DIAMONDS

A trick-taking card game by Mike Fitzgerald

Components

- 60 card deck in 4 suits (Diamonds, Hearts, Spades, Clubs), each suit numbered 1 to 15
- 110 small plastic Diamond Crystals
- 25 large plastic Diamond Crystals
- 6 Vaults
- 6 Player Aid cards

Goal

- Have the most points in Diamond Crystals at the end of the game.

Set-Up

Note: Key game terms are indicated in these rules in **bold/underline.**

- Place all the **Diamond Crystals** in the middle of the table. This is known as the **Supply**.
- There are two sizes of Diamond Crystals:
  - Small: these are **1-point Diamond Crystals**.
  - Large: these are **5-point Diamond Crystals**.
- Each player takes the following:
  - 1 Vault: The **Vault** is your secure area where you will be able to put your Diamond Crystals as directed by actions during the game. The Diamond Crystals in your Vault should remain secret to the other players.
  - 3 small Diamond Crystals: Place these Diamond Crystals into your **Showroom**. The Showroom is the space immediately in front of you, next to (but not inside) your Vault. The Diamond Crystals in your Showroom are visible to all players.
- 1 Player Aid card: This card uses the symbols shown on the right for **Supply**, **Vault**, **Showroom** (and "other player's **Showroom**") to illustrate the Suit Actions in the game. *Suit Actions will be described later.*

Supply

1-point Diamond Crystal

5-point Diamond Crystal

Vault

Showroom

Player Aid Card

How to Play

Note: See rule changes for a 2-Player game in the *Variant Rules* section.

Deal the Cards:

Randomly determine a dealer for this **Round**. The dealer shuffles the 60-card deck and deals 10 cards to each player. The remaining cards are not used for this Round and are set to the side without being examined. All 60 cards are reshuffled to start each new Round.

[Note that after all of the 10 cards are played (a **Round**), the next dealer will be the player to the left of the dealer in the current Round.]

Passing Cards:

After looking at his cards, the dealer decides how many cards will be passed for this Round. The dealer can choose 1, 2 or 3 cards to be passed. The chosen number of cards is passed by each player, thus returning each to a hand of 10 cards. Cards are always passed to each player's left. Select the cards you will pass before looking at the cards passed to you.

Card Play / Playing Tricks:

To start a Round, the person to the left of the dealer will play (**lead**) a card to start the **trick**. Then, the person to that player's left will play 1 card, and so on, until each player has played 1 card. [The play of 1 card by each player collectively is known as the **trick**.]

Each player must follow suit if they can, i.e. players must play a card in the suit that was led if they have one.

If a player cannot follow suit, then:

    a. that player may play any card, and then

    b. that player *immediately* gets a **Suit Action** in the suit that they played. *Suit Actions are described in detail below*.

> *What makes the game of **Diamonds** different from other trick-taking games is that when you cannot follow suit you will get a **"Suit Action"** to do based on what suit you do play. Suit Actions are also taken by the winner of each trick, as well as at the end of a full Round of play.*

Examples:

1. A Heart is led by the first player. You have at least one Heart in your hand, so you must play a Heart.
2. A Spade is led by the first player. You do not have a Spade in your hand. You may play any card you want, so you elect to play a Diamond. You then get a Diamond Suit Action.

When all players have played one card to the trick, the player who played the highest card in the suit that was led wins the trick.

The winner of this trick then:

    a. places the cards of this trick in his play area facedown, and then

    b. *immediately* gets a **Suit Action** in the suit that was led in the trick. Suit Actions are described in detail below. And then

    c. leads a card to start the next trick. If he has no further cards, the Round is over.

Suit Actions:

Players may be entitled to perform a Suit Action at various times during the game. Each suit in the deck has a different Suit Action associated with it. Here is what each player does when they perform a Suit Action in each of the suits:

- Diamonds: Take a 1-point Diamond Crystal from the **Supply** and place it in your **Vault**.

- Hearts: Take a 1-point Diamond Crystal from the **Supply** and place it in your **Showroom**.

- Spades: Take a 1-point Diamond Crystal from your **Showroom** and place it in your **Vault**.

- Clubs: Take a 1-point Diamond Crystal from another player's **Showroom** and place it in your **Showroom**.

Refer to the Player Aid cards, which use the above icons, to remember each Suit Action.

Suit Actions are always taken immediately when earned. You earn a Suit Action when:

1. You cannot follow suit: Take the Suit Action of the suit you played.
2. You win a trick: Take the Suit Action of the suit you played.
3. At the end of a Round: Players taking the most cards in each suit get that Suit Action.
4. At the end of a Round: Players taking no tricks/cards get two Diamonds Suit Actions.

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Note:

- Players should exchange five 1-point Diamond Crystals for one 5-point Diamond Crystal as needed to make change. When doing so, ensure that all five 1-point Diamond Crystals come from either the player's Vault or the player's Showroom (*but never from both!*).

End of Round:

After all 10 tricks have been played, the Round is over.
Each player counts the number of cards they have taken in each suit.
The **End of Round Suit Actions** now occur *in this order*:

1. The player who took the most Diamonds cards takes a Diamonds Suit Action.
2. The player who took the most Hearts cards takes a Hearts Suit Action.
3. The player who took the most Spades cards takes a Spades Suit Action.
4. The player who took the most Clubs cards takes a Clubs Suit Action.

NOTE: If there is a tie for who took the most in any suit, then no one gets to do the Suit Action for that suit.

5. Any player who did not win any tricks during the Round takes **_two_** Diamonds Suit Actions.

Starting the Next Round / Number of Rounds:

After the End of Round Suit Actions are completed, all 60 cards are gathered and reshuffled to begin a new Round. The number of Rounds to be played is based on the number of players:

- For a 2 player game, play 4 Rounds.
- For a 3 player game, play 6 Rounds.
- For a 4 player game, play 4 Rounds.
- For a 5 player game, play 5 Rounds.
- For a 6 player game, play 6 Rounds.

End of the Game:

After all Rounds have been completed, each player totals the number of points in Diamond Crystals that they have collected. Diamond Crystal points are calculated as follows:

- Each point of Diamond Crystals in a player's Vault is worth 2 Diamond points.
- Each point of Diamond Crystals in a player's Showroom is worth 1 Diamond point.

Example:

A player has 21 points of Diamond Crystals in his Vault and 5 points of Diamond Crystals in his Showroom. Their final score is 47 points, i.e. 42 from his Vault (21 x 2) plus 5 from his Showroom.

The player with the most points in Diamond Crystals is the winner!

If there is a tie, the player among those tied with the most points in Diamond Crystals in their Vault is the winner. If there is still a tie, players share the victory.

Variant Rules:

2-Player Game Rules

To play *Diamonds* with 2 players, we recommend the following rules changes:

For each trick, each player plays 2 cards, one at a time, taking Suit Actions for each card played.

All other rules are the same.

The playing of 2 cards per player per trick allows for some very strategic play, since a player can set up their hand to get the most out of both card plays in each trick.

Example:

Chad and Mike are playing. Mike deals and after passing cards, Chad leads the first card.

Chad plays the 4 of Diamonds, and Mike follows suit by playing the 3 of Diamonds.

Into this same trick, Chad plays another card, and since he is out of Diamonds, he plays a Heart, and takes the Heart Suit Action.

Also, into this same trick, Mike plays the 8 of Diamonds.
Mike wins the trick, and takes the Diamonds Suit Action.
Mike begins the next trick by leading a card.
Play continues in this manner.

4- or 6-Player Partnership Rules

Diamonds can be played as a partnership game with 4 players (2 teams) or 6 players (3 teams) using the following rules:

Partners sit opposite each other across the table.

The Dealer decides how many cards will be passed, but cards are passed between partners. There should be no communication between partners about the number or type of cards to pass.

Each partnership uses one Vault and one Showroom.

At the end of a Round, combine the cards taken by each partner to determine End of Round Suit Actions awarded.

If a player takes no tricks, they get the two Diamond Suit Actions, even if their partner took tricks.

All other rules are the same.

"Perfect Diamonds" - Variant Rules for 2 to 5 Players

Before the start of play, alter the deck of cards as follows and deal the indicated number of cards to each player per Round:

- For 5 players: Use all 60 cards in the deck. Deal 12 cards to each player per Round.
- For 4 players: Remove all 14s and 15s from the deck. Deal 13 cards to each player per Round.
- For 3 players: Remove cards numbered 10 to 15 from the deck. Deal 12 cards to each player per Round.
- For 2 players: Remove cards numbered 9 to 15 from the deck. Deal 16 cards to each player per Round.

Removed cards are placed back in the box and not used during the game.

Use this altered deck to play all Rounds of the game. All other rules remain the same.

This variant provides players with perfect knowledge of the cards that are in play during the game.

Credits:

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