

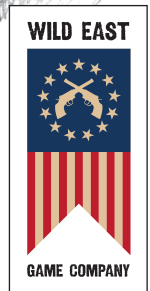
PITMAN



BET ∞ **BLUFF** ∞ **ROLL**

Created by Brian Bollinger

Illustrated by Greg Coulton



THE HISTORY of PITMAN

PITMAN dates to the early days of coal mining in Virginia, in the area we now call West Virginia. Long before labor unions the workloads were extreme and profits were low. The viewers (managers) did not allow the pitmen (miners) to surface for their lunch breaks due to the amount of time lost while the pitmen were surfacing and re-submerging. This was especially true for deeper pits.

The pitmen often found themselves playing quick hands of this game during their short breaks in dingy corners of the mines. The game was originally known as “Devil’s Guts” to the pitmen because co-workers badgered their opponents to wager higher and higher values with phrases such as, “You don’t have the guts to wager higher!”



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The original game consisted of a deck of cards which had a few “point cards,” several “dice cards,” and a handful of dice. The dice cards sometimes featured hand-drawn caricatures of fellow workers on them. It was easy to carry around since individuals needed only to pocket a deck of cards and a few dice to play the game.

At first the pitmen bet with the spare change they had in their pockets. As the popularity and addiction of the game grew, it wasn’t uncommon for pitmen to also bet using hours of labor in the mines as collateral.

As wagering increased, so did the winnings. Any pitman that won a large amount also had to risk fellow miners “assisting” them in lightening their financial load. Bandit cards were eventually added to the deck to reflect the reality of what was happening to winners. And lastly, Sheriff and Deputy cards were added ... although in this game, the Deputy isn’t necessarily on the side of the law.

The game quickly spread to back-room gambling and bar rooms but never seemed to spread much past the western Virginia area. On a large scale, it was never able to compete with games like faro (or “buck the tiger”) or poker and eventually died out in popularity.

We’ve recreated the rules to the best of our ability, added a few components (such as the Roll/Bluff chips), and renamed the game after those that originally invented and played it: PITMAN.



Coal miners.
Circa 1910.

Bain News Service.

The rules of **PITMAN**

Goal

To be the first player to reach a certain point total.

2 players	300 points
3 players	250 points
4 players	200 points
5 players	150 points
6+ players	100 points

Number of players: 2-8

2-4 use 1 deck

5-8 use 2 decks

Each deck will support an additional 4 players.

Age: 12+

Duration: 45 minutes

Contents:

2 PITMAN decks of cards
10 Six-sided dice
8 Roll/Bluff chips
1 High Bidder token
1 Pawn
1 Bid Tracker (board)
1 Set of instructions

1 deck consists of:

25 1 dice cards
15 2 dice cards
1 1 dice Bandit
1 2 dice Bandit
2 1 point cards (Sheriff)
2 2 point cards (Deputy)
2 3 point cards
2 4 point cards
2 5 point cards

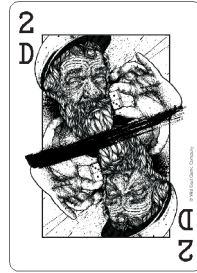
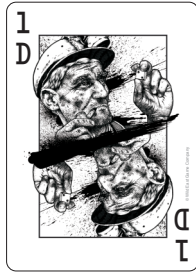
The Deck of Cards

There are three types of cards in the Pitman game:

- 1) The Pitman (or miner) cards let you roll dice. These cards have a 1D or 2D in black in the upper-left corner and have faces of miners on them. The combined number of dice from all of the Pitman cards in your hand is the actual number of dice you can roll. There are:

1 Die cards (25) - a Miner holding a single die

2 Dice cards (15) - a Miner holding two dice



- 2) The Bandit cards subtract from the number of dice a player may roll. These cards have a 1D or 2D in red in the upper left corner and have bandits on them. There are one of each of these cards:

-1 Die card - a Bandit holding 1 die

-2 Dice card - a Bandit holding 2 dice



3) The Point cards add to the total value of your hand AFTER you roll the dice. These cards are numbered 1 through 5, followed by a star in blue. The cards have corresponding stars on their center with the exception of the 1-point cards and the 2-point cards. The 1s and 2s are identified by images of a Sheriff and a Deputy. There are two each of the following points cards:

1★, 1-Point cards - Sheriff. This card can block all bandits. This card can only be used by the High Bidder. If used for the Sheriff ability, it is still used for its point value after the roll. (Example shown on page 10.)

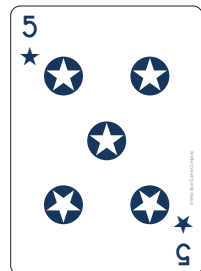
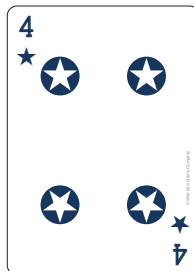
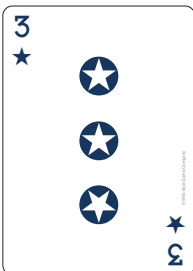
2★, 2-point cards - Deputy. This card can block all Bluff chips. This card may only be used by a player that played a Roll chip.



3★, 3-Point cards

4★, 4-Point cards

5★, 5-Point cards



The Setup

Each player rolls all 10 dice. The player with the most 1s (guns) is the initial dealer. Re-roll any ties. The dealer's position rotates clockwise (to a player's left) around the table each hand. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, deal each player five cards face-down. Players may look at their cards but never reveal them except when they are played.

The Points

In each hand there are 30 points that players are trying to win. The points can be won by a single player or divided evenly among the winners of the hand.

If you are playing a game with eight or more players, it is possible that after sharing the winnings there are extra points left over, or points that can't be distributed evenly. In this case, round the points up. All players that win a hand win the same amount.

Bidding - Round 1

There are two rounds of bidding per turn. Play starts with the player to the left of the dealer. That player must bid a minimum of 1 point. Players bid on the total number they will roll, using up to 10 dice plus any point cards in their hands. Players do not reveal, verbally or visually, the cards in their hands during bidding; they are just going to give a total amount they think they can roll, or they can pass. Once a player passes, they are out of the bidding for that round. Play continues clockwise.

Use the pawn on the Bid Tracker to keep track of the highest bid. The player with the highest bid places the High Bidder token in front of them.

Here is an example of bidding for the first round of a turn:

Player 1: "I can roll 19."

Player 2: "I can roll 23."

Player 3: "I'm out."

Player 4: "I can roll 24."

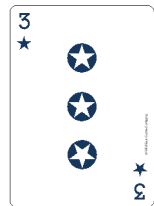
Player 1: "I pass."

Player 2: "I can roll 25."

Player 4: "It's yours."

Player 2 is now the High Bidder at 25 points and has the High Bidder token in front of them.

How do you know how many dice you can roll? Legitimately, you can only roll the number of dice you have supporting cards for. If your hand looks like this:



then you can legitimately roll five dice (1D + 2D + 2D) then add 4 points (1★ + 3★) to the total of your roll. However, the High Bidder will have a chance to bluff what their hand actually is. (Explained in **Declaration of Dice** - page 10.)

The Trade-In

Starting with the player to the left of the High Bidder, each player has the option to trade in any number of cards from their hand. Each player passes their unwanted cards face-down to the dealer and asks for the same number of cards back. The dealer must also announce how many cards they are taking.

Trading might happen like this:

Player 1, passing 3 cards to the dealer: “I’ll take 3.”

Player 2, waves his hand: “I’m keeping all my cards.”

Player 3, passing all their cards to the dealer: “I’ll take 5.”

Player 4, placing 1 card face-down on the table: “Dealer takes 1 card.”

Bidding - Round 2

After all players have had a chance to trade in cards the bidding continues. All players are back in for the second round of bidding. Starting with the player that holds the High Bidder token, they can choose to increase their bid or let it stay where it is. Following our previous example, Player 2 is in the lead with 25 points ...

Player 2: “I’ll keep it where it is.”

Player 3: “I’m out.”

Player 4: “I’ll raise it to 26.”

Player 1: “Not me. I’m out, too.”

Player 2: “27.”

Player 4: “29.”

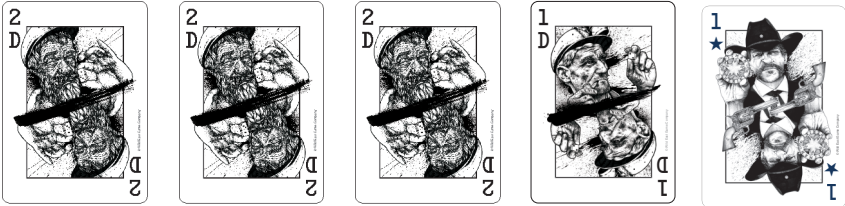
Player 2: “You can have it at 29.”

Player 4 is now the High Bidder at 29 points and has the High Bidder token in front of them.

NOTE: It is recommended that you read the rest of the instructions twice. The first time to get a general overview of the process, the second time to fully understand the mechanics of the process. Refer to the PITMAN chart (page 15) for order of play and resolutions for actions.

Declaration of Dice

In our example, player 4 now has the high bid at 29. Player 4 does not show their cards or tell anyone what they really have. We know, through the magic of these instructions, that player 4 has in their hand:



They can legitimately roll seven dice then add one point to their score due to the 1★ card they hold.

Remembering that any 1s (the two pistols surrounded by stars) they roll on the dice count as 0 points, player 4 does some quick math and figures that, with a little luck, they can probably score about 25 points on seven dice, plus one for the 1★ card, for a total of 26 points. (The average dice roll is about 3.33 points, once you calculate that the 1 counts for 0 points.) If they want any chance at reaching their bid of 29 points, they are going to have to lie, or bluff, about the cards in their hand. So player 4 tells everyone they can roll nine dice.

Revealing the Chips

Each of the other players now takes their chip and places it flat on the table, keeping it concealed with their hand until all players have placed theirs on the table.

If a player places the Roll side of the chip face-up, it means they either believe the High Bidder is telling the truth or they don't think the High Bidder can make the roll. If a player places the Bluff side of the chip face-up, it means

that they don't believe the High Bidder can roll the number of dice they have declared. They are challenging the High Bidder and want them to show their cards to prove it.

When a Bluff chip is played, players who had the Roll side of their chip face-up are eliminated from that round.

If nobody places their chip on the Bluff side, you can move forward to the Rolling the Dice section of the instructions.

Following our example round; the players place their chips on the table as shown...

Player 1



Player 2



Player 3



Player 4 is the High Bidder at 29 points claiming they can roll 9 dice. The High Bidder does not place a chip down.

The Deputy Cards

By placing the Bluff chip down, player 3 has essentially blocked players 1 and 2 from receiving any points this round, thus rendering them inactive for this hand. Their only chance at staying in the round would be if one of them had a Deputy (two-star) card and played it now, thus rendering player 3 inactive for this round. Any players that are not active at the end of the round are not eligible to share in points for that round.

If the High Bidder is forced to show his cards and could have legitimately rolled the number of dice they claimed, they get the full 30 points for the hand without having to roll the dice.

Back to our game:

“Does anybody have a Deputy card?” asks player 4.
“I do and I’m going to use it!” states player 2.

Player 3 has just had their Bluff canceled. Player 1 is now rendered inactive and is not able to receive any of the 30 points available. Player 4 does not reveal his cards.

The Bandit and the Sheriff Cards

As player 4 reaches for nine dice, player 1 plays a -2D Bandit card on them! If player 4 has a 1★ card – a Sheriff – they can play it and block the Bandit. If not, player 4 is only allowed to roll seven dice to try to reach their goal of 29 points. But, as mentioned earlier, we know their hand is D2, D2, D2, D1, and 1★. Yup, player 4 has a Sheriff card. They play it and block the Bandits. Player 4 now gets to roll nine dice.

Rolling the Dice

The value of each side of the dice is equal to the number of pips it shows with the exception of the 1, which is worth 0 points. On the Wild East Game Company dice, it is the side with our logo – the two revolvers surrounded by 13 stars.

Player 4 rolls the dice and gets:



The dice are: 6, 2, 4, 2, 6, 2, 1 (which counts as 0), 6, and 3. The total of all the dice is 31. Player 4 also gets to add 1 point for the Sheriff card, so their turn total is 32 points. Since they only needed 29 to make their bid they won that hand and get 30 points added to their score.

Had player 4 rolled 28 points plus the 1 for the Sheriff card the total would have been 29. They still would have won.

Had their turn total been any number 28 or lower they would have lost. Player 1 and Player 2 would have each added 15 points to their scores.

The Next Turn

Collect all the cards and pass them to the player to the left of the person that just dealt; this person is the new dealer. Shuffle all the cards, deal five to each player, and start again with **Bidding - Round 1** (page 7).

Winning the Game

The game continues until one or more players have reached the point goal. In the case of a tie, continue playing until one person is ahead. The point goal varies depending on the number of players:

2 players	300 points
3 players	250 points
4 players	200 points
5 players	150 points
6+ players	100 points

The REAL History of PITMAN:

Actually, I created this game in the autumn of 2015. Before that, it never existed. While it would be fascinating to resurrect an old “lost” game, that’s not what happened. No coal miners, no back rooms or bars. Just me sitting around my kitchen table with a couple of blank playing cards, a few markers, and my imagination.

-Brian Bollinger



Miners after work.
Circa 1915.

Detroit Publishing Company.



Group of miners underground.
Circa 1910.

Detroit Publishing Company.

PITMAN order of play

- (1) Deal five cards per player **Page 7**
- (2) Bidding - Round 1 **Page 7**
- (3) Trade in Cards **Page 8**
- (4) Bidding - Round 2 **Page 9**
- (5) Declaration of Dice **Page 10**
- (6) Revealing the Chips **Page 10**

- (7) Did anyone play their Bluff side up? **Page 11**
If no, go to step (10).

- (8) Can anyone play a Deputy? **Page 11**
If yes, players that played Bluff are eliminated from receiving points this round. Go to step (10).
Reminder: A Deputy cannot be played by the High Bidder or a player that played a Bluff chip.

- (9) The High Bidder must show their cards. **Page 11**
Did they have the cards to support or beat their bid?
Yes: They get all 30 points without rolling the dice.
No: The 30 points are split among all players that played the Bluff side up on their chip.

- (10) Do Roll chip players have any Bandits? **Page 12**
If no, go to step (12).

- (11) Can the High Bidder play a Sheriff? **Page 12**
Yes: All Bandit cards are ignored.
No: Reduce the number of dice the High Bidder can roll by the total amount of all Bandit cards played.

- (12) Roll the Dice **Page 12**
Is the total of the dice plus any point cards in the High Bidder's hand equal to or higher than their bid?
Yes: They get the full 30 points for the hand.
No: The 30 points are split among remaining active players in the round.

Quick reference - score chart

1 winner	30 points
2 winners	15 points each
3 winners	10 points each
4 winners	8 points each
5 winners	6 points each
6+ winners	5 points each

Quick reference - Sheriff and Deputy uses

A Deputy (2★) can block all Bluff chips. A Deputy can only be played by a player that played a Roll chip.



A Sheriff (1★) can block all Bandit cards. A Sheriff can only be played by the High Bidder.



Additional quick reference sheets are available to download and print from our website.
http://wildeastgames.com/game_pitman.html