

Nails Instructions

© 2010 Designed by Michael Lesnick. Developed by Michael Lesnick and Thomas Lesnick.

Nails is a very simple, fast-paced pattern recognition and logic card game for two or more players. Amongst well known games, it's most similar to the popular card game SET, but its dynamics of play are quite like those of the children's card game War.

The Nails deck contains 48 circular cards. On each card is a ring of five dots, and each dot is either red, blue, or yellow. Each possible combination of dots of these three colors appears on exactly one card in the deck, except that there are no cards on which all five dots are the same color.

The object of Nails is to be the quickest player to figure out whether two cards **hit** or **miss**:

We say two cards **hit** if:

- 1) There **is** a pattern[†] of **three dots** appearing on both cards **AND**
- 2) There **is not** a pattern of **four dots** appearing on both cards.

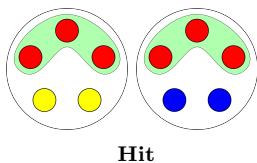
NOTE: We only count a pattern as appearing on both cards if it does so with **the same clockwise/counterclockwise orientation**.

We say two cards **miss** if they do not hit. Two randomly chosen cards hit approximately 50.5% of the time.

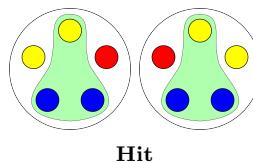
[†] What precisely we mean by “a pattern” is most easily conveyed by example; see those below.

Examples

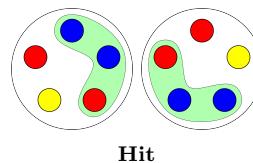
In the following examples, patterns of three or four dots appearing on both cards are highlighted.



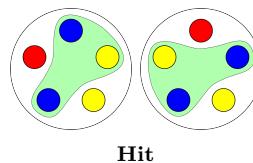
Hit



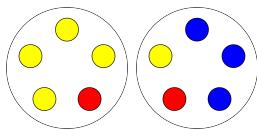
Hit



Hit

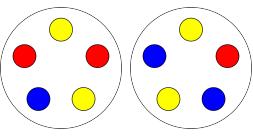


Hit



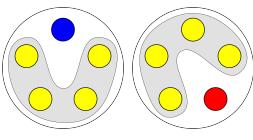
Miss

no pattern of three dots appears on both cards



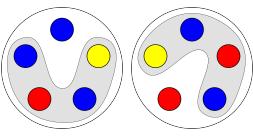
Miss

no pattern of three dots appears on both cards



Miss

a pattern of four dots appears on both cards



Miss

a pattern of four dots appears on both cards

Rules for Two Players

One player shuffles the cards and divides the deck into two even piles. We call these the **draw piles**. Each of the two players takes one draw pile.

The game consists of a series of 24 short rounds. In each round, the players try to win cards by being the quickest to correctly say whether a pair of cards hits or misses. Each player keeps the cards he wins in a **win pile** separate from his draw pile.

To play a round, the players turn over the top cards in their draw piles in unison and race to figure out whether the two cards hit or miss. When a player thinks he knows the answer, he calls it out. After he makes the call, the players come to a consensus on what the correct answer is. (If either player makes another call after the first one is made, only the first call counts.)

If the player who made the call is right, he wins both cards. If the player who made the call is wrong, however, the other player wins both cards, and in addition, the player who made the wrong call must give two cards from his win pile to the other player. If he does not have two cards to give, he owes them and must give them once he gets them.

Once the pair of cards has been turned over, the players may not touch the cards until after someone makes a call.

As soon as one round ends, the players begin the next round. The game ends when the draw piles are depleted. The winner is the player with the most cards in his win pile at the end of the game.

Rules for Three or More Players

For three or more players, the rules are the same as for the two player version, except for the following changes:

The deck is again divided in two draw piles, and only two players assume the role of dealer. All players can make calls and win cards.

When a player makes a wrong call, no one takes the pair of cards; it is put aside in a **dump pile**, and the player who made the wrong call must also put **four** of the cards from his win pile in the dump pile. If he doesn't have enough cards to put in, he puts what he has in and owes the difference to the dump pile.