

SLUFF OFF!

Components:

75 number cards (15 in each suit) valued 1-15

Suits = Red, Blue, Green, Orange, and Purple.

27 Penalty Tokens:

- 5 Blue, 3 Red, 3 Yellow, 3 Orange & 3 Purple (all are -2)
- 6 Black (-3);
- 4 White (-4)

1 Sluffer piece

These rules

Quick Rules

1. Deal 15 cards to each player
2. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer and then moving clockwise, each player predicts (guesses) how many tricks they will successfully take.
3. Players choose the corresponding tokens to the tricks they will take OR a player can choose the Sluffer piece and not take any tokens.
4. The player to the left of the dealer starts the game by playing any card. Other players must play a card of the same suit if they have it. If not, they can "Sluff Off" by playing any card.
5. The player with the highest leading card or highest Trump card takes the trick. Blue cards are "Trump."
6. The player who took the trick discards their token that corresponds to the color of trick taken. If a player does not have the correct token, they may discard a white (Wild) token; if they have neither, they must take a black -3 penalty token.
7. The Sluffer holder can take tricks but does not take black -3 penalty tokens.
8. The player who took the last trick starts the next trick by placing a card face up on the table. Play continues until all 15 tricks are taken.
9. Players with red, blue, green, purple and yellow -2 tokens in front of them at the end of the round score 2 penalty points for each token; 3 penalty points for each -3 black penalty token and 4 penalty points for each -4 white penalty token. Scores are noted on a piece of paper.
10. The player with the Sluffer automatically receives -4 points but adds 1 point for each -3 black penalty token that other players received during the round (do not include those still in the play area of table).
11. Game continues with as many rounds as there are players. The player with the **least** negative points at the end of the game wins.

Object of the Game:

In the trick-taking game of Sluff Off!, sluffing off (avoiding) your opponents' tricks is the power of the game! Sluffing off is accomplished by taking meaningless tricks that other players want or by



making them take tricks they didn't want. Each player is dealt 15 cards at the beginning of a round and must predict how many, and of what color, tricks he or she will successfully take during that round. Players then take tokens corresponding to the number of tricks they predict they will win. The object of the game is to get rid of those tokens during the round so that you do not have any left at the end of the round. But, take a trick where you do not have the corresponding colored token and you will receive a black -3 (penalty) token!



Setting up the Game:

Place the Sluffer piece and the 27 colored tokens in the middle of the table.

Depending upon number of players use the following cards:

- **3 players: use cards valued 1-9 in each color (=45 cards)**
- **4 players: use cards valued 1-12 in each color (=60 cards)**
- **5 players: use all 75 cards**

All unused cards are placed back into the box, they will not be used. Shuffle the cards and distribute them evenly to the players. Players should sort their cards by number and color.

Playing the Game:

There are three stages to the game: Prediction, Playing, and Scoring.

The Prediction:

After all the cards are dealt and sorted, the player to the left of the dealer begins by:

- **Making a Trick Prediction**
- OR
- **Taking the Sluffer**

Making a Trick Prediction:

Players predict (guess) how many of each color of trick they will be successful in taking during the game. They then take the corresponding colored tokens from the middle of the table. Players can take as many tokens as they wish. Determining which, and how many, tokens to take is based upon the cards in the player's hand. The higher the card value, the better chance the player will have to take tricks in that color. **Blue cards are considered Trump and can take tricks led by any other color.**

The next player, in a clockwise direction, has the same choice of making predictions or taking the Sluffer, if it is available. This continues until everyone has had a turn.

Note: The Sluffer can only be taken by one player. When a player decides to take the Sluffer, then the following players must make a trick prediction. It is possible that no one takes the Sluffer.

Also, it is possible that not all tokens are taken during the prediction phase.

- *Chris begins the round and decides to make a trick prediction. In his hand, he has: Red suit cards #3, #7, #11; Blue #2, #7, #10, #12; Green #3, #8, #11; Orange #5, #7; and Purple #1, #4, #5. Based on the value of his cards, Chris decides he is going to take one red, two blue and one green trick. He takes one red, two blue and one green token from the center of the table.*
- *Mary also makes a trick prediction. She decides to take two purple, one blue and two red tokens based on her hand that contains: Purple #9, #10, #12; Blue #9, #11, and, Red #8, #9, #10 and #12, along with other lower valued cards.*

Taking the Sluffer:

Instead of making a trick prediction and taking tokens, a player can choose to take the Sluffer piece. The task of the Sluffer-taker is to force other players to be **unsuccessful** in getting rid of

their tokens and/or to force other players to take penalty tokens. The Sluffer can never acquire any tokens, no matter how he plays and what tricks he takes. **The Sluffer receives 4 penalty points** (*maximum*) and possibly less at the end of a round. This will be explained in detail in the “Course of Play” and “Scoring the Round” sections.

- *Katie makes no trick prediction and decides instead to take the Sluffer. She takes the Sluffer and places it in front of her on the table.*

White tokens (wild and also -4):

The white tokens are wild tokens, and are used only if certain color tokens are no longer present. If a player would like to take, for example, an orange token, and there are no more orange tokens in the center of the table, then he or she must take the desired token from any other player. That player is given a white “wild” token in its place. A player can use the white tokens during the game as a wild for use with any trick that is taken (*see also “Course of Play” and “Scoring and Round”*).

- *Cory is next. Since Katie already took the Sluffer, Cory must make a trick prediction. He wants to take two yellow, one green and one blue trick. First, he takes two orange and one green token from the center of the table. Since there are no more blue tokens in the center, he takes the desired blue token from Mary. Mary receives a white token as a replacement.*

Course of play:

The player to the left of the dealer begins by playing any card of his choice face up in the center of the table. Now, moving clockwise, every player must play one card face up in the center of the table, matching the color played first (*if possible*). Whoever cannot do this plays a card of any color (Sluffing Off) or a blue card. Blue is always Trump.

The cards are reviewed to see who “took the trick”.



If no blue trump card was played, then the highest number in the color played first wins the trick.

If one or more blue trump cards are played, the highest blue card takes the trick. The winner of the trick takes all cards from the center of the table and places them face down in a separate discard pile.

The winning player then places his or her corresponding colored token in the center of the table. This player then leads the next hand with any colored card.



If any player takes a trick for which he or she does not have a token in the appropriate color, that player must take a Black -3 penalty token.

- During play, Chris takes one red trick and discards one red token back into the center of the table. If he takes a blue trick, he discards a blue token back into the center. However, if he takes, for example, an orange trick, then he must take a Black -3 penalty token, since he does not possess an orange token.

Very important: if a blue card is played as the first card of a trick, then the winner of this trick must turn in a blue token. If someone wins the trick with a blue trump card but a different color started the trick, then the winner of the trick may either turn in a blue token or a token in the color that started the trick.

White tokens always act as wild tokens and can be turned in when winning any color of trick.

Note: The Sluffer, just like any other player, can take tricks, but he or she never gets a token. If the Sluffer wins a trick, he or she places the cards on the discard pile and leads the next trick in a color of his or her choice.

Scoring the Round:

The first round ends as soon as all 15 tricks are played. Players who have zero tokens before them receive zero points. You have Sluffed Off successfully -- it doesn't get any better than that!

Each colored token (red, orange, green, blue, purple) that a player still possesses counts as **2 penalty points**.

Each black penalty token counts as **3 penalty points**.

Each white token counts as **4 penalty points**.

The holder of the Sluffer receives (at most) 4 penalty points, never more. However, these 4 penalty points are reduced by 1 point for each black penalty token that another player took during the round. If the fellow players took, for example, three black tokens altogether, the Sluffer holder receives only one penalty point ($4 - 3 = 1$).

Note: If the Sluffer holder should so successfully disrupt the play of the others that they take four or more black penalty tokens altogether, then the Sluffer receives 0 penalty points. A score better than zero can never be attained.

- Chris receives 3 penalty points (he has one black token).
- Mary receives 4 penalty points (she has a white token).
- Katie (the Sluffer) receives 1 penalty point (her fellow players took 3 black penalty tokens altogether. $4 - 3 = 1$).
- Cory receives 8 penalty points (2 for orange and 6 for two black tokens).

All points are noted on paper. All tokens and the Sluffer piece are placed back into the center of the table. The player to the left of the first dealer shuffles all the cards and again deals each player 15 cards. A new round is played in the same way as described previously.



Game End/Scoring:

Play as many rounds as there are number of players. Whoever has the fewest penalty points at the end of the game is the winner.

Tips and Tactics:

- When a player takes a trick, he or she must turn in a token of the appropriate color immediately. The player is not allowed to wait and turn one in later. If a player forgets to turn in a token, too bad! For reasons of fairness, however, all players should pay attention to make sure tokens are turned in correctly – and that black tokens are taken too!
- No more than six black penalty tokens can be assigned in a round. If a player is supposed to take a black penalty token, and there are no more in the center of the table, then she is lucky and does not take one.
- During the trick prediction phase of the game, a player should always remember that if he takes a trick with Trump (blue) and the trick was led with a different color, either a blue or the lead color token can be turned in. Therefore, a player does not necessarily have to take many blue tokens if he possesses a lot of Trump cards (blue).
- A player might want to try to take the Sluffer whenever he or she possesses very few, or no cards, in one or more colors. During the game, if he or she does not have to lead, he or she can sluff off, or even take a trick, to subtly disrupt the plans of the other players.
- In a three player game, the Sluffer can be very beneficial and may be highly sought after. You can choose to make it riskier to take the Sluffer by setting a value of 5 penalty points for the Sluffer taker during a three (or more if you choose) player game.

CREDITS

Game Design by Stefan Dorra

Art by Kwanchai Moriya

**Game development and word play
by Rick Soued**

Graphics by Bryce Cook

