

TIE-DIE

A dice rolling game for 2-4 players

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ABSTRACT

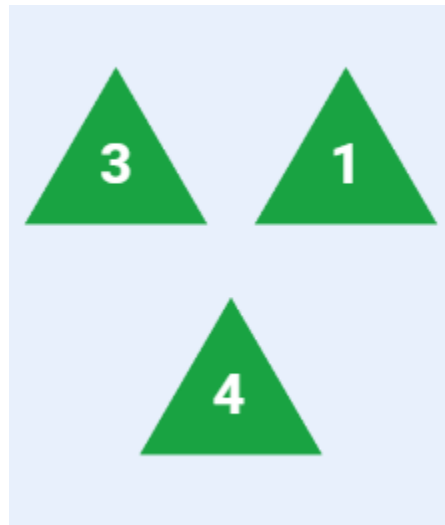
Tie-Die is a game of chance, insightful investment, and a touch of light gambling. Players roll simultaneously and add the number rolled to their point total. Any players who roll the same number must battle it out in a roll-off.

Materials

1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10 per player

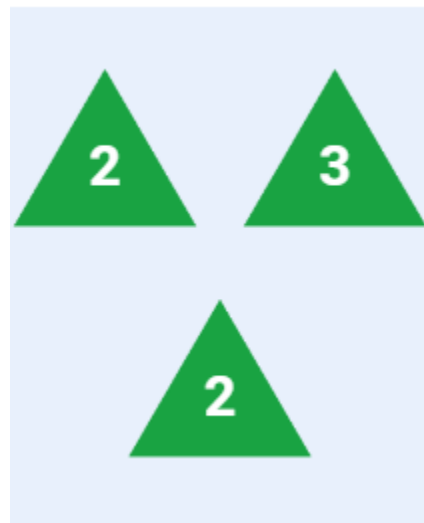
Pencil and Paper

Tie-Die is a game for 2-4 players where all dice are rolled simultaneously with the goal of reaching 30 points. Each player starts by rolling a d4.



Here, each player scored 3, 1, and 4 points respectively. Since there were no ties, points are added to each player's score and play moves to the next round.

In the event of a tie between two or more players, those players must enter a **roll-off**.



In this instance, the player who rolled a 3 adds it to their total and waits for the next round to begin. The two who tied roll their dice again. The **winner** of the roll-off keeps the number of points they rolled on their die and proceeds to the next highest die size (in this case, a d6). The **loser** of the roll off subtracts the number they rolled from their point total and goes down a die size. In the case of a 3+ player roll-off, the highest

number is the winner, the lowest number is the loser, and any player in the middle is unaffected.

Note: You cannot go lower than a d4 and your point total cannot go below 0.

At the start of each round, before dice are rolled, players can opt to spend points to upgrade their dice. The cost to upgrade is equal to the number of sides on the upgraded die. i.e. Upgrading from 1d4 to 1d6 costs 6 points, upgrading to a d8 costs 8 points.

Note: When buying upgrades with points you must upgrade in order. You cannot jump from 1d4 to 1d8.

Issuing a challenge

Once per game, each player may issue a challenge to another player whose point total is greater than theirs. To do so, the challenging player must spend a total number of points equal to the die-size of the defending player. The defending player may decline the challenge by paying an equal number of points. If a challenge is declined, the round continues as normal. **Challenges must be declared at the end of a round, after points have been totaled, but before players may upgrade their dice at the start of the next round.**

In the event that a defending player accepts the challenge:

1. The challenging player immediately moves up to the matching die-size of the opposing player.
2. A roll-off occurs.
3. If the **challenger wins**, they keep their newly upgraded die-size and the points they rolled in the roll off. The loser goes down **two** die sizes and loses points equal to their roll.
4. If the **defender wins**, they keep their die size but do **not** gain any additional points. The challenger loses points equal to the number rolled, but keeps their upgraded die size.

Example: Player A is in the lead with 21 points and a d10. Player B is behind with 16 points and a d6. Player B issues a challenge to Player A by paying 10 points (equal to Player A's die size). Player A may either pay a matching point cost to avoid a roll-off OR the two players proceed to a roll-off, each rolling 1d10.



Because Player A lost the challenge, Player B as the defender retains their d10 and point total of **21** points. Player B keeps their d10 but loses points equal to their roll.

Play continues until one player reaches 30 points.

In the event that two or more players reach 30+ points in the same turn, the player with the highest point total wins.

Design Process

Tie-Die is a modification of *The Dice Game*, wherein players roll a single die, add the number to their total, and pass the die to their left. This simple game leaves much to be desired. Players sit around a table watching their opponents rolls, waiting for their turn with little input or impact on the players around them. To improve *The Dice Game*, play needed to happen at a faster pace, and players needed to be able to influence the scores of their opponents. Otherwise, given the players' powerlessness to affect the steady progression of point totals, they may as well have been watching a horse race.

The first modification was to implement simultaneous dice rolling. I recently discovered the joys of simultaneous turns while playing a game called *7 Wonders*. In *7 Wonders*, players all take their turns at the same time, deciding what card to play and putting it face down on the table to indicate they are ready.. I witnessed the joy and anticipation of waiting for everyone to "ready up", which inevitably lead to the entire table chanting together: "1, 2, 3 - flip!". I noticed a similar buzz of excitement when rolling for initiative in a session of *Dungeons and Dragons*. Drawing on these two experiences, I knew I wanted simultaneous gameplay.

The second inspiration for this game modification also stemmed from time at the *Dungeons and Dragons* table. When rolling for initiative, whenever a tie occurred, players would erupt into a joyful shout of "Rollies!" indicating it was time for the two players who tied to have a roll-off, in which the victor would move slightly ahead in initiative. This was the inspiration behind the roll-off mechanic. With players rolling at the same time, ties would inevitably happen. Why not turn it into something to celebrate? That sense of mini-battles between the roll-off participants would serve as fuel for the fire of the greater competition, and the victor could reap the benefits by upgrading their die size. In fact, originally the game started with players rolling a d6, but after a few rounds of playtesting, this was tweaked down to a d4 to make ties more likely and, thus, make gameplay more immediately exciting. The implementation of the varying die sizes also gave a sense of level progression - spending points to level up from a d4 to a d6 meant excitement and anticipation for the player. After all, rolling big numbers feels good.

Next, players needed to be able to affect the scores of those around them. They could do this inadvertently by knocking an opponent down a die-size through a tie-breaker roll-off, but this wasn't quite reliable enough to prevent an early lead from snowballing towards an easy victory. In another round of playtesting, I was reminded of Mario Kart. The losers needed a metaphorical blue shell. This is where the concept of issuing a challenge arose. Luck was still an overwhelming factor in the game and a few bad rolls were enough to knock someone completely out of the running. The challenge mechanic was intended to be a sort of "Hail Mary" - it wouldn't necessarily break the game, but if it was successful it was often enough to extend the game, and even sometimes help someone in last place pull ahead into a comeback victory.

