

TALL CARD™

Inspired by *firefly*™

You're a week out from Persephone and you can only spend so much time in your bunk, so what are you going to do? If you live in the 'Verse - and especially if you're a crew member aboard Serenity - one common pastime is a rousing game of Tall Card. A scion of the Earth-That-Was game of Poker, Tall Card is a gambling game that's good for gaining credits or getting out of chores.

Standard Deck Components:

1 Hand Ranking Player Aid

Main Deck:

2 of 1-9 of each of the following suits: Bamboo, Plum, & Diamond

4 of each of the following Dragons: White Dragon, Green Dragon, & Red Dragon

Tall Deck:

1 of each of the following suits: Bamboo, Plum, & Diamond

1 of each of the following Dragons: White Dragon, Green Dragon, & Red Dragon

When you're spanning the 'Verse and meeting all sorts of folk from Ariel to the Rim and everywhere in-between, you're bound to encounter different ways to play. So, in addition to the standard deck, we've also provided 48 additional cards and 3 extra Tall Cards so you can play the popular unofficial fan rules, available all over the Cortex or Internet. See the Variants section at the end of these rules for more information.

Expanded Deck Components:

Main Deck:

1-8 of each of the following suits: Wan, Spade, & Swords

The Royals: Tortoise, Unicorn, Phoenix, & Dragon Emperor for all suits.

Tall Deck:

1 of each of the following suits: Wan, Spade, & Swords

Terminology:

Examples use the following shorthand for suits and card types:

b (Bamboo), p (Plum), d (Diamond), RdD (Red Dragon), WhD (White Dragon), GrD (Green Dragon)

Hand: This refers to the cards dealt to you that you keep in-hand.

Rank: You can use from one to five of the cards in your Hand to make a Rank. Ranks are used to determine who wins the round. Different combinations of cards make different Ranks; refer to the end of the rules or the Player Aid for the different Ranks possible and their strength over each other. If more than one player has the same Rank, the Value of the cards used in that Rank are considered for breaking ties. Cards not used to make up a Rank are never considered when breaking ties.

Value: Other than Dragons, all cards have a Value. The Values on the cards range from 1 (the lowest) to 9 (the highest). Cards are marked with their Value in addition to their Suit. Dragons have no Value.

Suits: Other than Dragons, all cards in the main deck have a Suit. You can see the Suit represented by the symbol for that Suit below the Value of the card. There are three Suits in the Standard game: Plums, Diamonds, and Bamboo. There is no Ranking in the Suits, which means the Suits are all equal.

Types: Dragons do not have Suits but instead have Types. There are three Types of Dragon: Green, Red, and White. No Type of Dragon is better than another Type. Dragons are not related to the Suits in any way.

Setup of the Game:

A lot of folks scattered around the 'Verse play Tall Card different ways, and sometimes use a deck to invent their own games. However, we recommend these rules to ensure a balanced, fair game:

Each player receives 100 credits or points at the start of the game. You can use actual credits, chips, or simple pen and paper to keep track. The main deck is thoroughly shuffled by the Dealer and the player to his right may cut the cards after the shuffle. The Tall Deck is also shuffled, and kept stacked separately.

Playing a Round:

Ante Step:

At the beginning of the round, each player places 5 credits in the middle of the table (this is called an Ante).

Deal Step:

The Dealer then deals each player 5 cards from the top of the deck. After each player has 5 cards, the players may look at their hands. The Dealer then turns over the top Tall Card.

Tall Card Step:

Starting with the player to the left of the Dealer, each player in turn may choose to claim the Tall Card, or decline. Once the Tall Card is claimed, move on to the First Bet Step. If no player claims the Tall Card, then the Dealer MUST claim it. Place the Tall Card near the claiming player so everyone at the table is aware of who has claimed it.

Note: The advantages of claiming the Tall Card are listed below. The disadvantage of claiming the Tall Card is that in the Draw Step you may not redraw more than one Hand card, whereas other players may redraw as many as they like.

If the Tall Card is a Suit:

A player claiming a Suit Tall Card improves his Hand when making a Rank with cards that are in the Tall Card Suit. The Hand is considered the highest possible Hand of that Rank regardless of the cards used to make that Hand.

Ex: Mal and Inara are playing. Mal claims the Plum Tall Card. His Hand is 8p,8d,8p,4d,3b. The three 8's makes the Rank "3 Pretty Sisters". Inara has 3 Pretty Sisters as well: 9d,9b,9b,WhD,1p. Normally Inara's hand would be higher, but since Mal has claimed the Plum Tall Card, and his 3 Pretty Sisters includes a Plum, it beats Inara's 3 Pretty Sisters, and would beat any 3 Pretty Sisters.

A player who doesn't claim the Tall Card suffers a penalty when using cards of that Suit. When forming a Rank that uses cards of that Suit, it is considered the lowest possible Value of that Rank.

Ex: Wash and Jayne are playing; Neither Wash nor Jayne have claimed the Plum Tall Card. Wash's Hand is 2p,2d,2d,4p,RdD, and Jayne's Hand is 1d,1d,1b,3p,WhD. Even though Wash's 3 Pretty Sisters is of higher Value, it loses because his has a Plum, and Jayne's doesn't.

If two players have the lowest Value in a Rank due to not claiming a Tall Card, they will split the pot if those Hands still manage to win.

If the Tall Card is a Dragon:

A player claiming a Dragon Tall Card may treat any matching Dragon cards as wild. If any Dragons are used as a wild in that player's Hand, then the Rank of that Hand is considered to be the lowest possible Value of that Rank. Players not claiming a Dragon Tall Card may not play any corresponding Dragon cards of that color in their Hand, and thus cannot use any of those cards to make a Rank.

Note: The Tall Card itself is not used in forming Ranks; it is simply a marker for knowing which Dragon or Suit is Tall.

1st Betting Step:

Next the betting begins. Starting with the player to the left of the Dealer, each player may choose an action below. Each player in turn takes actions until everyone at the table has called or folded.

If no player has placed a bet, a player may perform one of these two actions:

1. Bet: A bet is a wager of between 1-25 credits that you'll win the Hand by having the highest Rank. Announce your bet and place it in the middle of the table. Once a player has bet, he cannot raise or call unless another player has first raised the bet. If no one raises his bet, the betting is over, and play moves to the next Step.

2. Check: A check means that you are not wagering any money at this time, but want to remain in the round.

Once a bet has been made, a player may perform one of these three actions.

1. Call: The player matches the current bet and no more. He is stating he is in the round but doesn't wish to bet any more than has already been bet.

2. Raise: The player matches the current bet, then adds an additional amount (the raise). The player must announce the amount of the raise, and the new total bet. A raise may not be over 25 credits. The raise, plus the amount of the previous bet, becomes the current bet. A player may not raise again unless another player has raised the bet.

continued...

3. Fold: A player may fold. Folding means the player doesn't wish to continue to compete in this round. All money that was previously put into the pot remains there. The player discards his or her Hand (face down) and is out of the round. They may not re-enter the round later. If all but one player has folded, that player collects the pot, and a new round begins.

The Betting Step ends when all players have checked, all other players have called the last bet or raise, or all but one player has folded.

Draw Step:

Starting with the player to the left of the Dealer, each player may discard any number of cards and the Dealer will deal him enough cards to refill his Hand to five cards. The player who has claimed the Tall Card may only discard/redraw one card.

2nd Betting Step:

Starting with the player to the left of the Dealer, each player that has not folded now has an opportunity to bet again. This Step is the same as the 1st Betting Step.

Reveal Step:

All players who have called choose the strongest Rank possible from their Hand. They each reveal their Hands to the table and declare their Rank. Once a player declares a Rank for his Hand, he is stuck with that even if he sees a better Rank afterward. The best Rank takes all the credits in the pot and the round is now over.

Note: Refer to the Hand Ranking Chart at the end of these rules and on the Player Aid to see what Ranks beat what.

Tie Breakers:

Sometimes two players have the same Rank. When this happens there are some tiebreakers which only consider the cards that make up the Rank; remaining cards in the Hand are ignored.

Ties are broken by having the highest card of the two tied Ranks. For example: three 9's would beat three 8's. No Suit has a higher Value than any other, so Diamonds, Plums, and Bamboo are all the same when breaking ties. Only the Value of the cards matter.

Dragons are normally the highest card, so three Dragons of the same color would beat three 9's. However, when a Dragon Tall Card is turned over and becomes wild, if used in a Rank, its value changes to the lowest possible value of that Rank. For example: Red Dragons are wild and a player has two White Dragons, a wild Red Dragon, and two 8's, and another player has three Green Dragons and two 8's. It would appear they are tied, but the wild Red Dragon makes the first player's Hand Rank lower.

If the highest cards are the same, compare the next highest cards. Keep comparing until the higher Rank has been found or until all the cards from all tied Ranks have been compared.

If two or more Ranked Hands are completely tied, then the pot is split between those players. If the pot cannot be split evenly, the remainder is put in the pot for the next Round, or removed from the game if it is the last Round.

Example: Mal and Inara each have a Cratermaker: Mal: 8d,5d,4d,2d,1d, Inara: 8p,5p,4p,1p,1p. Mal and Inara compare their highest cards and both are the same: 8. The next highest cards are also the same: 5, and 4. The fourth card is different: Mal has a 2 and Inara has a 1. Mal wins the pot. If Inara had a 2 instead of a 1, all the cards would have been the same, they both would split the pot.

Next Round:

If the game has not ended (see End of Game below), all unplayed cards are discarded. Any players with 0 credits at the start of a new round are out of the game. The role of Dealer is shifted clockwise and the new Dealer reshuffles the main deck. Note that the Tall Deck is not shuffled unless it has been emptied.

End of Game:

The game ends after each active player has been Dealer twice, or when all players but one have 0 credits at the start of a new round. The player with the most amount of credits wins the game!

Variants:

You can make the game shorter or longer by varying the amount of rounds played. It is important, however, that each player gets a chance to be the Dealer an equal amount of times.

Tall Card is a betting game similar to Poker and most variants of Poker would work for your Tall Card deck. We also encourage you to create your own variations and share them with us!

For some versions, including the popular fan-made rules, you should include the Expanded Deck and remove the '9' cards from the Standard Deck, as well as the Dragons.

Hand Rankings:

Below is a list of acceptable Ranks, in order from highest to lowest. If two or more Ranks are tied in a round, refer to the Tie Breaker section.

5 Pretty Sisters:
Five cards with the same Value, Suits do not matter.
Ex: 5d,5p,5p,5d,5b

Heavy Boat, full of Dragons:
Five cards with three Dragons of one type, and two Dragons of another type. Ex: GrD,GrD,GrD,RdD,RdD

4 Shiny Dragons:
Four Dragons of the same type. Ex: GrD,GrD,GrD,GrD

Cratermaker Countdown:
Five cards, all of the same Suit, and the numbers are consecutive. Ex: 4p,5p,6p,7p,8p.

(Note: Cards do not wrap, so a 9p,1p,2p,3p,4p is only a Cratermaker, not a Cratermaker Countdown.)

5 Dragon Hootenanny:
Five Dragons of any type.
Ex: RdD,GrD,GrD,WhD,WhD

Heavy Boat, 3 Dragons:
Five cards with three Dragons of one type, plus a pair of numbered cards. Ex: WhD,WhD,WhD,9p,9d

4 Pretty Sisters:
Four cards with the same Value, Suits do not matter.
Ex: 4d,4d,4p,4p

2 Dancing Couples of Dragons:
Four cards, two Dragons of one type, and two Dragons of another type. Ex: WhD,WhD,GrD,GrD

Heavy Boat:
Five cards with three of any one Value, and two of any other Value. Ex: 9d,9p,9b,4p,4p

(Note: A pair of Dragons of the same type can be used to make a Heavy Boat. A Triple Dragons Heavy Boat is a better Rank.)

2 Shiny Dancing Couples:
Four cards, two pairs of cards that have the same Value, and the same Suit. Ex: 9p,9p,4d,4d

3 Shiny Dragons:
Three Dragons of the same type. Ex: WhD,WhD,WhD

Cratermaker:
Five cards, all have the same Suit, but are not consecutive.
Ex: 4b,5b,7b,8b,8b

4 Dragon Hootenanny:
Four Dragons of any type. Ex: WhD,WhD, GrD,RdD

Countdown:
Five cards, all consecutive, but not the same Suit.
Ex: 4b,5b,6d,7p,8b

2 Dancing Couples: 1 Dragon, 1 Something Else:
Four cards, two Dragons of one type, and any two cards of the same Value. Ex: WhD,WhD, 9p,9b

3 Pretty Sisters:
Three cards, all of the same Value. Ex: 9d,9d,9p

3 Dragon Hootenanny:
Three cards, all of them Dragons. Ex: RdD,GrD,WhD

2 Dancing Couples:
Four cards, a pair of cards with the same Value, and another pair of cards with a different Value. Ex: 4d,4p,9p,9b

2 Shiny Dragons:
Two cards, both the same type of Dragon. Ex: GrD,GrD

1 Shiny Dancing Couple:
Two cards, each card has the same Value and the same Suit.
Ex: 9d,9d

2 Dragon Hootenanny:
Two cards, both Dragons of any type. Ex: WhD,GrD

1 Dancing Couple:
Two cards, both with the same Value. Ex: 9d,9b

High & Mighty Dragon:
One card that is a Dragon. Ex: RdD

High & Mighty:
One card that has a Value. Ex: 9b

Credits:

Rules adapted by Ed Bryan
Design by Zac Pensol
Additional assistance by Tony Smith



www.ToyVault.com
facebook.com/ToyVaultInc

TM & © 2014 Toy Vault, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Toy Vault, Inc.
525 Saddle Rd.
London, KY 40744
Ph: (606) 257-0133 Fx: (606) 729-0403

Firefly TM & © 2014 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.
All Rights Reserved.

Stay shiny!