will make his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifvulnerable to http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif--so he keeps http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifon guard-duty to protect the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, and plays http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif; he still has http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifto protect his only count-domino from a six attack. Your partner plays: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.

You don't know where http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifis. You could leave it out, trusting your partner has it. But you see you have a reasonable chance of pulling in http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwith either your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif; and if you can get http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, you will make your bid. You decide not to leave your trump out. You play: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: trey-blank. It is now your partner's time to play. Most 42 players would just automatically toss the count-domino onto the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. But your partner is a sharp player. He sees you have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifon what will now be two tricks--that's 22--putting on his http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifnow is not going to be of any real help toward making your 34 bid. The key domino is http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif--whoever captures that will get the mark. Your partner sees http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifhave not been played, neither has http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifnor http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif. A good 42 partner is over there thinking, concentrating, trying to figure out how best he can help his partner with what dominoes he has. He sees the possibility you have http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand an opponent may have http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, which could catch your http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, and the opponent's http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwould result in your going set. So instead of http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, he plays: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.

Now you hope you can pull in http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Your right-opponent sees he can't catch anything, plays http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.

Now you think. You know your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; he would have played it on your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. You see there are three sixes out, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. It is likely your left-opponent is protecting his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand so if you lead your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, you are doomed to be set when you finally have to lead either your http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Your only hope of making this bid is to create a moment of confusion or indecision in your left-opponent's mind. Instead of playing http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Your left-opponent is not quite sure what to do. He knows if he plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifyou will have made your bid. And so in this moment of not strongly knowing exactly how to play, he makes a critical mistake. He plays http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. You now come back with your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifand get the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, which makes your bid. His partner asks him, "why didn't you catch his http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifwith your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif?" He responds, "I don't know; I guess I thought his partner would catch it with http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifand maybe he would lead something you would catch and I would put http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon a trick you caught, or maybe he'd have a four I could catch with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif."

You were able to get this mark through good playing. You outwitted your opponent. Of course he should have played http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto your http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif--his partner might have had http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifor he might have figured you were trying to trick him there. He sees now what he should have played. But your playing http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, instead of http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, enabled you to salvage the mark you would have been certain to lose, had you played like most 42 players would have.

Some people play a bid called No-Trump or Follow-Me. This is a bid in which you perhaps have doubles and high dominoes to go along with the doubles you have. There is no trump. This player will play along with anyone bidding this, but would not himself ever bid Follow-Me. To this player, it is simply not 42--- **if you are playing 42, a trump should be declared** (the only exception to this is a Nel-O bid, which many would say isn't really 42 anyway). *It is this player's opinion Follow-Me should never have been allowed into Forty-Two.*

**Whenever a player trumps a trick that sets his opponent he must immediately turn his dominoes face up for all to see---this should be emphasized, for even many longtime 42 players fail to do this: if a player has trumped in and set his opponent, he should automatically turn his dominoes face up so all players can inspect his hand, to insure no dominoes were overlooked---an opponent should not have to request this; it is the proper thing to do.** To not do so, is analogous to someone bidding 84 and saying he has a lay-down, but then turning his dominoes face down and throwing them in to be shuffled, without showing his hand to anyone. He may indeed have a lay-down, but you'd like to see it--you'd like to be sure he hasn't overlooked a domino. Forty-two players do not allow that to happen--why is an opponent ever allowed to get by with trumping in and setting a player without turning his dominoes over to show that he was correct in trumping? It is not that you suspect your opponent is cheating--it is that people just inadvertently overlook a domino sometimes--and you, for sure, ought to be permitted to look and see the opponent was correct that he could use his trump.

Whoever is keeping score marks his marks on that side of the paper where the marks will be closest to him; that way there is no confusion as to which column belongs to which partners---the column that is nearest the score-keeper is his marks, the other is the opponents'.

**Behavior**

If you see your partner or opponent has not played expertly, it is considered bad form (discourteous or rude behavior) to blurt out, "That's dumb!"---It may be he has indeed played badly or it could be you just don't fully grasp the underlying strategy why a player played or bid in a certain way; ask him in a nice way after the hand is completed to explain it to you.

It's okay to point out your own mistakes; but be very reticent to remark about other players' blunders.

Good-natured banter and even good-natured glee, gloating or bragging over a hand well-played or a hard-fought game won, is part of the zest of 42; it's as spice is to food, adding enjoyment. Cold, formal, rigid playing with no or few comments is not conducive to fun (that may be one reason some people don't like tournaments). If you can't take some ribbing or have no sense of humor, then you probably ought take up some other game. But there is no place in Forty-Two for rudeness, insults or name-calling. Civility across the 42 table, as everywhere else, must be maintained. When 42 players behave or talk rudely, it is time to look for players who are always courteous and polite, considerate of other people's feelings.

If a person accidentally reneges and it is quickly discovered (within a trick or two) and the mistake can be easily corrected, it should be allowed to be corrected. When playing with friends, in non-tournament play, one should not in cutthroat fashion exult in effect: "you reneged! I'm not allowing you to correct your renege, give us the mark!" Behaving like that just isn't right among friends. But if the mistake (the renege) cannot be easily and amicably corrected, if it causes confusion and casts in doubt the outcome of the hand, then the side who reneged should forfeit the mark(s).

An especially crude and onerous act of rudeness is to accuse someone of cheating. This should not be said or even hinted at, even in jest. If you think it really is true, then just avoid playing with that person again, or talk privately with him about it; but NEVER, even in jest, accuse anyone of that before others. If there is even one nonsmoker playing, smoking should not be allowed at or around the 42-table. It is very inconsiderate for people to discharge their poisonous emissions onto and into people who do not share their unconcern for health.

Unnecessary or distracting talk such as profanity, vulgarity, or exclamations of euphemisms should never be tolerated while playing 42. It is ironic many people who profess to be Christians are careless about using the LORD's name in vain, showing no reverence for that name which is above every name, uttering the LORD's name repeatedly during playing, just to express surprise or exasperation. A simple statement such as "that surprises me" or "I wish that hadn't happened" would be preferable to utterances that reveal to non-Christian observers and listeners no respect or reverence for God's will as expressed in Exodus 20:7. Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path." If there is a minister, elder, deacon or Sunday School teacher present at your Forty-Two club, it would be very appropriate for there to be a scheduled break in the playing, for that person to ask if anyone present wishes to share a Bible verse, testimony or praise, and the minister or elder, deacon or Sunday School teacher to pray a short prayer giving thanks to the Lord for His mercies and blessings. This acknowledging of the LORD would be a good Christian witness and might do much to show to any non-Christian players present that Christians are different, that true Christians respect and revere the LORD.

Someone not actually playing should be especially careful not to advise or signal a player how to play. The only time an onlooker is allowed to remark about a hand in progress is to tell the player he is watching that he is reneging (is not following suit when he is supposed to)---this must be said during the trick that is currently being played, so the reneging does not occur. It serves no useful purpose for an onlooker to state someone has reneged after the dominoes have been turned over---it should be said only when the mistake can be corrected (for it's possible the onlooker could be mistaken and no renege actually occurred). In tournament-play, or if playing very seriously, an onlooker would be prohibited from making any remarks, not even allowed to point out a renege (it would be the responsibility of the players to catch the renege).

This compilation is for people who are interested in playing among friends, free from the burdensome and repressive rules and restrictions found in some tournaments. Free to enjoy the game as thousands have since its invention in 1887. *It is this player's opinion that the remarks herein, if heeded, would enhance the enjoyment of 42--- and that is really what 42 is about, having a good time with friends and family.*

**Maintaining the purity and beauty of 42**

The variation known as "Sevens" is particularly offensive. Those who play it devastate 42, much like unrestricted Nel-O does, ruining good hands the other players would like to play (hands requiring skill to play well). Having no strategy to it whatsoever, on a "Sevens" bid you might as well just have everyone flip over their dominoes while the bidder attempts to show he has more dominoes closest to seven than anyone else. No true, self-respecting 42 player should ever lower himself to participate in a game in which this detrimental variation is played!

The people who play Nel-O, Sevens, Splash, Plunge, etc. repeatedly in every game, no doubt enjoy getting their marks and games that way. But perhaps they just don't comprehend the challenge and delights of playing straight 42 at a high level of expertise. When there are really sharp 42 players playing a game, you have a battle of wits--cunning and daring come into play. It's the skill that's involved in good 42 playing that makes 42 such a great game. And when a skillful 42 player sees a hand he really wants to play sabotaged by a Nel-O or Plunge or Sevens, and when it's done over and over, he is dismayed and disgusted too--that this great game has been lowered, has been brought down, compromised and corrupted. And when he sees his beloved 42 deteriorated to the level of a player exchanging a domino for a better one from his partner, then it is observed that 42 has sunk to a child's level, a way of playing six-year-old children might devise. Adding variations to Forty-two is like adding water to milk--if people get in the habit of watering down their milk, they may eventually think that is what milk ought to taste like and crave it--and so the variationists who have with glee and merriment watered down 42, now crave their diluted mixture and want to proselytize as many as they can to partake their concoction with them. And that is sad for the future of Forty-two, the game generations have played and loved since its inception in 1887--that there are now large numbers of people actively diluting and degenerating Forty-two. Forty-Two is too good a game to be degraded. People ought to take a stand about this, and not perpetuate, not further the debasing of 42 by participating in games in which variations are allowed.

**If you absolutely must resort to playing a variation, perhaps the least repugnant is Nel-O.**

*If not strictly controlled Nel-O can ruin the enjoyment of 42; but if restricted, can be interesting.* **But remember, if you don't declare a trump, you are playing something other than straight, pure 42. This is the control and restriction that must be applied: Each player is permitted to play only one Nel-O bid per game**---*if this restriction were not enforced there are some players who would play Nel-O nearly every hand, devastating the game of 42.*

Nel-O may be the oldest of the variations. In the earliest 42 rules this player has seen, Nel-O was an option to be used when everyone else had passed--then the last bidder could be forced to bid, and if he chose to, he could bid Nel-O or "Low." But as a camel that sticks his nose into a tent soon takes over the whole tent, so this very limited permitting of Nel-O has now expanded to a deleterious overuse. When Nel-O is played repeatedly in a 42 game, it curtails the real 42 playing. Playing requiring skill takes a backseat to this variation. It really should not be allowed into serious 42 playing, but given over completely to the variationists. But if you are curious to know how it is played, here is how: A person with all, or nearly all, low dominoes initially bids one or two marks, or he can raise an 84 bid to three marks. The bidder leads out a small domino which he hopes will be caught by his opponents. The bidder's partner doesn't play at all; he is just an observer. If the opponents fail to catch the bidder's lead, he is set and loses the one or two (or more) marks he bid. If an opponent does catch the bidder's initial lead, then he plays one of his low dominoes, hoping the bidder will play a higher one (players must follow suit). If at any point the bidder catches a trick, he loses however many marks he bid. Double catch doubles--a higher double catches a lower double. If a double is led and you do not have a double, then you can play any domino you choose, preferably get rid of a high domino.

Here is an example of a Nel-O bid:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. |

You bid 84 "low" and lead http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Left-opponent: (he must decide to play either http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, thinking maybe his partner will catch the four and have a small domino to lead back or catch the four himself with his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand lead back either the http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif). He chooses to catch it with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your partner doesn't play--knocking a 42 player out of playing, even one hand, is not a desirable thing, which in itself can be an argument against allowing Nel-O. Your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif(he doesn't know where http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifare; he may want to lead http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifeventually, in case you are holding one of those fours. By playing http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, he is ridding his hand of a high five, which is what he wants to do).

Your left-opponent has decided to play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, hoping you will have a higher double and will catch it. Your right-opponent: he has only one double and he must play it; he plays http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. You can get rid of your higher double; and so you play http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif.

Your-right opponent doesn't know what you have; he can lead back a four, five or six. He chooses to lead http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifbecause it rids his hand of a deuce. You don't have a five, so you play http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. You can't go set now. You made two marks.

It can be your partner has just one high double (perhaps http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif) and your opponent has two small doubles, such as http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. In this instance it could be best to lead your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.giffirst, rather than your http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Example:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. |

Your left-opponent bid 84 "low" and leads: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Since his partner obtained a Nel-O bid, your right-opponent doesn't play. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. You can lead http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifbecause that is a small domino, or your http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, for you're thinking your partner might have http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifto lead and your opponent might have a higher ace or deuce that would set him. Or you can choose to play your http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, for it is certainly possible he will have a higher double, and if your partner didn't have a double, that would set your opponent. But you suppose he just might have two small doubles and maybe your partner has a bigger double he needs to get rid of. So you lead: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif.

Now you will see if you guessed correctly. You lead: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Your partner now doesn't have a double---so by catching your double, your left-opponent goes set. You get two marks.

As you see, there is strategy involved in playing Nel-O. It can be interesting. The main thing wrong with Nel-O is that very few players restrict how often it can be played in a game. It should be restricted, so it doesn't overwhelm real 42.

There are those who will even warp Nel-O by declaring doubles are high in suit or doubles are low in suit. If you are playing Nel-O, it should always be doubles catch doubles. But it seems there is no end to what some people will devise. Forty-Two is a great game, played as it has for generations---why do some people feel a compulsion to tinker with it? Leave 42 alone! Play it in its pure form--there is no need to invent strange, new variations!

The beauty and genius of 42 lies in its simplicity. It is the enjoyment of overcoming your opponent, of making your bid, or helping your partner make his bid through skillful playing of the dominoes you have drawn. It's not just seeing who can get the most marks any way you can. When the emphasis becomes just that, then the great game of 42 is cheapened. Adding variation upon variation onto 42 does not improve 42--it diminishes it. It's like a surgeon adding hands to your stomach and back--you might can do more things with extra hands; but it would be a grotesque mutation. And that's what's happening to Forty-Two. Forty-Two is not being improved; it's being warped as each new variation is grafted onto it. And it seems most people will go along with any thing. It appears that with many players the enjoyment does not derive from playing the dominoes they draw to the best of their ability--but deem their hand a disappointment if they cannot do something (Nel-O, Plunge, Splash, Sevens, etc.), anything but have to concentrate on playing their dominoes. For to be a great 42 player, you do have to concentrate; you must have a desire to play every trick to the very best of your ability. It seems most players nowadays just don't want to do that much concentrating, don't want to expend that much effort into their so-called 42 playing. So they bid on any thing or they play any and every way somebody has thought to invent and introduce to them. "It's an easy way to make marks," could be the variationist's motto. It's the different philosophy or outlook, the different emphasis on what is important that distinguishes the true 42 player from the variationist. Caring enough to try to play the very best on every trick is not as high on the variationist's priority; but rather, just getting the marks. There is no special desire among the variationist to preserve and play the game as generations before played and loved the game. It's okay with variationists to tack onto 42 any additional way of playing with dominoes anyone comes up with. Of course the very act of doing that changes the game.

Sometimes a variationist will attempt to dampen a real 42 player's abounding enthusiasm for the game by saying to him, "*it's only a game*." That is like saying to a great cook at a feast, "*it's only food*." Or to a fine musician in the midst of a recital, "*it's only music*." To the variationists it is only a game, and will always be only a game. They will never develop the passion and love of 42 that a true 42 player has for the game, because they simply don't care enough about the game to put out the effort to become a really great player, and with their limited knowledge of the game they don't realize what they have in pure, straight 42 is a masterpiece of a game. The variationists think they can improve the game with their additional ways of playing--but it's like someone imagining he can improve a great composition by adding ditties to it or hoping to improve the Mona Lisa by painting others into her portrait. Most variationists will never grasp and experience the greatness of 42--and what is so lamentable is that they revel in their ignorance and teach others to think what they are doing is playing Forty-two. With their love of a multiplicity of variations, they should not hijack the name "Forty-two." They should call their game "Hodgepodge" or "Conglomeration" or Variations or something similar. Forty-two should be essentially the game that was invented in 1887. [For the origin of 42, see the article by Michael Hilton that appeared in the July 1988 Texas Monthly]. Let people play their variations, add a new variation every week, if they want to. But don't call it 42. Let there be a game called "Forty-two" which has not been contaminated. Let 42 be played as originally invented--a trick-taking game in which a trump must be declared (and played as the first domino) and no Plunge or Splash (which, in effect, is talking across the board, letting your partner verbally know that the bidder has three or four or more doubles in his hand). Let "42" or "Straight Forty-two," be the original game played in its beauty and simplicity, in its pure form--a game worthy of cherishing and protecting. And the way to protect it is refuse to join the throng merrily demeaning this great game. Don't sit down at a table where "Hodgepodge/Conglomeration" players are pretending to play 42. Don't become a collaborator to 42's degradation. Organize your own 42 club--insist only pure, straight 42 will be allowed--don't lower your standards for anyone (and if you play on the Internet, always be the host; so you can see to it that pure 42 is played in the games you participate). Let the Conglomeration players play their frivolous plethora of variations--but playing as they do is not for serious 42 players. Hopefully 42 can yet be saved from those who drag it down.

**Eight players or more**

If there are two tables of 42 playing, it will be more fun to have interaction with all the 42 players present, than if the two tables played all the time separately. Designate a "Head" table and a "Foot" table. The main privilege attendant to being at the head table (also called "champion" table or "table number one") is that head table governs when players shift to the head table. There is no movement until the head table notifies all tables it is time to move (any number of tables can be in the head table system). At head table the partners who win a game (or you could have it as the best two out of three games) call for the winners at table number two (if there are only two tables of 42, then that would be foot table) to come play at head table. Whoever won the most marks at table number 2 proceeds to move to head table---and if there are more tables, the winners there also move up to a higher table immediately upon notification of head table it is time to move; e.g., the winners at table number 3 move to table number 2 to play the losers there. When head table has made its announcement, then at each of the lower tables it is seen which partners made the most marks--the partners at each table who have accumulated the most marks move up to the next higher table. The players at the lower tables are allowed to complete the hand they are playing if tied in marks. **If the marks are not tied, the hand is not allowed to be completed**. (*The score might be four marks to three--the couple with the three marks bid 84 and is just one trick from making the bid when Head table says to stop playing---since the hand is almost finished and it could make the difference who would be ahead in marks, isn't it okay to finish that hand?* No. When the winners at Head table indicates by ringing a bell or announcing verbally that it's time to move, all playing ceases at that instant! With the only exception being if the marks on the paper are tied).

Head table NEVER waits for a lesser table to complete a game. The head table ALWAYS is the governing table; it controls when players move. The couple who lost at head table goes to the foot table where they change partners with whoever lost at that table--(if you were playing like in a tournament, you would not change partners at foot table). Some have it when more than one table are playing each table finishes its game; this is undesirable, for that often makes the slowest table govern when players move. Having the winners at head table wait while others finish a game provides no reward for being successful. Players who have succeeded through skillful playing to get to, and stay, at head table should be recognized for their good-playing and should receive the privilege or reward of controlling when players shift to the head table. *And the losers at head table should not fail to change partners at foot table; for if you're losing game after game, you want to have hope you will get a partner you can win with*. Even though you change partners, you can still determine at the end of all playing who won the most games, if each player will simply, on his own small piece of paper, make a mark for every game he won. Winners should never be made to change partners, only losers, and that only at foot table. If you do not want to change partners, if you want to have your playing like a tournament, you could still do the head table/foot table system. There are different ways to do tournaments. Each tournament organizer must decide for himself which system he prefers. Here is one way: Have all participants draw for partners (that is probably fairer than letting someone choose his own partner; but that is optional--if you want to let people select their own partner, that's okay). However many tables there are, they are designated Table 1, Table 2, etc. and the participants draw a number to see to which table they will be seated. At table number 1 there is a bell which is to be rung as soon as a couple makes their seventh mark. When that bell is rung all play at all the other tables cease--with this exception: if the marks are tied, then the hand must be played out. *Only the players at Table 1 are playing to see who gets seven marks first--the players at all the other tables are playing to have the most marks when the bell is rung.* **Therefore at the lesser tables it doesn't matter who gets seven marks first** (they may not even be close to having seven marks); **but rather, who has the most marks when the bell is sounded.** When the bell is rung whoever has the most marks receives what is called "A Game Mark." The tournament organizer records the names of everyone who has won a Game Mark. At the conclusion of the tournament the couple who has the most Game Marks is declared the winner. *It doesn't matter what table you wind up at; what matters is who has the most Game Marks.* The tournament organizer can choose to have a time deadline or simply say that who ever gets a certain number of Game Marks first wins the tournament. In a tournament Nel-O, Plunge, Sevens should never be allowed. Since there is sometimes confusion when someone bids on doubles, it should be made clear that if someone bids on doubles players are not required to play a six to http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, a five to http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, a four to http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, etc. (when doubles are declared trumps, they become a suit, just like any other suit in Forty-two--if a double is led, only doubles are required to be played to it). Some tournaments insist that you must line up your dominoes in a certain way (three dominoes in front, four in back) and have forfeiture of a mark if you touch a domino but don't play it, or if you say or do something that might enable your partner to know you have a certain domino or a good hand or bad hand, etc. The tournament organizer has to determine what level of strictness he will enforce. The tournament organizer must be ready to settle any questions or disputes that arise during the tournament--such as, if a player draws out eight dominoes (instead of seven) and looks at them, should there be another shuffle or the mark forfeited because of the error?

Visit several tournaments and decide for yourself the system you prefer. Whatever the tournament organizers decide on should be recognized by all as being fair. A while back this player went to a tournament in which there were only two tables playing. Each table would play the best two out of three games. The winners at each table then played the best two out of three to determine the final winners. On the surface that may seem like a fair way to do it. But as it turned out, the couple who won two games actually had fewer marks than their opponents. With this scheme it can be as big a difference as five marks (if you win the first game seven to nothing and then lose the next two games, but get six marks both times; you and your partner will have 19 marks to your opponents' 14--you have clearly outplayed your opponents by a margin of five marks--but you are declared the loser and out of the tournament). Probably a better way to have done the tournament would be to have both tables play three games and at the end of the third game see who won the most marks. The couple at each table with the most marks then would play three games and count the marks to see who won the tournament. But doing it that way didn't provide good interaction of players. During the first round the losers at each table played against only the two people who were their opponents--when they lost the third game, the tournament was over for them.

Gender should not usually be a factor in determining who plays as partners (the practice of arbitrarily pairing male with female as partners should generally be avoided by all serious 42 players); however, it is probably better when four or six people are playing that husbands and wives not be partners, especially if there is no chance of switching partners during a session of 42. Too often when husbands and wives are partners there is a tendency for one or both to start criticizing the other, which can ruin the 42 for everybody.

When there are six players, it can become tedious and boring for a very good player to draw as his partner a player who makes many mistakes and has to play the whole time with him. To keep that from happening, have the two who lost a game and also the two who are sitting out draw. The two who draws highest dominoes play. If the couple who just lost happens to now draw the two highest dominoes, then rather than draw again, they get up and let the couple who was sitting out play. This is not a perfect scheme, for one who has already sit out a game will have to sit out during the next game. But it will remedy the problem of having a good player stuck with having to play all the time with a player who he wishes he did not have to play with. A player needs to have hope he can get a partner he will win with.

To play 42 with others on the Internet click-onto Curtis Cameron's web page. There you are given an opportunity to buy Curtis Cameron's computer program. For anyone at all interested in 42, his program is well worth the small amount asked. It will give you many hours of enjoyment, plus it enables you to play with others via the Internet. Most of the time it will play adequate to good 42; but unfortunately, in some instances, it makes mistakes a really good 42 player would not do (the 3.48 and earlier versions; hopefully later versions will be programmed to play better). But a very good feature is the Play All Hands--by using it, even a beginner at 42 can learn to play well, by seeing what should be played to make a hand and what results in going set.

After you've downloaded Curtis' 42 program from <http://www.ccdominoes.com/download.html> you will want to make a shortcut to his Lobby page (bookmark or put into your Favorites): <http://www.ccdominoes.com/cgi-bin/Lobby.cgi?Win42> so that you can easily and often return to it. It will show you any games currently in progress, and what the host has chosen to play. When this player sees that Nel-O, Plunge or Sevens is being allowed, he will not take an "empty seat" with those who are degrading 42. You can easily begin hosting your own games and wait for players to join you who will play 42 properly.

You can have enjoyable games online and meet nice people. But you will also encounter rude and obnoxious people online. Curtis ought to program in an "Always Exclude" ability. As it is now, when you're hosting a game, you can refuse to let in someone you remember was discourteous in the past. The problem with that is Curtis' program allows anyone to easily change his screen name and you not be able to recognize it as the rude person you'd like to avoid. When you register the program, you use a code number--Curtis should somehow utilize that number to enable the program to recognize someone you have consigned to the Always Exclude list and display a message to that person informing him that his request to play was refused--with no message appearing on your screen about it. Perhaps Curtis could even provide an option whereby you could inform the excluded person the reason he was being refused. Maybe you would type in "offensive language," "chats way too much," "obnoxious." If the refused encountered several such "Always Exclude" messages, perhaps he would modify his behavior while playing 42 online with others.

If you are a variationist you will like playing the online tourneys or ladders. The winners probably fancy themselves as 42 champions--- but since most of the online players include variations, it's not a true test of excellence in Forty-two playing. The winners are those who are adept at skewing out marks any and every way their variations permit, rather than playing great, straight 42. Someone who has reached the top of the ladder or won such tourneys by playing variations who thinks he has proven his prowess at 42, is like someone who has won in Miniature Golf competitions imagining he can take on Tiger Woods in the PGA--it's just simply isn't the same game. The two may look similar is some ways--but it's not the same game--Tiger Woods' golf is not Miniature Golf. Forty-two that includes variations is not Forty-two.

**Getting skunked**

One of the most humiliating and dreaded things that can happen while playing 42 is to play an entire game without winning even one mark. This is called "getting skunked." Traditionally one of the triumphant players draws a depiction of a polecat on the opponents' column. The pictorial embarrassment glares out for all to see. The fear of getting a skunk drawn on you should spur all players to always play at their very best.

When bidding, say on sixes, (let's say your partner has http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifand another six), it probably is best to lead http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, if you have it, so as to give your partner the option to catch or not catch depending on whether he has leads. (A reason a partner might not automatically catch his partner's initial playing of trumps is that he sees that the opponent didn't play a trump and he suspects that the other opponent may have two trumps--so he wants his partner to lead another trump to clear any remaining trumps from the opponent); but it is usually best for a partner to try to catch what his partner leads. If you have bid and you don't have the double-trump, it is often best to play your highest trump rather than a low trump when initially trying to get your partner in the lead---and leading a high trump may prevent your opponents from catching your lead with a low trump--your opponents might even decline to catch your high trump; and thus give you the opportunity to come back on the second play to clear the trumps they hold.

When bidding 84, say on fours, you lead http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, and your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand your opponent on your right promptly lays down http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifproclaiming he has your trump-set. Don't be pliant in letting your opponents quickly turn over the dominoes and marking for themselves two marks. Protest that you want to play the hand out. Your opponents will loudly and vigorously tell you there is no way you can make it for you are obviously trump-set. And you would be set if you just automatically came back with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. But don't do that. Lead whatever off you have in hopes your partner can catch it and remain in the lead; if he can remain in the lead, then whenever your opponent trumps in, you will be able to overtrump and then lead your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto get his http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gifand you then can probably make your bid.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. |

You bid 84 on blanks. You: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. You see that there are two trumps out, the http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand the http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner may have both of them or your partner and opponent may have one apiece. Or, and this is what you fear most, your right-opponent may have both of them. When playing on-line you don't get any physical indicators of what the other players may have. But in playing 42, you are always alert and watching for any hint of what your opponents might have. Wise old-timers at 42 will maintain a "poker face"; but others may inadvertently "brighten up," or give out some slight indicator that you will discern. You noticed your right-opponent now has a slight smile. You believe he is not so wily as to be tricking you. You suspect he is holding both your trumps and expecting to set you. If he does have both trumps, then you see you will quickly go set if you lead http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. That would leave your right-opponent with http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifafter he plays his http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifto your http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your only chance of making this bid is to get your partner in the lead and hopefully he will have enough doubles or walkers to remain in the lead, until you can overcome your right-opponent's trumps. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif(your partner knows to try to catch whatever his partner leads; he doesn't think to himself, "I don't have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; we're going set--it doesn't matter what I play--I'll just toss in my http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif)--he knows if he has a higher domino than what his partner has led, then he better play a higher domino to it, if he can. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You, for sure, cannot trump in--for if you do, there is no hope of you making this bid. So to your partner's http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, you play one of your doubles--but which one? There is no way your partner can lead an ace that will make you play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. But suppose he leads a five, and your right-opponent trumped it--if you had to play your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, you would go set. So to eliminate that danger, you play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, rather than http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Your right-opponent is getting worried. He sees you are skillfully maneuvering to wrestle away from him what first appeared to be a certain defeat for you. He saw you played http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifon your partner's http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif--so he realizes it wouldn't do any good to trump the http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif--you would just overtrump him. So he plays: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Your right-opponent is glum. He sees you have outfoxed him. He dejectedly throws down his http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Now to whatever your partner leads your right-opponent will trump--and you will overtrump him and have the higher trump that will catch his remaining trump. You have played good 42. Most 42 players you encounter would just unthinkingly have led http://texas42.net/images/0-0.giffirst, and then http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, and gone set. But you play at a higher level.

Suppose when bidding 84, the only off you have is a http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. If on the next to the last play your partner has http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand no other six, but perhaps a double, and one of your opponents has http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, it can be best to play http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, rather than automatically playing http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifon the next to the last play. It is risky to do that; but you might decide to play like that, if you saw that not many sixes had been played--you could surmise an opponent is protecting his sixes for the opportunity to set you.

Be alert that your opponents may sometimes be too quick in declaring they have made their bid. Don't assume because they exclaim they have made it that they really have. For example:

Suppose the dominoes were drawn this way:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. |

Your partner bids 35, right opponent passes, you pass, left-opponent bids 36 on treys and leads http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif(Why didn't he play http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, instead of http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif? Because he only has three trumps and he fears an opponent has http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gifand another one and will wind up with having the highest trump out--and a bidder really doesn't want an opponent ready to pounce with the high trump).

Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Right-opponent catches with http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.

Right-opponent hesitates a while trying to figure out whether to lead a six or a five; your left-opponent throws his dominoes face up and says, "there is no need to worry with it I have the rest of it; I have no offs"---but you say, "don't mark it just yet, I'd like to play it out." Your left-opponent counters, "There's no need to play it out; you see I'll either trump in or catch any five or six my partner leads." BUT THAT'S WHERE HE'S WRONG. Any five or six his partner leads will result in him going set. If his partner leads a six, you will trump in and will set him when your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor if your right-opponent plays a five, you will trump and your left-opponent will play http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, but your partner will put on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand your opponent will have lost his bid.

People are often too quick to throw down their dominoes and declaring a bid is made. It can happen that your opponent has bid 84 and next to the last play have a walking http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifand the only remaining trump out his partner has. If there is a trump remaining out, it is not fair to the opponents for him to throw down his dominoes and proclaim he has made it; for it can happen and has happened! that his own partner becomes alarmed at seeing his partner play a little http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifunthinkingly will trump his partner's walker and will end up losing the marks because his only remaining domino is an off that will be caught by his opponent, thus what should have been a certain making of a bid was foiled by a blunder. If it had not been played out, if the dominoes had just been thrown down, no one would have guessed his own partner would have blundered so badly. So it should be emphasized, even among experienced players, that as long as there are any trumps out anywhere, the throwing down of dominoes and proclaiming the bid is made will not be allowed.

If you have the misfortune to be playing in a game in which plunging is allowed (someone who has at least four doubles can "plunge" and his partner selects trumps and does the initial leading). Some people even allow that a Plunge bid is a four-mark bid; then it is especially painful when your opponents declare the bid made when it actually hasn't been made. For example:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. |

You: pass

Left-opponent: Plunge

Your partner: pass

Right-opponent leads http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. You play http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.

Your right-opponent throws his dominoes face up and says "we have all the doubles and I have no offs; we made it!" But you say "I'd like to play this out." And if your left-opponent plays either his http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifor his http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifyou will be able to overtrump your right-opponent and indeed set him!

If you are weak on trumps or if you want to avoid having to later lead an especially dangerous off, it is often best not to lead your double-trump but instead, retain your double-trump so that later, hopefully, you will catch in and with it be able to clear any remaining trumps out of your opponents' hands. But whenever you are considering leading out a small trump, try to prevent your opponent from catching that trump with a trump that is a count domino, such as http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, for that would make it more difficult for you to make your bid. And it's probably best to nearly always lead a higher trump, rather than a lower trump. And when your partner or opponent bids and leads out a small trump, if you have two trumps, always try to play higher than your right-opponent, but retain your highest trump; e.g.: if your partner bid on sixes and led http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, your right-opponent played http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif(you have http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif) play http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifinstead of http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, for your left-opponent may come up with http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifand it will be to your benefit to be holding the highest trump out.

It is often best to lead your off early, as soon as you can, before your opponents have the opportunity to clear their hands and be able to put count on what you lead, should the other opponent catch it. An exception to this might be if you have a walker, perhaps already have led a double, such as http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, and you have a walking http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand offs http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You want to lead out your off soon, for the reason given above, but you certainly don't want your walker http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifto be taken away from you, which could happen if anyone (including your partner) has http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. So lead your walker http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifbefore you lead your off http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. For it can happen to you that if you led http://texas42.net/images/3-0.giffirst and your partner caught it with http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifthat he then leads http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, which takes away your walking http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, you are left to go set if he doesn't have any more doubles for you. Figure if you have a walker that can be taken away from you, it will be---don't let that happen.

If you don't have the double to your trump, you don't want an opponent to continue to keep it during the course of playing the tricks. He would then be in the catbird seat (a position of power or control). In some instances it may be best to lead a count-trump in order to entice an opponent to catch the first trick with his double. Here is an example of this: you bid 34 on fours and have:

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| http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. |

As a usual practice you would not play a count domino as your first lead. But outstanding players sometimes play in unconventional ways in order to make their bid. In this example if you led http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif(as most players would do) you almost certainly would go set if your left-opponent decided to play his http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifrather than his http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Even though your partner will catch with http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gifand lead two doubles for you, eventually your left-opponent need only wait until he captures his partner's http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. But if you could entice him to play his http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifthe first play, then you have an excellent opportunity to make your bid. So lead http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifas your first play in hopes the http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifwill be played.

Suppose the dominoes were drawn like this:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. |

The marks are six to five in your favor and your left-opponent passed, your partner bid 34, your right-opponent passed. If you were behind in marks or if the right-opponent had bid, you might have raised to 36 or more, hoping your partner would have your sixes or http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. But since your partner bid 34, you figure he probably has a fairly good hand (and your hand is risky), so you pass.

He bids on fours. This is another instance when he probably ought to lead his http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, in hopes he can entice the http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifinto being played. But of course it's risky to do that, for if one opponent catches the http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand the other opponent can put on http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, the mark is lost.

Your partner chooses to lead out http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, the right-opponent does not have a double to lead should he catch it, declines to play http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, but plays http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifinstead. You play http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gifand the left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.

You lead http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, your partner http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifand your right-opponent http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.

You play http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner must now decide what to do. He saw your right-opponent rid his hand of a five on the http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifyou led. He worries that may mean your right-opponent has the http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand is getting ready to pounce at the first good opportunity. So your partner is reluctant to play either http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon your http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. He plays http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Your right-opponent now blunders!--he can't bring himself to give away a nickel in count, so he keeps the domino he should play (the http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif) and plays http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifinstead.

When you saw your partner didn't play an off, but threw away one of his doubles, that's when the alarm bells go ringing for you! That showed he must be worried about his trump situation.

The average 42 player would just blithely keep on leading his walking sixes, which would in no way help his partner get out of his peril. So you would positively **not** lead your walking http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. But would lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, so hopefully your partner can somehow catch it, getting in as much count as quickly as possible, before an opponent's high trump captures enough count to set.

So to your http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, your left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif--and your right-opponent, angry at himself for not throwing in http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifearlier, now has to play it.

Your partner tries to get http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gifby leading http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, your left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.

Your partner now has to lead http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand just hope http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifwon't fall on it too. Happily your right-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifboth, so the only trick he will capture will be that one. And so your partner only lost six points, making his 34 bid with two points to spare. He made it **only** because you were astute enough to not make the mistake of playing your walking sixes (for your right-opponent could then just patiently wait for the sure opportunity of catching either http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif)-- you boldly led what looked like a scary play (the http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif); but actually was the smartest play you could make to get your partner out of his difficulty. *That is playing good 42!* So whenever you see your partner is throwing away doubles on your leads, it may mean he is worried about his trumps. In that case, when you see that happening, the more doubles or walkers you play, instead of helping your partner, may actually be just insuring he will go set. As soon as you've noticed he has thrown away a double on what you have led, see which high count-domino is out (http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif or http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif) and lead for it--try to make it fall on your lead--and hopefully your partner will capture it.

Another example of what you may want to do when you see your partner throw away a double:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. |

Right-opponent passes. You bid 31 on deuces. Your left-opponent bids 33 on aces. Your partner bids 34 on sixes. Your partner could lead http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif; but since there are four sixes out including http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, it possible an opponent would be able to retain http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif--and as indicated before, an opponent ready to pounce with the highest trump is something you want to avoid. So your partner leads http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Right-opponent sees he can trump this trick and get a count (http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif)---but the only double he has to lead back is http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, which is not likely to pull in another count. If your partner had bid 36, your right-opponent would trump this trick and lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif; but declines to do so now, for he has his sight on http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif--maybe your partner will trump in on something and when he does, your right-opponent expects to come out with a trump to capture http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. So instead of trumping this trick, he discards his http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif.

You see you have a walking deuce; so you play it: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Do you hear the bells ringing? Your partner threw away a double on your walking deuce. He noticed your right-opponent didn't play a deuce when you led the double, but rid his hand of a five. Your partner wisely didn't throw his http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifon your walker, for fear it would be trumped. He also wisely didn't trump your http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand then lead his http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. For he knows there is a possibility your right-opponent may have both trumps that are out. If your partner trumped with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifnow, your right-opponent would be sure to capture http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Right-opponent plays: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Now what do you play? Because your partner played http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifon your walker, you know he is worried about trumps. Like the previous example, now is the time to lead a five-trey to get http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifplayed if you can--(you're thinking maybe your left-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand your partner can trump it with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand that will make 34). You lead http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner : http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif(your partner certainly doesn't want to play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand risk that it will be trumped by your right-opponent). Your right-opponent trumps this trick with http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. But your partner now is in complete control and will have the rest of the tricks. This bid was made by good-playing on your part in leading http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand good-playing by your partner in throwing in http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif(which alerted you that he was worried about trumps) instead of http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. By keeping http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifhe was able to play it on your http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, which would have caught it, had your right-opponent not trumped it.

But if your partner had drawn http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifinstead of http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, then one of your fours would have been a better play than http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. In 42 you won't always know which is the best domino to lead. You just do your best in discerning who likely has what and relying on what you remember has worked in the past, give it your best shot. Sometimes it will go as you hope; but other times it won't. There are too many possible distributions of the dominoes for you to declare you should always do this or that in every situation. This player favors trying to get the big count to hit the table when he sees that his partner (who has bid) throws away a double. But again, that would have been wrong if, in this example, your partner had drawn http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifinstead of the http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Forty-two is really enjoyable when you do make the right decision! It's interesting to note, in the above example, that a bid sometimes can be made by declaring as trumps what you have fewer. Your partner had three sixes, but only two fives. If he had bid on fives, had led http://texas42.net/images/5-5.giffirst, you would have played http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif; your partner would then lead http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto which you would trump with http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gifwould have fallen on your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, which would have made 33. When either you or your partner trumped anything with your five, that would have made 34. In the above example, suppose instead of your partner having http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, he had either http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif; he just might have decided to bid on one trump. Many very good players, who have played for decades, never even imagine that at times they could make a 30, 31, 32, or 33 bid with only one trump--and because they don't see that as a viable possibility, they let pass an opportunity that might mean the difference in winning and losing. When you draw http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand one other double that may draw in a nickel-count you could play it this way: lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand then the double that hopefully will draw in a five-count. At times you will make 33. Outstanding players do sometimes see ways of making bids to which lesser players are without a clue that a bid can be made that way. When would you ever bid on only one trump? If the score were six to six and an opponent who you know is a very good player, one who hardly ever loses a 31 bid, bids 30 31 or 32, that might be the time to raise him with http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifas your only trump. Let's play it out:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. |

The score is six to six. Your right-opponent passes. You bid 31 on deuces. Your left-opponent bid 32 on treys. Your partner bid 33. He can choose to bid on sixes (there are four out somewhere; your partner worries that if an opponent has http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand another one or two, he might go set. Or he can choose to be a bit bold and bid on fives. Your partner is not the timorous sort. He bids on fives and leads http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. You http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. That was a surprise to your partner! This was just the second trick; he didn't expect anyone to trump his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your left-opponent is somewhat surprised too; he saw he didn't have a six and thought he was going to set your partner by trumping the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Instead, he plays: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif. That's 33. You and your partner win the game. (If your partner had not raised your left-opponent, your left-opponent would have made 41 and won the game).

Is there ever an instance in which the opponent is playing his bid and your partner catches his off your putting count on the trick your partner caught will result in your opponent making the bid? Suppose the left-opponent bid 31 and he has led down to http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif(deuces are trumps); your partner has http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif; your right-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, you have http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. It is your left-opponent's time to play; he previously has led http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand you know he has http://texas42.net/images/4-3.giffor an off. He leads his http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, your right opponent http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Most 42 players will just automatically throw on the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifbecause your partner has caught the opponent's trick with his http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. But if you do, the left-opponent will trump your partner's http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand then walk his http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, making his 31 bid. The key to being a good 42 player is not to just play unthinkingly automatically, but to take the time to look on the table and see what has been played and try to the best of your ability to infer what dominoes are out and where they are. Eleven doesn't set 31; putting http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon your partner's http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifwon't do the job. You must get 12, so withhold your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifby playing http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifon the trick your partner caught; your partner now plays http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifto which your left-opponent will trump---you will have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto catch your left-opponent's http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifand that making 12, will indeed set him. So don't be just a domino pusher, a lazy 42 player. Don't just play on automatic; you don't get points by being a fast player; while you don't want to be excessively slow, do take the time and effort to observe what has been played and figure out what dominoes the other players are holding in their hands.

Don't Do the Inexplicable. **Differentiate Between an 84 Bid and a non-84 Bid.**

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. |

Your right-opponent bids 84. You: you don't have a great 84 hand; but over the years you have learned that you are often successful at making 84 with this type of hand--so you are willing to give it a try. You bid three marks. Your left-opponent and your partner passes. Fives are trumps and you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Why would your partner play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif? There is a player who makes this play. His explanation seems to be this: he doesn't have anything to help you with, so he will just he'd go ahead and play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Inexplicable. This is an 84 bid--count doesn't matter. What is the point in your partner giving you http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif??? Does he imagine that his partner is going to think, "I'm so glad to see that http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifcome in"? This player is not going to be glad to see his partner play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon the first trick of an 84 bid! He seems to have a blind spot in seeing that it makes no sense to throw away one of the best dominoes he is holding, one that might could be used to help his partner make his 84 bid. Here's how it plays out: Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.

You have to come back with another trump to get the trump an opponent is holding: http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.

You: you've seen your partner throw away one four; since you have a four behind http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand you are hoping your partner will catch that four, you decide not to play your trumps now out of fear your partner will gratuitously throw away yet another four. You play: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif.

You see that http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifis out. You don't know if your partner has it. Your right-opponent may have it. You decide to play http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifin hopes your partner will have http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifand a double to which you can play your http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Great! Your partner caught it! Surely he will have a lead and you will make three marks. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif.

Your partner doesn't have a lead. You will go set.

Here's how this hand should have been played: You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner sees he doesn't have a double to help you. He should now be trying to figure out ways to help you with what dominoes he has. If you have http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, he may can come out with walking sixes for you. He should also see the possibility that if you have a four behind the http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, if he hangs onto his fours, he may be able to help you. And if you have a trey behind http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, by keeping his treys he may be able to help you. The domino he should play now is http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Your partner: he has to make a decision. He doesn't know if you have a three, four or six. He chooses: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.

You: It is probably best for you not to continue leading your trumps, for that increases the chances of your partner throwing a way the domino that will help you. Lead http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifbefore your partner has an opportunity to make a mistake. To your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifyour left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Your partner; http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Right-opponent http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif.

You are not sure where the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifis, but decide to lead your http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifin hopes your partner has it. Left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Right-opponent http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif.

Your partner has a walking four to lead. You will play your off, the http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, on it and you will make three marks. You make three marks because your partner played good 42. He didn't give up on trying to help you, just because he didn't have a double in his hand. A person can play either exceedingly poor 42 or good 42. In this example, it's the difference in getting the three marks or losing the three marks. Never give up trying to help your partner--with whatever dominoes you have, try to help your partner.

Suppose the dominoes were drawn like this:

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| --- |
| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. |

It's your first bid. You bid 30. The other players pass.

You could bid on blanks, but you'd have for an off a five behind http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif(which is okay) but since you don't know where http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifare, and you don't have http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, it is risky to bid on blanks.

You could bid on fives; but then you have two fours to contend with. You choose to have deuces as your trumps. Usually it would be best to save your double-trump for later and therefore lead http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. But since http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifis out, you decide to lead your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifin hopes you can pull in that count.

So you play: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, your left opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif(now you wish you had led down), left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.

You know now, because your partner played http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, he doesn't have any more trumps (a partner should not play a high trump on his partner's lead and keep a lower trump--that simply is not good playing, for it confuses his partner; you must assume your partner will keep the higher of two trumps, unless one of the trumps is a count-domino). You rightly assume your partner has no more trumps and one of your opponents has a trump. You could lead one of your trumps and make the opponent's trump be played, but you fear the other opponent will play http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, or even worse, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif.

So you decide to play your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, knowing it's just the second play and you see there are three fives out there somewhere (the http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifis a trump, so is not counted as a five) and you just hope the opponent who has the trump also has a five.

You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif; your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif; right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif--you survived that play!

You now have a walking http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif; you lead it, hoping your partner will give you count.

Your left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif; your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.

You could lead http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, but dare not, as almost certainly the opponent with the trump would catch it.

You lead http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif; left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif; your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif; right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif.

Right-opponent: leads http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif; you don't want to give up your http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, so you trump it with http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif; left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif; your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.

Now you're not sure what to do. Your opponents already have http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand you know if you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, it will be trumped by your opponent. There is a possibility that by leading your trump that when your opponent catches it, he won't have a double; he might have a little six and your partner would catch the last trick of the hand with http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif--it is possible the dominoes would be like that, so you play http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif.

Your left-opponent is the one with the trump; he plays http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif; your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif; your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.

Now all your hopes on making this bid depend on your left-opponent having an off your partner can catch.

Your left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif--your hopes are dashed, and you go set when you play your http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gif.

This is an example of inattentive or lazy playing--just simply bad 42 playing!

There is no point at all in leading your http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. All you have to do is look on the table and calculate how much count you have acquired. You have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif--that's 25, plus the four tricks, makes 29--all you need is one more trick to make your 30 bid. So go ahead, lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif; let your opponent capture http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. They will have http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifplus two tricks--that's 12--twelve doesn't set a 30 bid (12 from 42 is 30--it takes 13 to set 30). When your opponent catches your http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifwith his trump, you are left with the only remaining trump, and that makes your bid.

In Forty-two you don't just concentrate on what dominoes you have in your hand--you closely observe and consider what dominoes have been played, you keep up with what trumps have not been played and know how much count has already been played. Don't be a lazy or inattentive 42 player!. You will enjoy 42 so much more if you are concentrating, keenly observing every play of each player--if you play sharp 42, you will understand what a great game 42 is!

Suppose the dominoes were drawn like this:

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| --- |
| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. |

You bid 34 on fours.

You: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif(http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif is a better play than http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, so you would not have to play http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifin case your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif). Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.

Forty-two is very interesting when you are considering the various possibility how the dominoes may fall. In this instance, all you need to do is capture one more nickel-count to make your bid. But how do you do it? How do you prevent your opponents from getting both, the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif? The way most people would play this hand is to just automatically, unhesitatingly lead back your trumps (for you know there is still a trump out), then lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, expecting http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif(if your partner hasn't already given it to you) to fall on it. But what if one opponent is backing up his http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand the other opponent is poised to throw http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifonto it? You decide to play this differently than most players would. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.

*You expected a nickel-count to fall on that, if your opponent caught it*--you don't mind that, just as long as you can capture the other nickel-count. By playing this way, now the only way you can go set is if one opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif(forcing you to follow suit with your http://texas42.net/images/0-3.gif) and the other opponent puts on http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. You are betting it won't be like that. If the opponent leads anything other than http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, you will just wait to capture the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifwith your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor catch http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifwith your http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, if it is led. Or get rid of your http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand capture the rest. You played the hand well, which saved the mark for you. But even with all the good-playing you could muster, you could still have been set had the http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifbeen as aforementioned. You can't do anything about what dominoes you draw. Your task is to play every trick the best you can. You really enjoy 42 when you see you have made the right choice, the right decision that enabled you to win the mark through skillful playing.

Some players are prone, when bidding 84, to not even care where the trumps are; they seemed programmed to just play down to all seven tricks to usually their off behind a double. Even Curtis Cameron's 3.35 version of his computer program will strangely disregard the fact that his partner has all the trumps. When the program bids 84 on blanks and the only three trumps out are in his partner's hand, the program will come back the second and then the third time, oblivious to the fact that his partner might help him with those trumps. In this instance of an 84 bid all the program seems to know to do is to lead down to the off behind the double---on which the opponent catches and he goes set. If it had only left his partner with the trumps, his partner would have trumped the off and the bid would have been made. But in real-life-playing this really does occur---by mediocre players.

Even some longtime players seem to be beset by a moment of confusion when their partner bids on fours and leads out the http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Should you give your partner the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifsince it is a big count-domino or give your partner http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif? Only the mediocre players are beset by that confusion. You should of course play the smaller four; if your partner bid anything more than 31 he knows you must have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor an opponent would immediately throw it down, announcing that the bidder is set. When http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifdidn't fall on the first play, your partner will assume you have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. He now can either choose to lead a four on the second play to get you in the lead, or wait till later and figure you will trump in with it at the appropriate time. If you played your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.giffirst, then he would have to assume you don't have any other fours, and he would likely come back and get your other four; and so you will have lost a good opportunity to use a trump to help your partner make the bid. Whenever your partner bids on fours and you have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand a smaller four, make this a rule you NEVER violate: Never play your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon your partner's initial lead of double four (and don't offer the lame excuse, "I didn't want my partner to get me in the lead, for I didn't have any doubles or any good thing to lead"--if you are playing with a good 42 player, and he sees that the only remaining trump out is http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, he probably won't lead another four the second play--but will play his doubles down to his off; and you are expected to trump in *then* with your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. This would be especially true if your partner has an off behind its double. If he doesn't have an off behind its double, then he might, at some point, lead a small four back, figuring you will surely have at least one double or can lead something that will enable him to get rid of a worrisome off.

No matter how bad your hand is, even if you have no doubles to help your partner, if all you have is small fours, fives and sixes, don't ever imagine you are playing smart 42 by giving your partner the highest trump and keeping the smaller trump (**if your partner bid on blanks, under no circumstances would you play your http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gifto his initial lead of http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifand keep a smaller blank**, or if your partner bid on aces, **under no circumstances would you play your http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifto his initial lead of http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand keep a smaller ace**, or if your partner bid on deuces, **under no circumstances would you play your http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gifto his initial lead of http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand keep a smaller deuce**, or if your partner bid on treys, **under no circumstances would you play your http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gifto his initial lead of http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifand keep a smaller trey, etc**.). If after the first trick, the only outstanding trump out is your high trump, your partner should not automatically come back with a small trump and force you to play the high trump. Train your partner to lead his doubles, if he has any--doing that will hopefully draw in count and enable you to rid your hand of something to which you may trump or those doubles your partner should be leading may draw out dominoes from your opponents that will enable you to walk a domino. *It is poor playing indeed for a partner to throw away his high trump on his partner's initial lead of the double out of fear he will be put in the lead*. If you see that after the first trick you can be holding the highest trump out, be happy you have a trump that may enable you to trump in and help your partner---DON'T EVER be guilty of throwing away what may be the only way you can help your partner! And let's just suppose that the fearful partner having read and remembered the above, being doubtful and skeptical of the advice, nevertheless did resist his impulse to throw in http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifonto his partner's initial lead of http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. So now the trembling partner awaits with dread for his partner to lead back a trump. And yes, that's what happens! and all that he has in his hand are no doubles, just four, five and sixes. "I knew this would happen! I knew all the time I should have played my high trump and not let my partner get me in the lead!" And so he dejectedly leads a http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, expecting http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto come in and set his partner. One opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand, another opponent http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, but his partner doesn't have a six, trumps it. "How did that happen?" the still shaking partner wonders. http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifdid fall, but the bidder caught it. Disaster didn't happen. The bidder now can lead his http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifand although an opponent will catch it, the other opponent also has a four and can't put count on. The bidder made it because his partner led a six which drew out the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifon which he could trump. If the fearful partner had decided to just throw in his http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifthe first time (which of course would make his partner assume he is not holding another trump) then the bidder would have led his off-four and would have gone set. The summation of all the above is just to point out that it is such poor-playing indeed for a partner to throw away a high trump and keep a lower one on his partner's initial lead of a double.

When playing 42 with people who supposedly know how to play, it's interesting to see the strange "logic" some have. One player always plays his high trump on his partner's double. If his partner bid on aces and leads out http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, that player will give his partner http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, instead of http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. His theory is that his partner will want to see where all the high trumps are, so he's doing his part to help his partner gather that information. That's poor 42 playing. He should keep his higher trump, for that may be the only way he will have to help his partner--(and it serves no useful purpose to confuse your partner by playing a higher trump and keeping a lower one--unless the trump is a count domino--if the partner had http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, then to his partner's initial lead of http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, he would give him http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifbecause it is a count domino, and you always expect your partner to be quick to give you count, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. But if your partner bid 84, count doesn't matter. If your partner bid 84 on treys and the only two treys you have are http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, you would give your partner the http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif; for it can be he would have five treys and would need to lead his http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gifto get you in the lead). Suppose you get the bid for 31 and the dominoes are like this:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. |

You bid on aces and lead out your double.

Left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your partner (wanting to do his part to help you see where the high trumps are) plays http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif.

Right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Now you a sit a moment, a little stunned. Somebody is not playing good 42. Surely the right-opponent would not throw in his high http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifand keep http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. So it must be your partner, with some malformed theory on how to play, who his holding http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. You restrain yourself from reaching across the table and wringing his neck. If he had kept his http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, you could, after you've led the doubles you have, lead a small ace and get him in the lead; he would then start playing his doubles; you would get rid of http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand easily make your bid. As it is, you of course leave him with his trump, hoping he will be able to trump your http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You play http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. Your partner will have to play http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. You play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner, imagining he is playing good 42, gives you http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. After already making one blunder (playing his http://texas42.net/images/5-1.giffirst) he makes yet another blunder. He should be preparing himself to use the trump you are leaving him, by getting rid of his five. But no, he happily gives you http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, the thought never entering his mind he should retain http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand play http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifinstead. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. You are down to nothing but trumps and http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You lead http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Your partner now plays his http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif; the right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif---you go set. If your partner now tells you, "you overbid your hand," you may be excused if you throw a domino at him! Twice it was in your grasp to make that bid and twice your partner blundered--and more than likely, unless someone tells him, he won't have any inkling he played bad 42.

**Don't Unnecessarily Confuse Your Partner.**

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. |

Your right-opponent bid 31 on treys (he has good trumps and http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, but having both a six and a five for an off makes him reluctant to bid more than 31). You bid 32 on sixes. Your left-opponent and your partner pass. You lead http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif(getting rid of a five in hopes of trumping http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif). You: http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif(still thinking about capturing http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif). You: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif(realizing you must be getting down to having nothing but trumps and doubles, decides to wait no longer for http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; he's going to use his trump now and sees what happens). You ponder the situation. You see there are two fours out, the http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. You know your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif; because it being a walker, he certainly would have led it, if he had it. You know you are safe to rid your hand of http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifbecause the most that will fall on that trick is http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, if your left-opponent happens to have both the http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. You play: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. You are set. You are stunned! What happened? Your partner threw you for a loop. He unnecessarily confused you. This player observed a very good 42-player with many years of experience make this play. Apparently he thought he would be tricking the opponent by playing http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifinstead of http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif; maybe your right-opponent would put count on the http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifthinking his partner would catch it with http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. But your right-opponent could see that you didn't play a four and would likely trump any count you thought would be a threat to your making this bid. This is not the time for your partner to try to be tricky. It's time for him to play this straight--if he has walking fours, lead them from larger to smaller, the http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifthen http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Your partner outfoxed himself and caused you to lose this mark. If you hadn't been so sure that your left-opponent had http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifyou would have overtrumped your right-opponent's http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, led your last off, the http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, and then you would have the rest of the tricks and made your bid.

Again, Don't Unnecessarily Confuse Your Partner

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. |

Your partner passed. Your right-opponent bid 33 on aces. You bid 34 on deuces. Your left-opponent would have been comfortable bidding 33 on fours; but doesn't want to try 35 on them; he thinks that might be stretching a bit--so he passes. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif(you are not worried about getting in your trumps; your worry is http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, how to get rid of your fives--you definitely don't want to lead your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand at some point lead one of your fives. You want to lead a small deuce to which hopefully your partner will catch and enable you to rid your hand of your fives). To your http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifyour left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Your partner plays: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif(looks good for you--looks like your partner will help you make this bid). Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. You know your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif; if he did, he would have played it--you have to trump it to keep from going set. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifin hopes of getting http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif(you are a little confused--why did your partner lead an off, the http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, when he could have led a double to help you?). Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. You are set. Your partner turns his dominoes face up and you see he has http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Why didn't he play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifinstead of http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif? That's a very good question. This player plays with someone who likes to play his http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand then http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Perhaps he thinks it's a smart play. Probably he is thinking it will trick the opponent and the opponent will put on count. The problem is that it also tricks you. You don't know he has http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. It would be so much better for him to just play this straight, no tricks at this point; as in this example, he should play http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. You would have rid your hand of your fives and easily made your bid. But your partner unnecessarily confused you. That's not good 42-playing.

**FIRST OPPORTUNITY**

It is sometimes best not to just always automatically get in your trumps. Sometimes you will want to leave a trump out, trusting your partner will have it. You are running a risk an opponent will have it, and will trump in with it and set you. But good 42 players will, at times, take that risk, as in this example:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. |

You bid 31 on treys and lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.

You don't know where http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gifis. You certainly need help this time, with three offs including http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. So you decide to risk your partner has the trump. Therefore, you don't come back with http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Instead, you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif--and yes, you are risking you will go set right there, if you have guessed wrong and your opponent has the http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gifand no five. But good 42 players are willing to take chances.

You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner: remembering he should quickly be throwing in what count dominoes he has to his partner, plays http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.

Your partner just made a crucial mistake. His focus was on giving you count; but he didn't remember that you do not give your partner your count if there is a compelling reason not to do so.

He ought to realize you are worried about your trump, that you are running a risk by leaving it out and you don't know where it is. This is where the rule of First Opportunity kicks in. If it is not obvious to your partner that you have a trump, you trump in at the first opportunity you see. If you do not trump in at the first opportunity, then your partner will assume the opponent is holding the trump, and will come back and get it.

You: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif--you are dismayed! Why, why, why wouldn't your partner trump in and help you when he could have? Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

It doesn't matter what you lead now. The http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifin your hand will set you. The mark that could have been made so easily, is lost because your partner didn't understand that using his trump at the first opportunity is often more important than giving his partner count. It is use it or lose it.

You bid 34 on deuces.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif |

You play: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif--he, of course, does not play his http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif; that would be unnecessarily confusing his partner--he plays his smaller trump. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.

Now the question is: who has what trumps? You know your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif; he would have given it to you, because it is a count domino. You know http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifis in your left-opponent's hand. If he also has http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, you are probably in trouble. It will be difficult for you to make your bid. It is not best to come back with your http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif; that would be playing unthinkingly automatically, poor 42 playing. If your left-opponent has both trumps, he then would be in the catbird seat, holding the high trump, which also happens to be a count domino. If your left-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif(and you know he does) and your partner has http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, you are well on your way toward making your bid. If your left-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, you might as well know it now. If you go set on this second play, there is likely not much you could have done anyway to save the mark. But if you survive this second play, you are likely to make your bid. Leading http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifas your second play is the best way to play this hand. (You rejected the impulse to lead http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifas your first play because one of the trumps out was a count domino, the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, and if the opponent caught it, he might immediately lead http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand capture http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, which would quickly set you). If the left-opponent is a sharp player, he probably would unhesitatingly play his http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifon your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, to try to make you think that was the only trump he has. But you will still come back, the second play, with http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. |

Your left-opponent passes. So does your partner. Your right-opponent has a nice 35 hand on fours and bids that. Your hand sure doesn't look like a 36 hand with that http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifsticking out like sore thumbs. But 42 is not a game for the fainthearted. Often you have to be willing to take chances, be willing to trust that your partner can help you make your bid. Now it's your time to bid. What will you bid on this? You have deuces. You don't like having http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-3.giffor offs. If you bid 36, you realize you may go set. You're not feeling faint. A surge of boldness envelopes you and you say 36 on deuces. Having such bad offs, you consider leading http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifin hopes your partner will get in the lead and help you. But because you have the http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifunprotected, if an opponent catches the first trick and then leads http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, you will go set. You lead http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Your left-opponent this time is a sharp player. He knows he won't likely be able to prevent you from taking away his http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, so why try to keep it and in so doing give you the knowledge of who has that trump? Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.

What do you play now? There are two trumps out, the http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. Your partner may have both of them. Your opponent may have both of them. Your partner may have the higher one--or it may be your opponent holding http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. There is no way you can tell. Unlike the previous example, leading http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifnow may result in your going set. In this situation, try to pull in what count you can with the doubles you have. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Now the question is, does your partner know the importance of First Opportunity? If he thinks he will make you happy by giving you his count, the http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, he is wrong. He should look at the first trick and see that only three trumps have been played and suspect you may be worried about trumps or need help pretty badly. If your partner has leads for you, now is the time for him to trump--trump at his first opportunity and help you as much as he can. If he does that you will make this bid. Here's how: Your partner trumps your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif(the reason you played http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifinstead of http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifis opponents like to lead a five to try to set you, and if that happens, you want to be able to trump a five). Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. You're feeling a lot better. You've played all your offs and are left with trumps and a double--but you can't throw down your dominoes and proclaim you have this bid made. If your left-opponent has the http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, you are still in danger of going set. Your partner wisely doesn't lead a five; he leads http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Left-opponent:http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif.

You now can play http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifand take away the http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. You make 42 on your 32 bid. But suppose your partner had done what most 42-players would have--given you his count on your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Here's how that would play out: You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif.

Now you will go set no matter what domino you play. If you play http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, your left-opponent will play http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your partner will trump it with http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. If you play your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifnow, your opponent's http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gifwill capture either http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. If you trump your partner's http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, your left-opponent will likely overtrump you. He will lead a six to which your right-opponent will put on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You will trump it, but still be left with http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, which will set you when your opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Yes, you did bid wildly. A hand like this is not what you want to routinely bid 36. It can be made or you can go set, depending on whether you have a partner who is playing sharp 42. Partners who are both very good 42-players can make bids lesser players wouldn't even attempt; and if they did, the less-skilled players would likely go set because they simply don't know such things as when to put on count and when to trump. The bid was lost because your partner gave you http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif; because he didn't understand that it was more important to use his trump than give you count.

If you have several high trumps--such as http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, (and some offs, such as http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif)--it is often good practice to lead the smallest of your uncatchable trumps. So instead of leading http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, you would lead, as your first play, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif--by playing like that, you are hoping your left-opponent will try to set you by throwing on count, such as http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif |

Your partner bid 35 on fives. He leads: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Right opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Right opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif.

**Always be cognizant of what it takes to make your bid--and secure it as quickly as you can.**

Your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwill make your partner's bid. But you are afraid to lead http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; for your partner may not have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif(and if you think about it, you know your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif--if he did have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, there would be no offs now in his hand, and he would just turn over his dominoes, proclaiming his bid made. Since he hasn't done that, he must still have an off). You know your partner has http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif; for that is the only trump that hasn't been played (the last time trumps were led, just you and your partner played trumps--so there is no question your partner has http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif). You want to save your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto play on your partner's http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif--that will make the bid. So you play http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.

You just blundered! But that's probably the way most 42 players would have played your hand. Your partner doesn't know where http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifis--he will assume your right-opponent has it; he will therefore trump your http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifand lead his http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif--your opponent will capture your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your partner goes set.

The domino you should have played is http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Just look at what has been played. http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifhave already been played. You have two more sixes in your own hand (the http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, of course, is a trump). The only domino out that can catch your sixes is http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. So there is no doubt your partner can trump your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your partner is sure to trump it; and in capturing http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, his bid will be made. In this example, whether you lead http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, shows clearly whether you are a good 42 player--or a mediocre player.

But the above example also shows whether your partner is playing good 42. When you blundered by leading http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, your partner could reason if your right-opponent does have both double six and http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, (and he knows you don't have http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, or you would have led it) that there is no way he can make the bid. Trumping http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifand then having to lead http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifwon't help at all. Wherever http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifis, it will fall on this trick, or the last trick. Upon seeing that his partner led http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, his only chance to make this mark is to surmise his partner has http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand just blundered by not boldly leading it. So, being a good 42 player, he declines to trump the http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifhis partner led--he plays http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. On the last play he succeeds in capturing the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwith his http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif--but asks his partner, "why didn't you just go ahead and lead http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif"?

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif |

Your right-opponent bid 31 on blanks and leads http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif(by playing http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, he is telling his partner he has http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand if his partner has http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand a five-off in his hand, lead his small five or a six-off **now**).

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif(by playing http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, he is telling his partner he has http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, and if his partner has a small trey, lead it **now**). Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-3.gif.

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif.

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif(you say, "I'm a generous person. Here's http://texas42.net/images/5-5.giffor you." Your right-opponent, not appearing to be pleased by your generosity, casts a suspicious glance toward you). Left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif.

Right-opponent http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif("Is there no end to my altruistic propensities?", you ask. Your right-opponent raises his fist as though to thrash you. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.

Your right-opponent knowing well he's never seen a burst of generosity from you in a 42 game, resignedly awaits for you to pounce upon his http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand set him.

When he played his http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, it was obvious from seeing the deuces already played and the ones in your hand, that the only one not accounted for, the http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, was in your right-opponent's hand. And when he played http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, you already knew exactly what he had--the http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand the last remaining trump. He made a mistake when he led http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifwhen he did. He should have played his trumps, then http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand lastly http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. He revealed too much information about his hand too early. But that's how you get a lot of marks--by taking advantage of your opponents' mistakes---and of course, not making many yourself.

You and your partner were able to set your opponent. But your partner may not have played the best 42. He saw he could capture http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gifon the first trick; and that looked so good to him; he used his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifto get it. Perhaps most of the time when your partner has followed suit (you played http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif) to an opponent's catchable trump, it is best you play your smaller trump and hang onto your double (your partner should have played http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, instead of http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif). He should forego the nickel-count and wait for the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif--that is especially valid if he doesn't have any doubles to lead to get count. In this example, if your partner had http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifto lead to try to get http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, then it might be okay for him to have captured http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifwith his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. If he had kept his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, then he would be in the catbird seat. If the right-opponent had come back with one of his small trumps to force the play of http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, you would unhesitatingly have put on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand your opponent would have been set on his second play. Or if your opponent led http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifor his doubles and then http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, the end-result would be same--he would go set, because your partner is sitting ready to pounce on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifwhenever he can with his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. But you can't really fault your partner for playing as he did (his catching http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif) because your opponent was set. You can't argue with success. Playing that way will net you the nickel-count; but often you will wind up with only that trick. This player would have chosen to let http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifgo by.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. |

The score is six to six. Your right-opponent bids first; he bids 36 (he intends to bid on fours and lead http://texas42.net/images/4-4.giffirst, then http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifas his second play). You pass. Left-opponent passes. Your partner doesn't relish bidding 37 with a http://texas42.net/images/5-0.giffor an off. But he knows your right-opponent is a conservative bidder and a player who knows how to size up his hand, and usually makes what he bids. So your partner is going to bid 37 on aces and leads http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. Your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. He played well. He knows by experience it is best to hit an opponent as hard and as quickly as he can. His partner may have the high trump and will be able to set your partner on this trick, or you may can catch it--however it goes, your right-opponent played well by having it his rule to put on a count domino at the first chance at setting his opponent. He could have played http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; but he chose to play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, to try to set his opponent as quickly as he can. He may be tricked occasionally by a wily opponent who bids on aces and leads out http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, while holding all the higher aces. But he doesn't let being sometimes tricked deter him from his "hit hard and quickly" rule.

Your partner played http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, your right-opponent http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif--does it make any difference whether you play http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifor http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif? Yes, it does. http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifwon't catch http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifanymore securely than http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif--but if your http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gifdoes catch this trick, it will reveal to your partner that your left-opponent doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif; and therefore your partner will know you have it, and not take it away from you, out of fear his opponent has a trump. (Suppose your partner bid on deuces and you have http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifand your left-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your partner leads http://texas42.net/images/2-0.giffirst and your right-opponent puts on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; always remember to catch his deuce with http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gifrather than the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Your partner will know then you have the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. If you played http://texas42.net/images/2-2.giffirst, your partner would worry that your left-opponent might be holding http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gifand that could compel him to play his hand differently).

So you play http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. You don't have a double to help your partner. You don't want to lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, for that might set your partner; and you don't want to lead http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifbecause that's a count-domino. You can lead one of your sixes or http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. What will you choose? You can see from your hand and the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifthat has been played there are three sixes out somewhere and two deuces out somewhere. Usually you would probably choose to lead the domino that has more out (in this case, the six) because it is a little more likely each opponent will have to follow suit (and not be able to put on count). But when you have a trump, you need to always be concerned about ridding your hand of dominoes that will enable you to trump. If you play http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, you will still have a trey and won't be able to trump a trey if it is soon led out--the same is true with http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif; you will still have a deuce and wouldn't be able to use your trump if it were soon led. So you choose to lead http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.

To your http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, your left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Because you played http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gifand your left-opponent didn't catch the first trick, your partner knows you have http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif; and he also knows you don't have any doubles, or you would have led one. So he leaves you with your trump. He plays http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. From years of playing 42 you know how important it is to be quick to give your partner count. But since you are a very sharp player, you also know you don't just automatically give your partner count, if there is a compelling reason not to do so. And the compelling reason here is it can be more important to be ridding your hand of dominoes that will enable you to use your trump. Using your trump to help your partner (or set your opponent) is often more vital than your nickel-count dominoes. So instead of giving your partner http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.

Now is the time your partner needs you. He leads http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Right-opponent plunks down his http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifthinking he has set your partner. But you play http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, and with your partner holding the rest of the trumps, he makes 42 on what looked liked a risky 37 bid. He made it because you played very good 42.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. |

Your partner bid 31 on blanks---a conglomerationist playing Nel-O would be thrilled to have this hand, and would quickly bid 84 on it--but at this table only straight 42 is being played; so on this 31 bid, your partner leads http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif(he just made a mistake--he should have played http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, to give his partner a chance to give him count---and you would have gladly given him http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif). Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif.

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif(he makes an interesting play; he chose to play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, instead of http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif). You: (you have an aversion to giving an opponent count; so you play http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif) http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif.

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Your partner http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Your partner is set. The lessons to be learned here is it is often best to give your partner a chance to give you his count, and you need to always be concerned about protecting your count; and give count, especially big count (such as http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif) protection. It would have been better if you had played http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, even though it is a nickel-count, and kept your http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifprotected. Your partner would have made his bid, if you had done that. But that may not always be the case. There are a multitude of combinations of dominoes that can be drawn. The way you play one time may not work for you, if the dominoes are distributed differently. If your partner had http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand the right-opponent could pull it out of his hand with http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, then your playing the http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifwould have resulted in your partner going set. Sometimes you will just make the wrong decision. It won't necessarily be a bad play on your part--it's just that at times a play can go either way and there is really no way you can tell which player has what dominoes.

Because there are so many different combinations, so many ways the dominoes can be distributed, you won't always play exactly the same, even in what looks like a situation you've encountered before. You may decide to play differently, be more bold against a less-skilled player than one you know is experienced and crafty. But then again, you might occasionally make risky bids or plays against highly-skilled players. One plays differently depending on a number of factors or circumstances, such as your opinion of what your partner and opponents are likely to do, what the score is, and a desire to prevent your opponents from being able to correctly surmise what you will likely do in all situations, etc. In the final analysis, you consider the dominoes you have drawn, and bid or not bid, and play those dominoes how you feel will result in your getting the mark. Because you will play one way one time and another way another, isn't a bad thing. It might not be what some would consider "consistent" 42; and it might even be contradictory to the way you usually play or bid; but if it is based on years of experience playing 42 and knowing what is apt to work and what isn't (or what can work, what the possibilities are), you go with your best guess on which domino you should play---then when you see you have made the right decision, that you have discerned what is the best play you can make, you are experiencing the delight, the enjoyment of playing 42.

The sharper 42 players will make fewer misplays, fewer mistakes than the average 42 players. The good 42 players are concentrating to see who played what and surmising who has certain dominoes, and have learned what to do and what not to do in various circumstances. This is where the skill and the enjoyment of 42 comes in. Perhaps most players who have embraced the variations so readily have never reached that level of skill in 42, and do not know and understand what a great game 42 really is. If you are not pained by a blunder you see you have made; if you don't care about 42 enough to always want to play the best that is possible to play, then you probably belong with the variationists. They really enjoy playing as they do. Just put your mind in neutral; be content and satisfied with substituting skill, the mental challenge of outwitting your opponents, for variations in which there is little or no strategy. You can be happy playing that way, with as little effort and concentration as possible. But be honest enough to say what you are playing is HodgePodge or Conglomeration or Variations--just don't delude yourself into thinking you're playing real 42.

**Trying to set an 84 hand.**

Most of the time when an opponent bids 84, he will have an off behind its double. Occasionally an opponent will bid 84 with a straight off--but make it an usual practice you concentrate especially on the probability your opponent will have an off behind its double.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. |

Your right-opponent bid 84 on sixes and plays http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. You see there is one four your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifcan catch (the http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif) and it's certainly possible your right-opponent may have that as his only off. You see there is one deuce your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifcan catch (the http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif) and it's certainly possible your right-opponent may have that as his only off. But you are a veteran 42 player; you know from years of experience when an opponent bids 84, he is more likely to have an off behind its double, than a straight-off. So you make the decision early-on you will throw away your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand concentrate on protecting the only thing in this hand that has a chance of catching an off behind its double: a trey. So to your right-opponent's http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, you play: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifYour partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif.

Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Left-opponent: he sees http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifisn't played yet, so he will keep both aces for now; he plays: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Your partner: he sees http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifhaven't been played, so he will hang onto his trey and even to his little http://texas42.net/images/2-1.giffor now. Your partner plays: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif(he played http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, instead of http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, so as make sure you wouldn't hold for it).

Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/0-2.gif. Your left-opponent is hoping his partner will have either http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifor a four, for he has the highest four and highest deuce. Your left-opponent plays: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your-partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif.

Your right-opponent is pleased he was able to pull the http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif---now if he can just force http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifto fall on his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, he will be able to make his 84 bid. Your right-opponent plays: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifYou've played smart 42. You've protected your http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand protected your http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif. You now play http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifWhen your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, you will play http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, and be left with http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gifto catch his http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. You get the two marks because you played good 42. A wily opponent may observe your tendency to expect an off behind its double, rather than a straight-off, and bid with a straight-off, hoping you will throw away your doubles, and thus leave his straight-off to either walk or his partner catch it. So you do have to be alert to that possibility. But all this is part of the fun and enjoyment of 42--figuring out how best to play, how best to outmaneuver your opponents with the dominoes you have drawn.

A good player sees opportunities less skilled players overlook. An example of this is knowing that at times he can bid on one trump and sometimes make his bid. If he draws a hand in which he has both http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, time and again he can bid on fives (with no other five in his hand). By leading http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand then http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, sometimes 32 in count (http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif) will fall on those first two tricks. So with only those two doubles in his hand and no other five, the experienced player will make his 32 bid on the hand most other players wouldn't have recognized as a makable hand. Try to get http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifin as quickly as possible; if you have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, make that your third play. (If you have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifin your hand, you would of course bid on fours instead of fives). You will not want to boldly bid (30, 31, 32, or 33) this way every time you have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifin your hand---but have it in your arsenal of plays, know it can be made, and do it when you think it is appropriate.

Another example of an opportunity often overlooked is recognizing many times you can make 84 on a hand like this: you have http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. You're confident you can pull your trumps; you have an off behind its double (http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif) and a straight off (http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif). You could consider this a 35 hand, or if you're bold enough, delight to bid 84 on such a hand. You would figure there are three opportunities: one is you will see your partner has a trump, which you will let him keep to catch your http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifafter you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Or if he doesn't have a trump that he will have http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gifto catch your http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifafter you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. But if he doesn't, you are willing to take the chance he will catch your straight off, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. By keenly observing who played which dominoes, lots of times you will know or have a good guess at whether your partner can catch your offs. With a hand like this, you definitely do not plan to lead all your trumps, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifand lastly http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your plan is to discern if your partner has a trump; but if you see he does not, you will as quickly as you can, gather in all trumps from your opponents, and then (with one or more trumps still remaining in your hand) immediately lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif(watching very carefully who played what). If you think your partner will catch your off that is behind your double, you lead it. If not, then you lead your other off. You won't make 84 every time you bid on such a hand, but often you will.

Sometimes it is best to "take the mark in hand rather than two in the bush." On a hand like this: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, most people will quickly bid 84. But there are four dominoes that can catch the http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifin this hand (http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif); you are just taking a chance you'll be lucky and will make this 84 bid. It is probably better to forego the risky 84 bid and take the much more sure one mark. So just bid 36 on sixes, lead http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifin hopes your left-opponent won't have a six and will try to set you by putting on http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Your second play would be http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif; so you can get rid of your off with only the probable loss of http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifon the trick, should your opponents catch it. It would be a mistake to lead your double six, then http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, then http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, etc.---that would give your opponent time to rid his hands of aces and be ready to set you with http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifwhen you finally did get around to leading your http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Often it is best to lead your off quickly while your opponents must follow suit, rather than giving them the opportunity to clear their hands and be ready to put on count to your off.

But suppose you have a hand like this: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. This type of hand is less risky than the previous example. While there are still the same four dominoes that are out to catch http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, you have http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifto possibly get the http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gifand you have the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifto possibly get in the http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, and so by the time you lead http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, you now have a better chance getting the aces in so that your http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifwill walk.

Be alert not to make the mistake of giving your partner http://texas42.net/images/5-5.giftoo early. DON'T GIVE YOUR PARTNER http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifUNLESS DOING SO WILL MAKE THE BID (the exception to this is if you perceive an opponent has the upper hand on trumps, then you would need to get it played before an opponent captures it). But usually, don't give your partner your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifunless doing so will make the bid. *But if you have both http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand one or more doubles, do throw in http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifearly on one of your partner's leads so your partner will know he can safely lead his five-off.* Too many times a player thinks he his playing well by giving his partner http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif; but if the partner has to lead a small five and one opponent catches it with a higher five and the other opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, then throwing in http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifto his partner doesn't seem nearly as smart as the player thought it was.

A player had these dominoes: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. He bid 84, but chose to play the hand differently than most would have. Instead of leading all the fives in his hands and having http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto play as his last domino, he led http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifas his first domino. His partner caught it with http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, had a double (he didn't have double six) to lead, and so the bid was made. The reasoning of the bidder is that his partner was just as likely to have http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifas http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, so why not try that? But if you know you have a sharp partner who likely will be holding low dominoes, such as http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifto mislead your opponents, then you'd probably play all your trumps first and save http://texas42.net/images/6-4.giffor the last play. If the opponent who has http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifalso has http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, he just might throw away his double six to catch the small domino.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. |

The score is five to four in your opponents' favor. Your partner gets first bid, but passes. Your right-opponent bid 84. You have a decision to make. Do you let your opponent play his 84, or do you raise him? You have only one domino that has any chance of catching anything, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif; but it's very unlikely it would work around that your http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, with no other deuce in your hand, would catch your opponent's off, if he has an off. You consider your partner passed, so he may not have many doubles to help you if you decide to bid, or set your opponent. You decide to take the chance you might can make three marks. You bid 126 (three marks). Your left-opponent passes.

You bid on blanks. You know your partner doesn't have a powerhouse of doubles, for he passed. You are determined not to play this as most 42 players probably would (playing http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifas your first domino). Instead, you lead http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.

Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-2.gif. Your partner sadly plays his http://texas42.net/images/0-3.gif; for he can't imagine anyone would lead for http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifto catch the first trick on a three-mark bid. Your partner is amazed when your right-opponent played http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand your partner realizes he has caught the trick.

Your partner has only one double; so of course he leads it: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif. Your partner, the good 42 player that he is, sees immediately he has a walking 2----five deuces are on the board and the other two are in his hand. So he leads http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. You know your partner doesn't have another double in his hand else he would have led it. It would be bad playing for you to trump his http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand lead the rest of your trumps, with only the faintest possibility your opponents would throw away their sixes and let your http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifwalk. You have to trust your partner would not have led http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, unless he knew it couldn't be caught by the opponents. So to his http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. You now turn your dominoes face up, celebrating this game won through excellent 42 playing!

Suppose the dominoes were drawn this way:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. |

If you do get caught having to play Nel-O, suppose the marks are six to four in your opponents' favor and your right-opponent, in his excitement at seeing a good Nel-O hand, blurts out "84!"; you figure he more than likely does have a great hand, so you bid three marks. You choose to bid on fours (when the dominoes are all played you realize you would have had an easier time making this, if you had chosen to bid on deuces; but you don't know that at this point--in 42, hindsight is often better than foresight), hoping to get your trumps in and hoping your partner will have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifto catch your http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifoff. You lead http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand your opponent on your left throws down his three fours, announcing you're trump-set. But you say you want to play out the hand. So to your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifyour opponent on the left plays http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Your right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. You now play http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner doesn't have a double for you; he plays http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, you: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, left opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. You know you are doomed if you play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; so you now play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif; your opponent eager to set you, plunks down his http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifand says "See I told you, you were set!"---but your partner also has no ace, so he overtrumps with http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, (your opponents sit in stunned amazement), right opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Your partner plays http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, your right opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, you play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, your left opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You now lead http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, which gets in your opponent's last remaining trump. Your opponents are left speechless. The point of the above is to show you must NEVER assume your opponents will play expertly. Even though they declare with abounding exultation they have you set, DON'T BELIEVE IT UNTIL YOU ARE CERTAIN THEY ARE CORRECT. Assume if there is any possible way for your opponent to blunder and cast away his advantage (such as being on your left and having three trumps) that he just might make the blunders that will enable you to overcome, and thus truly "snatch victory from the jaws of defeat." That is 42 at its finest.

You salvaged these marks through skill most players wouldn't have done. There are scads of 42 players in Texas; but most never rise to a high level of expertise. When his left-opponent threw down his trumps, your typical variationist wouldn't have any more idea than a rat there was a way he could yet make his bid; he would have immediately agreed he was set. Probably the main reason players play mediocre 42 is that they play too fast; they don't take the time to carefully consider the dominoes that have been played; they just don't bother putting out the effort in concentrating that is necessary to play great 42. To the mediocre player, if it looks like it will be very difficult to make a bid, just don't bother with it, agree you're set, or just play anything to get this difficult hand over with and go on to another. And that's too bad. With that attitude, with that kind of playing, the mediocre players miss out on how very delightful and enjoyable 42 is. You get out of 42 what you put into it. If you are concentrating and playing excellent 42, then you really enjoy it!

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif.  Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. |

It's your first bid--you like what you have drawn. At times you would bid 84 on this hand; but you see http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifis out somewhere, along with two more trumps--so that makes you reluctant to risk losing two marks. You decide to bid 35 on sixes. You plan to lead a small six and as quickly as you can, throw in the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifor trump in and lead it (before you lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, while hopefully the opponents have treys and can't put any count onto it). After disposing of http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, you would lead your http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, clearing any remaining trumps from your opponents' hands. This should be an easy 35 bid to make.

You play: http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif(he played http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifinstead of http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifbecause he wants to retain the higher http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, and he doesn't believe you would bid 35 with http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifout--he would be shocked if your partner caught your http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifwith http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif). Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You are not so happy with what you see now. Your left-opponent was the only one to play trumps, and still has two, with plans to do mischief with them. Your left-opponent is an adherent to the theory you should hit your opponents as hard and quickly as you can. So he leads http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Your partner's hand doesn't look very promising help-wise. But a good 42 player tries to figure out how best to help his partner with whatever dominoes he has. He has to play a five to the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, but which one? He sees there is one deuce he can possibly catch (http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif) and three treys (the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif) and one ace he can possible catch (the http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif). He can protect one of his deuces from http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, if it is led; and protect one of his treys from http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, if it is led; and protect one of his aces from http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, if it is led--he doesn't know if it will work around for him to catch anything or what it will be at this point--he knows he won't play http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, for there are several of them out; he could decide to play either his http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif; he chooses to play http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif.

Now you ponder what to do. If you lead your http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifnow, the opponent would play http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifand would lead a double, which would force you to trump--his remaining http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gifwould set your 35 bid. You need to get in as much count as quickly as you can. You could lead your http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifnow, but if your left-opponent didn't have an ace, he could trump your http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifand if http://texas42.net/images/1-4.giffell on it, you would be set. So you lead http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, with hopes your partner will give you http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. Your partner didn't give you http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif; that worries you a bit. You will have to try to get it from your opponents. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif.

You lead: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif. That was a break for you that you really needed! Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif.

Now is where you play either good 42 or bad 42. You study what has been played. You see there are three treys out--the http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, the http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, and the http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif. You know your left-opponent has the high trump, the http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. If he has two treys, then it's all over for you. You will go set. Leading your http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifwon't benefit you at all; that would just insure that your opponent will capture your http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. The smartest way you can make this bid is to now lead http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand just hope your left-opponent has a trey and your partner the http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif. So you play: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner, the sharp player he is, sees he has a walker in his http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, so he catches your trey with his http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. You don't want to spend your trump; that would give the advantage over to your left-opponent. So you play: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Your left-opponent now sees all hope is gone for him. In one last feeble attempt to keep you from making your bid, he trumps http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifand leads his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. You will trump it and make your 35 bid.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. |

Your left-opponent bid 34 on aces. Your partner passes. Your right-opponent considers raising his partner on deuces; but decides not to. You can't reasonably bid 35 on fives with the offs you have; so you pass. Your left-opponent plays: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifYou: http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-2.gif.

Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Left-opponent trumps with http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. You look on the table and see that http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifhasn't been played, and you want to catch it with http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. So you now play http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Your left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. It walks. Your left-opponent made his bid. Your opponents get that mark--this is another example of lazy, inattentive playing. The main thing you needed to do was to just notice http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifhad not yet been played. Your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifis really irrelevant. Whoever catches the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, which absolutely will fall on the last trick, will capture this mark. Don't be so enamored with your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifyou can't bear to part with it. If you on the next-to-the-last play you throw in http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, you will still have the highest five out to catch http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, should your left-opponent have it--and by keeping http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, you have the highest six out which will catch http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, should your left-opponent have it. If your left-opponent has http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifand your partner http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand you catch with http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, you'd still just get one mark; you don't get bonus marks just because you capture both ten-counts. The "red lights" should have come on for you when your left-opponent trumped your partner's http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. There was no count on that trick, and your opponent could have thrown an off onto it and easily have made his 34 bid--**UNLESS** his off is a count-domino. So likely he has either http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. But if you watched closely, you saw your left-opponent trump your partner's http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif--so obviously he doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. When he next led out his trump, the http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, his partner played http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifto it. And even earlier than that, on the second trick when your left-opponent boldly led out http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, as though he had no fear http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifmight fall on it; that should have made you suspicious that he may have the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifhimself. But the real clincher to what domino you should be holding at the last is that it can be clearly seen, at the next-to-last trick, only two off-dominoes haven't been played, the http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. And you have it in your power to catch both, simply by hanging onto http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. A sharp 42 player would see all of this and would not have hesitated to throw away his http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif---and kept his http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. *Always keep up with what count-dominoes are out; and to the best of your ability, determine who has them*.

**When not to lead your double-trump**.

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| Your left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif.  Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. |

Your left-opponent bid 35 on deuces. He is anticipating losing a trick to http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand also losing http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, but walking his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifbehind the http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. He leads: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. You want to hit as hard as you can, so you try to get http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwith your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. To your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifyour left-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. You know your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, for he would have given it to you. What do you play now? You haven't captured any count, and since you have http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifin your hand, your http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifcan't hope to get it. This is where lots of 42 players would make a mistake. Many players would decide to lead back the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifin hopes your partner could put on count that would set your opponent. You should have as your rule, when you have caught your opponent's initial lead, that you do not lead back your double-trump when only three trumps have been played and the opponent's partner didn't play one. It is likely your partner will have a trump. If you lead back your http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, you are apt to wind up just helping your opponent by clearing trumps. You can see four fours have been played and http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifis in your hand (the http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifis a trump). If you lead http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifthat will certainly call forth http://texas42.net/images/6-4.giffrom either your left or right opponent. You should lead your http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifin hopes your partner has a trump and will capture http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. And if your partner doesn't have a trump and your opponent gets your http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifalong with http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, you are still in the catbird seat because you're holding the high trump. Eventually your left-opponent will lead a trump, and on that trump your partner will automatically play his count (if he is a good player, your partner will see that the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifhasn't been played and will automatically play his count at that point--mediocre players are afraid to risk their count and consequently lose many marks. You may be tricked sometimes, sometimes the opponent's partner will catch it; but if there is a chance your partner can catch what the opponent led and you have a count-domino that will set your opponent, make it your rule that you put it on! For you may not get another opportunity to set your opponent), and so you have set your opponent.

When your partner has bid and he leads a small trump which you catch, if one of your opponents does not play a trump and the other does, sometimes it will be best to come back with a trump to clear the opponent of a trump which he may have. You may be inclined to keep your trump so that you can help your partner later with it; but if your opponent is also keeping a trump, he may use it decisively against you. Here is an example:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.  Right opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. |

It's your left-opponent's bid. He passes. Your partner bid 30 on blanks. Your right-opponent passes. If your right-opponent had raised your partner, you might have considered raising him on fives--but not having double five or http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand offs too, you are likely to go set--unless you just happen to be lucky that your partner has http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. It's a bit wild to bid on such a hand. You pass.

Your partner plays: http://texas42.net/images/0-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. You see that you can lead your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand have another lead for your partner with a walking http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifif http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifhas to fall on your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif---and if you keep your http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, you can have that to maybe help your partner later. But if you now lead http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, your partner will go set. Your left-opponent will trump the http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand capture your partner's http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. If you lead your double blank and then http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, your partner will make his bid.

Even when you don't have the double-trump to lead back, it may be best to lead whatever trump you have--in those instances when your partner bid and one opponent didn't play a trump. Here is an example of that:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif.  Right opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. |

Your right-opponent bids 31 on fives. He has his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifprotected with http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif. He will likely lead one of his small fives, even though http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gifis out--for he fears an opponent may have two fives and be able to keep the http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif(if he led http://texas42.net/images/5-5.giffirst) just waiting to jump on his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You pass. Your left-opponent passes. Your partner bid 32 on aces. He leads http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif(he led http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gifrather than http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifbecause if an opponent had http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, the opponent would catch with a count-domino, the http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, which is not what you want to happen. To your partner's http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gifyour right-opponent plays http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto try to set. You play http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. You have two doubles to lead and a trump. Your inclination is to lead the doubles and retain your trump to help your partner later. But you noticed that one of the opponents didn't follow suit, so it may be that the other opponent is holding a trump and ready to pounce at the first opportunity he can. Even though it means getting out of the lead, you choose to play http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. By doing that your partner will make his bid. If you had led either http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifor http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, your left-opponent would have trumped with his http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, your partner would have followed suit and when your right-opponent put on http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, your partner would have gone set. It is sometimes best to clear away trumps from the opponents (when you see that an opponent didn't play one of your partner's trumps), rather than immediately start leading your doubles. But it is not always best to immediately come back with a trump, as this example shows:

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. |

Your left-opponent bids 31 on fours. Your partner considers bidding 32 on treys, but since he doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifand two five-offs, decides to pass. Your right-opponent bids 35 on deuces. He plans to lead http://texas42.net/images/2-5.giffirst, hoping you will put on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. If he sees just he and his partner has trumps, he will lead http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifsecondly to get his partner in the lead. You: you really don't like seeing that http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifin your hand, but decide to try making 36. Aces are your trumps and you lead http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif. Your partner sees that only three trumps were played and fears that your right-opponent may have another trump, just ready to pounce, leads his trump: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif.

Now you are left with two trumps, two doubles and a http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifthat you will inevitably have to lead--and when you lead it, you will go set. Your partner should have led at least one of his doubles to help you out of the situation you were in (having the http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif). When you find out he was sitting over there with http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifand http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand didn't lead them, you won't like it one little bit! This is yet another instance showing you can't make a firm rule that you should always do this or do that in 42. Sometimes it will be best to come back immediately with a trump--other times it is the wrong thing to do. Sometimes is best to trump in and start leading your doubles--other times it will be best to wait another trick before doing that, etc. A good 42 player will not always be consistent in the ways he plays. If you bind yourself to always playing a certain way when a certain situation arises, you may find there are exceptions to your self-imposed way of playing that will cost you the mark--a mark you will lose because you didn't vary your usual way of playing. Sometimes you will have a hunch, or feeling or intuition that this time you will play it a little differently. Maybe you will be right or maybe you will be wrong. But 42 should not become mechanical--it should always be fun. The good 42 player knows from experience what can happen and decides to risk that he has made the right choice. Pertaining to the above examples, this player leans toward having his partner, who catches your initial lead, give you at least one lead (lead a double, so you can get rid of an off) before coming back with a trump. Most of the time an opponent will have to follow suit on the second trick.

**Tournaments**

Forty-two tournaments can be enjoyable, if they are not overly strict with formal "do not do this" and "do not do that" rules (don't touch your dominoes during the course of play, don't talk, line up your dominoes in a certain way, etc.). Rules of conduct are necessary in tournament-play so as not to give unfair advantage. Players can pick up on, by slight hand movements or other gestures and by things said, who has a certain domino. But most 42 players are not going to cheat--if you enforce too strongly your regulations, are too severe, and not allow leeway for honest mistakes people are apt to make, you can squeeze the fun right out of 42. People are not always going to do and play perfectly--sometimes people do inadvertently indicate they have a trump with a gesture or motion or perhaps say something they shouldn't which could be construed as talking across the board, but if you are not playing in a tournament you should give your opponents some slack, show some leniency--remember 42 is just a game for having fun, fellowship, enjoyment--don't take it so sternly that you needlessly hurt someone's feelings.

Some form of the "head table" system is probably the best, so you do not have to wait for the slowest table to finish its game. Some tournaments give money or gift certificates to the winners. But money and certificates are quickly expended. It is better to provide trophies and/or plaques and ribbons to the champions. They are a tangible proof of good playing, mementos of achievement and expertise that will last a lifetime. Forty-two tournaments can be an excellent means to raise money for worthy causes, such as your local volunteer fire department, etc. As an event in your town's yearly festival a 42 tournament can draw people to your town who otherwise would not come. And if you want to bring people into your place of business, hosting a 42 tournament will attract new customers and prospects for you (businesses, commercial establishments should not charge an entry fee; in the instances of business-sponsored tournaments, prizes of cash and gift certificates are appropriate). You will find some tournaments are better (more fun and enjoyable) than others; but at nearly all of them you will have an enjoyable experience playing the great game of 42, and can meet some really nice folks.

A leading manufacturer of dominoes, for years, distributed 42 Rules of Play in each set of dominoes sold. Unfortunately, one paragraph has been especially confusing to aspiring 42 players. Here it is: "'42' is sometimes played by allowing the one that gets the bid to call the small end of the first domino ONLY that is led. Example--if bidder holds http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, and http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifthe http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifis an 'off' but if the bidder leads the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifas the first domino and calls the small end an ace then each player must follow suit. Since the bidder has the http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifin his hand the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifis the high domino, then this becomes a much better hand. The advantage of playing in this manner is to be able to rid ones hand of 5 and 6 offs thus making the bidding higher." It is regrettable that paragraph was ever written and promulgated as a good way to play 42. *It certainly is not*. It does not explicitly say it is a Follow-me hand; but if it isn't, it doesn't say what trumps are. Presumably fives would be trumps and therefore you are improperly getting rid of your off, the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, on the first play by requiring the players to play an ace to your lead of http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, rather than a six---the bidder is unfairly ridding his hand of http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, out of fear http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifwill fall on it, if played in the usual way of playing 42---which would leave you sitting pretty, very little chance of going set. Assuming it presents a variation of a Follow-me hand, the bidder, in the opinion of this player, improperly (unfairly) gets rid of a worrisome off (the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif) by strangely requiring the other players to play to the ace end of the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif. As this player has previously stated, if a trump has not been declared, you are playing something other than pure, straight 42. Tournament organizers rightly prohibit Sevens, Nel-O, Splash, Plunge in tournament-play. It is too bad tournament organizers (the ones who should be showing by example what excellent 42 playing is), do not recognize Follow-me is just as inappropriate as the other variations they ban.

In the above-quoted paragraph we see the http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifbeing led, being played in a bizarre way. Of course it would improve your hand to do that. Swapping dominoes with your partner would improve your hand. Obtaining the bid and declaring something is trumps other than the first domino led would improve your hand. Cheating does not always have to be covert or surreptitious. It can be done boldly and openly. There are 42 players who believe the practices just referred to fall into that category. One person, who was probably influenced by the above-quoted paragraph, bid on aces. He had http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; but not the http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. After calling naming aces trumps, he leads as his first play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand says the other players must play a four. On the first trick the opponents are likely to have a four and be unable to trump, thus virtually assuring he will make his bid. Yes, he can easily make his bid by playing that way. But that's bad 42. You can score A's on your tests in school, if you are deft at cheating--but it's not right. Playing 42 like that cheapens the game and makes winning any way you can the goal, rather than playing in a straightforward and fair way. That player may well be a variationist at heart, who is able to sneak in this way of conniving a mark, when he knows regular variations would be immediately rejected. And if anybody objects, he will probably say he read it in the rules. If anyone still possesses the "rule" quoted above in a Rules of 42, he should expunge it off the face of the earth any way he can (liquid paper, scissors, whatever it takes to get rid of it). Getting good grades in school any way you can and getting marks in 42 any way you can, should not be tolerated. Do what is right.

Forty-two tournaments ought to be beacons illuminating what is right, honorable and good in the great game of 42. Players should play the dominoes they draw to the best of their ability--42 tournaments should not sanction any contrivance that is in essence unfair, to rid oneself of a domino you'd rather not have in your hand. Yes, you may wish a certain domino wasn't in your hand--but deal with it! Use your skill as a 42 player to overcome, if you can. Don't resort to bizarre, unfair playing--that is a degradation of 42. In the above example, you could easily bid 34 or 35 on fives. You might decide to lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, with hopes your partner will give you http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. You might decide to lead http://texas42.net/images/5-2.giffirst in hopes your partner will catch it with http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gifand have a double to lead. You might even decide to bid on aces. Or you might decline to bid and figure there is a good chance you can help your partner with the doubles you have or set your opponent with the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifyou have. There is no good reason at all to depart from straight, pure 42.

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. |

It's your partner's first bid. He bids 34 on fours. He anticipates losing his http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gifto an opponent's http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Your partner doesn't have a five-off, so he isn't worried about http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. He is willing to lose the http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifto the opponents with only the probable loss of http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. He really shouldn't have any problem making his 34 bid.

Right-opponent: passes (he has five blanks, but is reluctant to bid 35 without his http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gifand two offs).

You: If you were behind in marks you might even bid 84 on this. Having treys as your trumps, you shouldn't have a problem pulling the remaining ones in and there's a good chance after you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifyour two off-fives will walk. But you decide to "take the mark in hand, rather than two in the bush"--on this 35-bid the main domino you're worried about is http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif; but you don't have an off that is a six or four, so that shouldn't hurt you. Your plan is to lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif(and then http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gifif http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifdoesn't come in on the first trick) and then quickly play your http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, which hopefully will draw in the fives that are out--which will enable your http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifto walk after you trump in and then lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. The reason you wouldn't lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifis an opponent might have two fives, one of which might could catch your http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifand the other opponent be ready to put on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifto set you. You want to get your http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifled as quickly as possible (http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif rather than http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gifbecause an opponent who catches your five can't lead http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, but could lead http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifwhich would take away your http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gifand potentially set you if an opponent puts on http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif).

Left-opponent: bids 36 on sixes. He will bid on sixes, but has three offs. He hopes his partner will have fours and will wind up with a four that will catch his http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif; but if not, maybe his partner will have http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifto catch his http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifto catch is http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. This is a risky 36 bid; but he knows you are a good player and apt to have analyzed your dominoes well and likely to make your bid--so he bids 36 on sixes on this hand that most players would not have bid 36.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.

Left-opponent: the http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifdidn't fall--so he has to lead to get it: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif. Right-opponent: he has two count dominoes; which one should he play now? If a deuce is led, he will be forced to play his http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifon it--it is better to play http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifnow to eliminate the possibility of an opponent capturing it. But he doesn't consider that; to him, it doesn't matter which count he plays. So he plays: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. You want to be able to put http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifon any domino your partner happens to catch. You see http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifand http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifhaven't been played--your left-opponent may have http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand your partner may have http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif; if so, then the http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gifis the domino you should play now.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. He sends it out as a probe--he wants to determine where the fours are--hopefully his partner will be left with a four to catch his http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Your partner doesn't want to part with his count, so he plays http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif--and in this instance, it is a mistake. Sometimes it is best to protect and keep your count, but other times it can be best to throw in a count domino and keep a domino that will catch the opponent's off. But all your partner is thinking about now is protecting is http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, so he plays: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif.

Your left-opponent knows you don't http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. He knows your partner has http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, for his partner would have given it to him if he had it. He knows it's possible your partner could also have http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif; but he is betting his partner has it, so he leads: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. You: your http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gifwill catch any trey that is led, so you discard http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif.

Your left-opponent felt very relieved when his partner caught his four, but dismayed with he sees his partner doesn't have any doubles or walkers to lead back. Your right-opponent is not going to lead http://texas42.net/images/3-2.giffor that is count. He chooses to lead http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifbecause the http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifhas already been played and hopefully http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gifwon't harm his partner. You: http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif.

Now it gets interesting. You have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif. What do you do? Unfortunately there are many claiming to be 42 players who would just automatically toss out http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, who would not take the time to look at the dominoes that have been played. But you're a better player than that. You see there are no fives out--if you lead http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, it is certain your left-opponent will trump it and that will make his 36 bid. Your only chance of setting your opponent is to lead http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifand hope your left-opponent will be scared that your partner will play http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand will trump it. He would then be left with http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, your partner would catch it with http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifand you would set with http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. If your left-opponent is sharp enough to figure you have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand is wanting him to trump the http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifand if he refrains from trumping it, he will wind up with both http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifon the last trick and thus make his bid. Whether your left-opponent will make the right decision is really questionable. There is no way he can be sure whether you have http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifor your partner. You played good 42 by not just unthinkingly tossing out your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. By playing your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifinstead, you have given yourself a chance at setting your opponent. Probably most players would unthinkingly trump your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gifsince http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifhasn't been played--so unless you're playing against a really good player, your http://texas42.net/images/5-3.giflead will likely be trumped and you will end up getting the mark. If your left-opponent considers you to be a wily player, he just might ponder the thought that you may be holding the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifyourself, and not trump it. This is an example of 42 being such an interesting game. Sometimes you just will not know where a certain domino is and you must take into account whether your opponent is enticing you to make the wrong play. And those times you guess correctly or through keen observance and skill make the right decision, you are experiencing the delight and joy of Forty-two!

**Don't Hit Your Partner On His Back End**

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif |

The score is six to four in your opponents' favor. It's your right-opponent's first bid. He bids 84. You: pass. Your left-opponent: pass. Your partner is bit puzzled. That was a strange bid. Your opponents already have six marks--why would he bid 84 now? He must have some kind of super hand that excited him. (Even though your right-opponent has a good hand, very definitely an 84 hand, he should not tip off to his opponents that he has such a great hand. He shouldn't have bid any more than 36. Always be aware what the score is and don't overbid). Even though your partner doesn't have the double to his trump and an off, he decides to be bold and try to make three marks. He bids on fives and leads http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. Unfortunately, you do not have a double to lead back. How can you possibly know what to lead? There are so many dominoes that haven't been played. You might as well just toss out any of your dominoes and just hope it will help your partner or at least not hurt him, right? Wrong. When someone, including your partner bids 84, your first thought should be that he likely has an off behind its double. That won't always be true. Lots of times people do bid 84 with a straight off. But still have as your first thought that the off may be behind its double. With that assumption in mind, you certainly don't want to hit your partner on his behind domino--for if he has the chance to lead his double, then he might be able to walk his off. This is a three-mark bid. You don't play quickly or impulsively. You ponder what to play. You see there are four doubles that haven't been played--and you review them one by one in your mind. Your main goal now is to not set your partner. You should get in the habit of systematically figuring out what double your partner may have and what are the off-dominoes behind each double that is out that you might hit--so that you will not hit him on his behind If you led your http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, your partner might have http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifor http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. You definitely don't want to lead your http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. Ask yourself if you lead one of your deuces now, what deuces are behind what doubles that haven't been played. Your partner might have http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gifor http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif--and if he does, your leading a deuce now will set him, should your opponent have http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. What if you lead http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gifor http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gifnow? Your partner could have http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifbehind double six. If so, he is wanting to quickly trump in and just lay his dominoes down, as his http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifcould not be captured by an opponent. He would be very displeased, if he has http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifbehind http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, if you led a four and he has to play http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gifand go set because an opponent caught your four with http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. The safest domino for you to lead is a six. Assuming that since he bid 84 or more he has an off behind its double, your leading a six should do no harm to him. If he has http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, he will catch your http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gifwith his double. And if he doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, he will be able to trump your six, then lead his trumps, then whatever double he has and then his off. In this particular hand, if you had http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif, instead of your left-opponent having it, and http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif(only you and your partner has trumps), your partner would not come back and take away your trump but would lead his http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gifand then http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, expecting that you will either catch his http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifwith a trey or your trump.

**Deciding What Off To Throw**

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif. |

Your left-opponent gets the bid for 35. He bids on fours and plays http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif. If your partner catches a trick, you want to be able to put on http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifto set your opponent. What domino should you play? When an opponent bids on fours, your first thought should be to think he may lead a six-off--because since it is likely he has http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, he will consider a six as not being a dangerous domino to lead. Likewise if he bid on sixes, your first thought should be to think he may lead a four--because since it is likely he has http://texas42.net/images/6-4.gif, he will consider a four as not being a dangerous domino to lead. He has now led http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif--to which you play: http://texas42.net/images/1-6.gif. You are now ready to put on http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, should your opponent play a six and your partner catches with http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif(he sees there are two trumps out and is now drawing them in). Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-3.gif. You: What can you rid your hand of now? You just have one deuce; so if your opponent leads http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gifand your partner has http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifyou will want to be able to play your http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif. You play http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif(he played http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gifrather than http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, to rid his hand of a five, for http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifis now the domino he fears the most. Your partner will catch the http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif; you will put on http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifand set your opponent. When an opponent has the bid, always try to rid your hand of what dominoes you can so that you can put on count, should your partner catch what your opponent has led or your partner leads a double to which your opponent must follow suit. If your opponent bids on treys, think that he might have a deuce-off to lead--if you can, get rid of your deuces so you can put on count, should your partner have the http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. And if your opponent bid on deuces, think that he might have a trey-off to lead--if you can, get rid of your treys so you can put on count, should your partner have the http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. If your opponent bid on sixes and you have several fours in your hand, or if he bids on fours and you have several sixes in your hand, or if he bids on treys and you have several deuces in your hand, or if he bid on deuces and you have several treys in your hand it is probably best rid your hand of whatever you can so as to not follow suit to a domino your partner catches or leads--your main thought at this point is being able to put on your count to set your opponent.

**"Let's Play This as Safely as Possible"**

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-3.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. |

The score is five to nothing in your opponents' favor. Your left-opponent bid 84. Your partner: pass. Right-opponent bids three marks. What's going on here? Your right-opponent raised his own partner, when they just need two marks to go out!? He must have a terrific hand for sure! It looks like you're going to get skunked. Is there any way at all you can stave off having a polecat put on you? You have four treys--if your partner happens to have treys and a couple of doubles, you have real chance of making three marks. You see you have an off behind its double. After you lead http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gifyou will have some information about where the remaining deuce or deuces are--you will see who played what deuces and from that you may know or have a good idea whether you should lead your http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. If you feel your partner can't catch your http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, you will lead http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand hope he has http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif.

You decide to bid four marks; your attitude is, if you go down, at least you go down trying. Do you lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.giffirst or http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gifand trust that your partner will catch it with http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif? You don't really know. You just have to go with how you feel is best. You choose to lead http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. You made the right decision! You feel a lot better now. You know now that your partner has the http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. A really bad 42-player would not even recognize the significance of your left-opponent playing http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif. It obviously means he doesn't have another trump. But the bad 42-player, playing on "automatic" would play http://texas42.net/images/3-5.giffor his second play. But let's proceed up a level from a bad player to a mediocre player. The mediocre player will now play http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. He will figure that surely his partner will have at least one double. But suppose your partner doesn't have a double--since that is a possibility, why not play this hand as smartly as possible? Now we go to the level of the good player--here is what he would play: he won't force his partner to play his trump on the second play; he leads his double instead. So on the second play, you: http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif.

You: you look at the four deuces that have been played (the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifis a trump) and the two in your hand--there is only one deuce you are afraid of now, the http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif. This is just what you wanted to happen. You know that if your partner doesn't have http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif, he will be able to trump it. You lead http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/2-6.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/1-5.gif.

Your delight at how this is turning out gives way to a little unease as your partner hesitates, trying to decide what to play. He ponders what domino should he play. He considers that if he leads http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, you might have http://texas42.net/images/1-4.gifand that will set you because the opponent's http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gifwould catch http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif. He sees that only two sixes have been played; so there is a definite possibility if he leads http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gifor http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, that will result in your going set. Finally he says, "Let's play this as safely as possible." He plays http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. Your heart sinks. Why did he think that was a good play? His trump was the only remaining way he could help you--and now he has thrown it away. He can see that your have four dominoes and that three of them are trumps. You have only one off. You don't now have an off behind its double--so there's no danger of him hitting you from behind your double. He should reason that if you do have a six, you are a goner--there is no way for you to make this bid if you are sitting over there with a six-off. But if you are able to trump his http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, he would in turn be able to trump http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gifor a five. Because your partner led a trump back at you, you will inevitably have to lead your http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gifand your opponent will catch it. You were skunked because your partner concluded http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gifwas the safest domino for him to lead--it was safe for that one trick; but it led directly to your going set. But let's don't leave this on a negative note. Let's say that just before he uttered those words, a flash of insight lit up his thinking; he discarded the notion of leading his http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gifand led instead: http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif. Your right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-5.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/5-2.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Your partner trumps with http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. Your last two dominoes are trumps. You and your partner make four marks. Again, it's good 42 as opposed to bad/mediocre 42. Which do you play?

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| You: http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. http://texas42.net/images/1-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/1-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-6.gif.  Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif.  Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-2.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-4.gif.  Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gif, http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/2-0.gif, http://texas42.net/images/6-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif, http://texas42.net/images/4-0.gif. |

Right-opponent bid 31 on fours. You passed and so does your left-opponent. Your partner bid 32 on treys and leads http://texas42.net/images/3-4.gif. Right-opponent plays well by hitting as hard as he can to try to set: http://texas42.net/images/4-6.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/3-3.gif. Left-opponent http://texas42.net/images/3-1.gif.

You: http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif. Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Your partner: http://texas42.net/images/4-5.gif. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/4-1.gif.

Left-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Your partner: he sees that http://texas42.net/images/0-5.gifmight fall on that and set him, decides to trump it with http://texas42.net/images/3-5.gif. He could have hoped that you have http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifand another blank and chosen to play his five-off on that http://texas42.net/images/0-0.gif. Sometimes that will be a good play; but if he had done that this time, he would have gone set because the opponent would have played http://texas42.net/images/5-0.gifon that trick. Right-opponent: http://texas42.net/images/0-4.gif. You: http://texas42.net/images/0-1.gif.

Your partner sees that http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gifis the trump that's out and he knows that if the opponent has it and uses it, that will set him--so your partner decides to lead http://texas42.net/images/3-6.gif. That is a mistake--or as some in Texas would say, a flitter (a mistake or blunder a good player should not have done). When your left-opponent trumped your http://texas42.net/images/4-4.gif, that should have told your partner that you must have the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif. If the opponent had http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, he would have trumped with it, rather than http://texas42.net/images/3-0.gif. Because your partner didn't deduce that, he will now go set; the http://texas42.net/images/5-5.gifin the opponent's hand will do him in. But if your partner had realized, like he should have, that you have the http://texas42.net/images/3-2.gif, he would have left you with it and you would have used your trump and enabled him to easily make his bid. Observing who plays what trumps can sometimes can tell you who has another trump--and that can be the difference in winning the mark and losing the mark.