

The Game of 31

This game is one of the great, but simple, games that you can play. The rules are easy to understand, but the strategy involves at least three levels. It can be played with the first 6 cards from each suit, but I will use four sets of digits 1 to 6 to represent the cards. See diagram below.

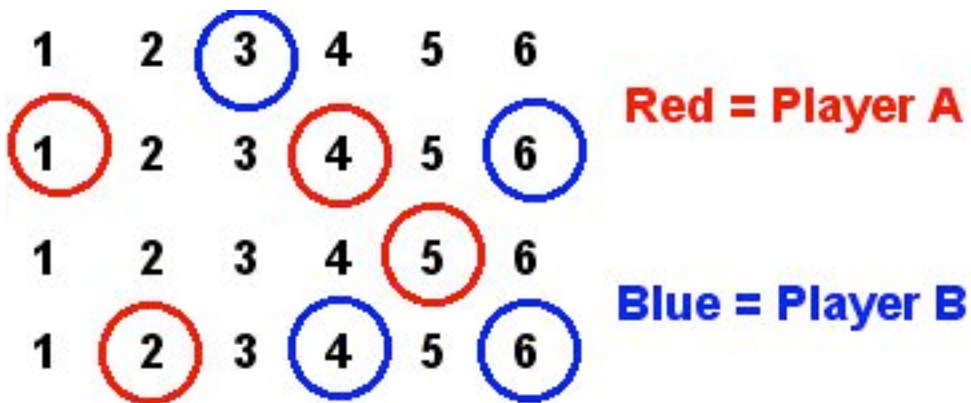


Here are the rules: (1) There are two players, where players alternate choosing a card, or in our case circling a number. (2) Player A's choices and Player B's choices are added together to keep a running total. (3) The player who makes the total equal to 31 wins.

Your mission, find the winning strategy. Answer, next week. Here is a sample game:

Move	Player A	Player B	Running Total
1	4		4
2		3	7
3	5		12
4		6	18
5	1		19
6		4	23
7	2		25
8		6	31

So, Player B wins, by making the total 31. Here is a diagram of the completed game:



Remember, there are "hidden" levels!!!