

Pesten

Izaak van Dongen

April 25, 2018

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1 Introduction

Pesten is a classic Dutch card game, similar to Uno but played with playing cards. The name translates as something like ‘bothering’. The objective is to annoy your fellow players as much as possible. The suits function as colours, and various cards have special functions. There is also a fine tradition of introducing house rules. People can feel very strongly about these, and we’re still finding special cases that require and appeal to the van Dongen jury, so while this implementation aims to codify the van Dongen house rules, it makes no guarantee of absolute accuracy.

It is played with one to two packs of cards, but this is entirely variable depending on how many players there are.

2 Rules

2.1 Basic play

The basic functioning of the game is, as mentioned, very similar to Uno. There is a discard pile and a pickup pile. The top card of the discard pile determines the current player’s allowable discards. A player is allowed to play any card of either the same suit or the same rank as the current card, or a joker, unless there is currently a special effect in play...

If a player is able to play, they must. However, if they can’t, they pick up one card from the draw pile. If they are able to play this card, they may, and this card takes effect as normal.

2.2 Special cards

Some cards have effects, which generally apply to the next player. Due to this, sometimes players opposite each other form ‘teams’ as they never obstruct each other. This mode of play also allows everyone to win more often. All effects are listed here:

Card	Effect
Joker	This card has no suit so can be played on any card (unless this table specifies otherwise, see 2). The following player must take 5 cards, or play their own joker, which increases the count to 10 and moves to the next player. The player who ends up taking the cards may decide on the initial suit after the joker, but may not play. Play goes to the next player after the suit has been decided.
2	The following player must take 2 cards. If the following player has a 2, they may play it and then the total number of cards to be taken is 4, by the next player, and so on. A player may also ‘escalate’ by playing a 3 of the same rank. This increases the payload by three. A following player must then play a 4 of the same rank or a 3, and so on. Any cards played in this mode are exempt from their normal special effects. A joker cannot be played while a 2-stack is in play. The player who ends up taking the cards may not play, and play goes to the next player from them.
7	A 7 allows the player to take another turn. Their next card must fit on the seven, or they will have to pick up a card.
8	An 8 skips the next player. This action cannot be stopped by any card, as the next player simply doesn’t get a turn, so cannot do anything like play their own 8.
10	A 10 means the player before the current player now has their turn, but play goes on as normal.
Jack	A jack lets the player choose the suit to go on with. The next player must play a jack, or a card of the declared suit, or a joker.
King	Changes the direction of play. The next turn goes the player originally ‘before’ the current player.

Any unmentioned cards are not special.

2.3 Card sets

A player may also play a ‘set’ of cards. A set of cards is either three or more of the same rank, or three or more adjacent cards of the same suit in ascending or descending order. For example, one might play 6 ♣, 6 ♦, 6 ♠, or 6 ♣, 5 ♣, 4 ♣. NB for the purpose of these sets, aces are considered to be both before 2 and after the King.

A set must contain at least three cards following the pattern. However, the play of two cards is permitted if they form a set with the top card on the discard pile, eg you can play 6 ♦, 6 ♠ if there is a 6 ♣ at the top of the discard pile.

If there are special effect cards, only the top card has its effect. This means that it's a better idea to play 9 ♣, 8 ♣, 7 ♣ than the other way round, as this gives the player another turn.

If a card set is played while a 2-stack is building, only the last card of the set contributes to the number to be picked up.

2.4 Last (card), but not least

As soon as a player reaches their last card, they must tap the table twice and declare 'last card' with appropriate volume and enthusiasm. If they don't, a two-card penalty is inflicted. If the player is playing a series of cards (using 7s, or sets) and they forget last card, they take back their last card and two penalty cards. They may not continue to play.