

# MEMBERS ONLY

Welcome to the Club!

By Reiner Knizia

A game of deduction for 3-5 players, aged 12 or more.

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English Edition: © 1996 by Reiner Knizia

English Translation: Reiner Knizia and Kevin Jacklin

Translators' Note: The bullet points in the margins of the original German rules are not reproduced in the English version. No information is lost. Text describing the playing pieces and game board has, however, been added for clarity.

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## ALL YOU NEED TO JOIN THE CLUB

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### GAME MATERIALS

Everything you need in our Club you'll find here:

- ◇ these rules;
- ◇ a game board;
- ◇ 65 cards (13 cards each of the 5 categories: 11 normal and 2 'NO!' cards);
- ◇ 25 betting pieces (4 single pieces and one double height piece, in each of the 5 different colours);
- ◇ 5 white risk pieces;
- ◇ 25 small markers (5 in each of the 5 colours).

*By the way, for a long time women were regarded as 'unclubbable' in the London clubs. Those days are over, but for the purposes of clarity and simplicity, we will refer to players in the male gender.*

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## BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

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**As the small brass plate discreetly points out beside the entrance: Members Only. It is no surprise that strangers are not easily admitted. Because, behind the heavy doors of the English club, strange games are afoot!**

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## YOU ARE VERY WELCOME

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### GAME IDEA AND OBJECTIVE

Who does not know of the Englishman's passion for 'sporting' bets? In order to become a member of this Club, one has to predict successfully the outcome of five different events. Collect the most points from among the applicants and prove yourself a worthy Club member.

Of course, the five bets are typically British...

1. *Which true Londoner dares to leave home without an umbrella?*  
How many days this month will it rain in the capital?
2. *The Queen, the Prince of Wales and much blue-blooded gossip in the press.*  
How many royal scandals will occur in the newspapers this month?
3. *From breakfast to afternoon tea, the 'cuppa' is sacred to the Englishman.*  
How many cups of tea will the British Premier spill during public engagements this month?
4. *Big Ben - symbol of British politics in the historic Houses of Parliament.*  
How many politicians' pasts will catch up with them this month, forcing them to step down?
5. *At Ascot races, the hats are more important than the horses.*  
Embarrassingly, how many Club members' wives will meet each other wearing identical hats this month?

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## IF YOU WOULD FOLLOW ME, SIR...

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### GAME PREPARATION

- ◇ Lay out the board.
- ◇ Each player receives five betting pieces of one colour, and places them in front of him. In addition, each player receives one white risk piece.
- ◇ Each player then takes the five markers of his colour, and places one onto each of the five different symbol spaces of the scoring table (at the top right of the board).

## THE GAME BOARD

The game board shows two principle areas: the betting area on the left and the scoring area to the right.

The betting area displays the five different event categories, each containing betting spaces from '1 or Less' to '4 or Less', and from '5 or More' to '8 or More'. The circled numbers show the points awarded for correctly placed bets. In the course of the game, the revealed cards are placed face up alongside the respective category, at the top edge of the board.

The scoring area consists of five scoring tracks, one for each of the event categories, with the appropriate symbol space at the top. Each track goes from 1-10, with 1-4 in a lighter colour.

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## KNOWING WHAT'S WHAT

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### GAME OVERVIEW

First of all in general: the game is played in several heats, each of which contains a number of rounds. At the beginning of each heat the cards are shuffled, and about half dealt to the players, the remainder staying out of the game (exactly how many cards are used is explained below). Therefore, one never knows how many cards of each category are in the game. This is what one must deduce!

On a player's turn he may place a bet, by placing one of his betting pieces onto a betting space of the chosen category. Subsequently he must reveal two of his cards. Therefore, in time, more and more information is revealed. Finally, at the end of each heat, the players are rewarded for their correctly placed betting pieces, by gaining points in the scoring table. The successful betting pieces are returned to their owners. Wrongly placed betting pieces are lost. The player with the most points after several heats wins the game.

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## THE SIX CLUB RULES

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### COURSE OF THE GAME

#### **RULE ONE: PLAYING A HEAT**

At the beginning of a heat, the 65 cards are shuffled and dealt to the players. With 3, 4, or 5 players receiving 11, 9 or 7 cards respectively. Furthermore, two cards are revealed face-up immediately. These two cards are placed on the top edge of the board, adjacent to their respective categories. The remaining cards are not used in this heat.

The player who explains the rules starts the game. Play then proceeds clockwise. On his turn a player may (but does not have to) place a bet using one of his betting pieces. To do this, the player places one of his betting pieces (a single or double piece) onto any vacant betting space of the chosen category.

*For example, if one believes that at least five umbrella cards will be revealed in this heat (i.e. that it will rain for a minimum of five days this month), then one places one's betting piece in the umbrella category onto the '5 or More' space.*

It is permitted to place several betting pieces under one category. But only one piece per turn, and only on vacant spaces.

Irrespective of whether a player has placed a betting piece this turn or not, he must reveal two of his cards and add them to the open layout. This must be done in such a way so that it is easy to count the open cards in each category.

#### **RULE TWO: THE FIRST ROUND OF EACH HEAT**

There are some special rules for the first round of each heat. The player who places a bet in the first round puts his white risk piece underneath his betting piece (which will double the score later). Furthermore, no cards are revealed in the first round.

#### **RULE THREE: THE END OF A HEAT**

A heat continues until all players have exactly three cards remaining in their hands. No further bets are placed.

All players choose one of their cards to discard, face down. These cards do not count in this heat. Now, the remaining cards in each player's hand are simply added to the open card layout.

#### **RULE FOUR: CARD LAYOUT AND THE 'NO!' CARDS**

To ensure clarity, open cards are laid out by category. One 'NO!' card neutralises a normal card. As soon as a normal card and a 'NO!' card coincide in the same category, this pair is discarded.

#### **RULE FIVE: SCORING**

At the end of each heat, scoring takes place. By category, the open cards are totalled to determine the results of the bets. All wrongly placed betting pieces are lost, and removed from the game.

*For example, if a betting piece was placed on the '5 or More' umbrella space and only four umbrella cards were counted, then that betting piece is lost.*

However, the risk pieces are always returned to their owners; they are never lost.

Correctly placed betting pieces are returned to owners after awarding points on the scoring track. How many points are given is shown by the circled number at the end of each row. The double betting piece and the risk piece give double points. If the double betting piece is combined with the risk piece, the points are tripled.

*For example, at the end of the heat, three umbrella cards are counted. A double betting piece on the '3 or Less' space would score 4 points. A betting piece on the '4 or Less' space would score 1 point. All other betting pieces would be lost in this category.*

The player advances his markers in the appropriate categories on the scoring table by the number of points he has won. It is not possible to score more than 10 points in a category - anything greater is not counted.

When all five categories have been scored, the next heat begins. The player who started the last heat shuffles all 65 cards and deals. The player to his left begins the next heat.

#### **RULE SIX: THE LOST BETTING PIECES**

Sometimes one has to take a risk to gain high scores, or because the safer betting spaces are already occupied. However, lost betting pieces remain out of the game, and reduce one's opportunities in subsequent heats. But, if a player has lost all but one of his betting pieces (or, indeed, all of them!) then he automatically has all of them returned at the beginning of the next heat. A player who has already lost some of his betting pieces may deliberately place the remainder recklessly in order to regain his lost pieces.

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## TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

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### GAME END

The game continues until, at the end of a heat, at least one scoring marker has reached the darker area (5-10) in each of the five scoring tracks. Then the game ends.

Now we will learn who is worthy to enter the Club. Total the scores of each player by adding the points of his five markers. However, only the markers in the darker areas (5-10) count. Markers in the lighter areas (1-4) are ignored. The player with the highest total wins the game and becomes a member of the Club.

*To be an Englishman is to belong to the most exclusive club there is.*

**Ogden Nash**

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## WE CAN GIVE YOU ANSWERS!

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If you have any further questions about the rules, we will be happy to respond. Please write to: Blatz Spiele, Postfach 47 04 37, 12313 Berlin, Germany.