

# T I C A R D O

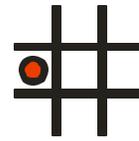
Created by Patrick Kellogg  
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## *1.0 Introduction*

This is a deck of cards in search of a card game. I came up with the idea after realizing that there are only three ways that you can “uniquely” place a single dot in a standard tic-tac-toe grid. All other ways of placing a dot are rotations of those three ways:



is really the same thing as  
just rotated counter-clockwise 90°



## *2.0 The Cards*

So, I created a deck of cards with the 3 unique single patterns, 10 unique double patterns, and 23 unique triple patterns. This gives a total of 36 unique patterns. The dots are in both red and blue, making a 72 card deck in all.

The PDF file included with these rules contains a template for all 72 cards on 9 sheets of paper in Postscript color format. When printed out on Avery 2 1/3" by 3 3/8" White Name Badge Labels (their stock #5395 or 8395), they can be stuck onto the front of a double deck of cards for a nice effect.

## *2.0 The Board*

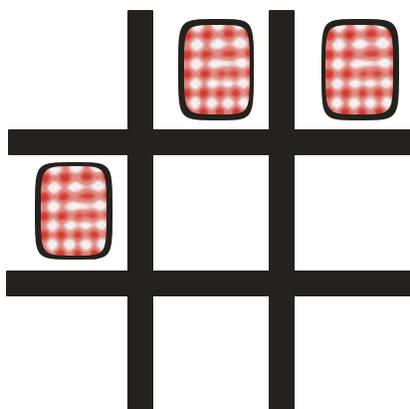
All Ticardo games are played on a standard tic-tac-toe board. You can make a nice permanent board by cutting out four 8 ½ inch strips of papers and coloring them black and taping or gluing them together. Otherwise, an Impromptu board can be created by placing nine extra playing cards “face down” to create a three-by-three grid.

## *2.1 The Pieces*

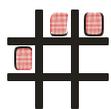
For the advanced Ticardo game, you will need six playing pieces, three colored red and three colored blue. These are not included with the PDF version of the cards. However, red or blue items will work: cut-out pieces of construction paper, or plastic pieces borrowed from other board games.

### 3.0 Solo Games

The first game is solitaire. This game uses only three-dot patterns of only one color. Remove all other cards from the deck until only those 23 cards remain. Clear the tic-tac-toe grid, and deal one card face up and use it to create a new discard pile to the side of the board. That first card determines what the initial setup of the tic-tac-toe will look like. Deal the next three cards face-down onto the grid:



Now, deal yourself a hand of five cards, and place the rest of the deck face-down in a "draw" pile. Hopefully, there will be one card in your hand that is "off by one" of the pattern on the table. For example:



can be turned into



by moving the upper-right card to the lower-right

So, discard the "off by one" pattern, move the card that's out of place, and then draw a new card so you still have a hand of five cards.

Repeat the process, every time finding a pattern in your hand that is "off by one", and changing the pattern on the grid. You win the solitaire game if never get stuck in a dead end where there are no patterns in your five card hand that are "off by one". Bonus points if you can play all the cards in your hand, even when there are no more left in the "draw" pile.

#### 3.1 Solitaire Variation

Play as above with only the three-dot patterns of a single color, but only allow "off by one" changes where the misplaced card is one space away from where it should be. For example (on the next page):


 could be moved to create 
 by dropping the upper-right card down one square. However, 
 can't turn into 
 because the misplaced card is two spaces away.

Bonus points if you can play an entire game where the misplaced card moves in only a “cardinal” direction (that is, up, down, left, or right, but never in into a diagonal square).

#### 4.0 Two-player Games

One variation is to play the solitaire game with two competing people. Again, use only the three-dot patterned cards of a single color. Set up the board with an initial pattern, and then place the three cards face-down on the grid. You should have a shuffled deck of 19 cards left over. Deal three cards to each player, and the dealer goes first.

As in the solitaire game, the player tries to play cards that are “off by one” away from a pattern in their hand. Every time they do so, they discard the card into an individual “scored” pile in front of them and draw a new card to keep three cards in their hand. If the player has no more possible “off by one” cards, their turn ends.

If a player starts their turn with no possible “off by one” matches, they can place a card from their hand face-up into a “discard” pile and draw a new card. Both players use the same “discard” pile, but each keep an individual “scored” pile. If there are no more new cards to draw, the “discard” deck is shuffled and placed face-down.

The game can end two ways: when there are no more cards left in the “draw” and “discard” piles, or when both players have passed in a row. In that case, the cards in each player’s individual “scored” pile are counted up, and the one with the most cards wins.

#### 4.1 Two Player Game With Pieces

The other two-player games need the addition of the six playing pieces described in section 2.1 of these rules. The first game is played with all 72 cards: the one, two, and three-dot patterns, of both the red and blue cards. Clear the tic-tac-toe grid and decide which player is red and who is blue. Separate on the deck so each player gets all the cards of their color (36 each). Put each half face-down to the side of the respective player, and give them three corresponding playing pieces.

At the same time, each player turns over the top card of their deck and places it in front of them so the word "Ticardo" is right-side-up for them. That is the starting position for their pieces. Note that if the players are sitting across from each other, the cards will be upside-down from each. Put the number of pieces (one, two, or three) on the board in that pattern relative to the orientation of that player's starting card. Note that for the initial setup, it is ok if two pieces share the same square – but during play, pieces can only move into an empty square.

Both players draw three cards from their individual "draw" pile to make a three-card hand. The blue player starts first. If they can, they play a card (with any orientation) that's "off by one" where the misplaced piece will be moved into a square that is empty. Then, they discard the successful pattern card into a face-down individual "scoring" pile next to their individual "discard" pile. Then, they draw a new for their three-card hand.

The blue player can also do two other things: they can *remove* a blue piece from the board to match a card that is in their hand. Or, if they have a piece "in hand" (that is, they only have one or two pieces left on the board), they can *add* a piece to complete a pattern they are holding. Note that only *one* piece can be added or removed in a turn – it is illegal to remove two pieces from the board to instantly match a one-dot pattern.

The blue player continues again with an opportunity to score. However, if they eventually can not make a valid pattern, they must end their turn. The "end of turn" has two parts: first, they have the option to move a piece on the board, remove and piece, or add a piece as usual. Note that this will not make a valid pattern yet, but will hopefully set them up for a score during their next turn. Then, they must discard a card from their hand into their own "discard" pile, and take a new card from the "draw" pile to complete their three-card hand. Then, the turn goes to the red player, who gets to try and score as many points as possible until they, too, must pass.

If either player runs out of cards in their "draw" pile, they can shuffle their unscored "discard" pile and take one of those cards. Eventually, the discard pile will run out. In that case, the player keeps all three cards in their hand, and tries to play them. The winner is the player who has scored all 36 of their cards.

## 5.0 Conclusion

If you enjoyed this game, please give me an email to [kellogg@dimensional.com](mailto:kellogg@dimensional.com) telling me what you think. Other free board games can be found at my website at <http://www.patrickkellogg.com/games>, as well as updated copies of this PDF file. Copyrighted 2003, copies of the PDF cards can be distributed freely as long as you include these accompanying rules and this attribution.