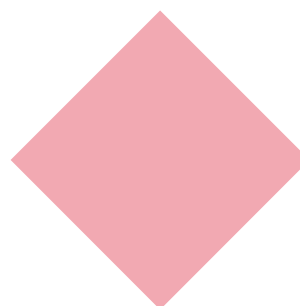
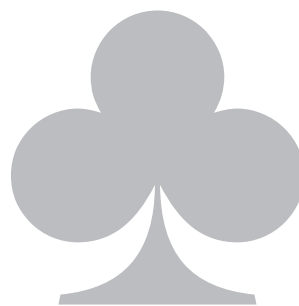
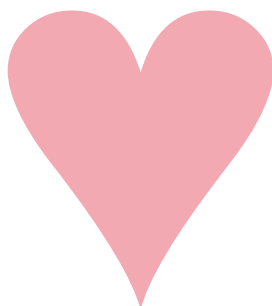
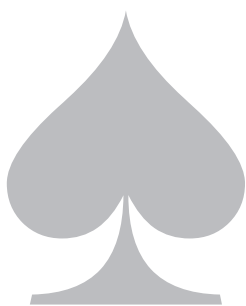




# **TEDESCO GIN**

## *Insights & Strategy*

*By Richard N. Pierro*





This book is dedicated to my parents  
Nicholas and Ann Pierro for being loving  
parents and teaching me to enjoy the little  
things in life—like a good game of gin.

## *Contents*

Introduction

### Chapter #1

Tedesco Gin

Tedesco Gin Rules & Etiquette

Card Symbols & Game Terms

### Chapter #2

Arranging Your Cards

Insights And Strategies

Evaluating Your Hand

Evaluating Your Opponent

Evaluating Your Opponents Hand

Let Your Cards Lead The Way

### Chapter #3

Playing The Odds

Playing Combinations & Triangles

4-Card Melds vs 5-Card Melds

Backing Into A Meld

### Chapter #4

No-brainers

Quick Knocks

Slip-meld Knocks

Don't Be Afraid Of Holding Points

Specking Cards

### Chapter #5

Knowing When To Play Aggressively

Playing To Win

Playing To Lose

Playing To Knock

Playing To Gin

Playing For A Draw

### Chapter #6

Asking For A Bunch

Building A Hand

Remembering Discards

Remembering Cards Picked Up

Discarding Covered Cards

Discarding Safe Cards

Discarding Deadwood

Influencing The Discard Pile

### Chapter #7

Trusting Your Gut

Knowing A Bad Card

Half The Fun Of Playing Gin Is Teasing

Your Competitors

Psychokinesis

Don't Worry About The Idiot Behind You

### Chapter #8

Moosing

Milking Your Opponent For A Card

Finessing The End Game

### Chapter #9

Scoring

Drawing A Line

Score Sheet Strategies

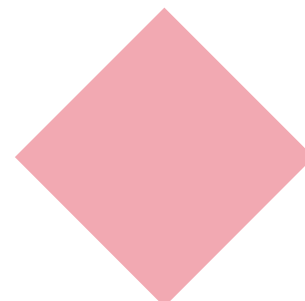
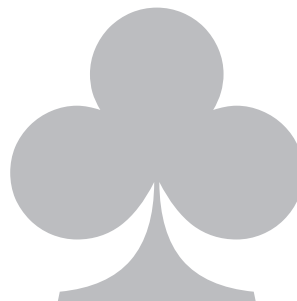
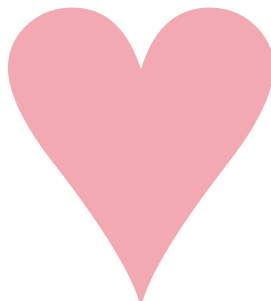
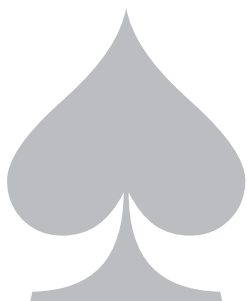
Team Gin

### Chapter #10

Playing A Hand

Playing A Hollywood

The Wrap-Up



## *Introduction*

I was bitten by the card bug early in my youth, watching my father and relatives play poker at the kitchen table. And the head to head battles of gin between my grandfather and father were amazing to watch. Dad was a very good card player, as I learned through the years, and enjoyed a hearty laugh when he worked his cards into a winning hand—which was more often than not. My grandfather, dad's father-in-law, from what I remember, didn't enjoy losing and expressed it with a few choice words in Italian—accented with head to toe gyrations that would make me smile. I couldn't wait to be old enough to join them at the card (kitchen) table.

When that day finally came I was taught the traditional 7-card rummy and eventually 10-card gin, I loved it.

Many years later I joined Tedesco Country Club, a local club, which has a challenging par 70 golf course, and was only two miles from my home and even closer to the office.

Every weekend I would play golf and noticed, as I got my coffee and bagel in the 19th hole, that there always were a couple of guys playing gin before their round of golf. And, after the round, while I was eating lunch with my golfmates, a group 20 guys would start playing head-to-head and team gin.

Naturally, I was curious, so I began watching and asking questions about their version of the game. After a few weeks of observing I built up the nerve to jump into a game. I learned very quickly that I had a lot to learn about Tedesco gin and playing for money—I had to learn that the hard way, by experience and watching the best players as they played a hand.

Although, I was taught the basics by the boys at the club, no one took the time to teach me the strategies, or the subtleties of finessing a hand, or how to maximize it's potential.

That is what this book is all about and hopefully will shorten your learning curve if you are a beginner or fine-tune it if you've been playing for awhile—and losing more than winning.

It may take a while to learn the nuances of the game, but if you like playing cards you will love Tedesco Gin and will enjoy many hours of competitive head-to-head or team gin with your friends and relatives.



## *Tedesco Gin*

Tedesco Gin, named after the golf club that I belong to, is a typical game of gin with a few unique twists, and introduces a player too, what I feel is, an interesting enhancement to conventional gin being played worldwide.

Now, I admit, there maybe a similar gin game played, but to date I am not aware of one. It is said that to become good at the game of gin will take you around 2-3 years, depending on how fast you comprehend the nuances and subtleties of the game, and/or, how stubborn you are.

This book is meant for the experienced player, to help bring your game to the next level using a little finesse and guile. Regardless of your level of experience and expertise this book should make you a better player regardless of which game of gin you play.

You may be the greatest gin player in the world, but if the cards won't meld up you won't win.

Cards run in streaks, just like luck, one day every hand you're dealt is a no-brainer (won within 4 turns) and all your discards, no matter how uncovered, are safe to throw. The very next day, you can't discard without making your opponent's hand, or you're always a card late as your opponent gins or knocks.

Obviously, these are the extremes and you need to be able to assess your hand and work it, whatever is dealt to you. When you get a bad hand you better know how to turn it around or get your points down before your opponent knocks or gins.

There is an on-going discussion at Tedesco pertaining to the percentage of luck verses talent when playing gin. The losers say there is more luck than talent and the guys who win say there is more talent than luck, and the percentages range all over the place. I'd say talent is 60% and luck 40%, with talent pulling ahead most days.

Please forgive the chronic use of male pronouns throughout the book "it's just hardwired." And for the most part my gin playing is done only with the guys.



## *TCC Gin Rules & Etiquette*

Gin Rummy was created by Elwood T. Baker & his son C. Graham Baker in 1909\*.

The objective is to score points. The strategy is to improve one's hand by forming meld's and eliminating unmelded cards—deadwood.

*The goal is to win!*

### **RULES OF PLAY**

1. Players cut for deal, low card deals, players receive 10 cards each.
2. Arrange cards in melds: a minimum of three cards in a suited run (2♥, 3♥, 4♥) or 3 or 4 of a kind (J♠, J♥, J♣, J♦.)
3. Aces may be used low or high (A♦, 2♦, 3♦ or Q♠, K♠, A♠) and around the corner (K♥, A♥, 2♥), always in a suited straight of three or more cards.
4. Dealer turns over an knock-card which indicates what you may knock for. If it's a 5, you may knock for 5 or less. All face cards are valued at 10. Aces must play for gin only. You may play for gin at any time. A suited spade up-card means all points double.
5. The person dealt to has first option to use the up-card. If both players defer the person dealt too goes to the deck for the first card. He then discards and the dealer has the option of going to the deck or picking up the discard. This is done until one player knocks, gins or plays to a draw (when there's only two cards left in the deck to draw from.)
6. When knocking, player states the amount knocking for (*must match or be less than up-card*) & lays down his melds. When knocking, an ace counts as 1. The opponent should assess knocker's melds & make layoffs, lay down his melds and deduct knock amount before his counting points. You must wait one turn to knock when you pick up a discard, unless it is used in a meld. When undercut knocking, opponent gets 25 points plus knock-point difference. Always announce when you gin or knock.

7. Counting points: Lay cards down when counting. Points are face value 2-10, face cards 10, aces 15, gin is an extra 25 points. *If the knock-card is a spade points double.*
8. In the event of a premature knock (to many points or broken meld) your opponent has the option to request a redeal or play the game out with offender's cards exposed to remain exposed & to knock asap.
9. Playing to a draw (*going to the wood*). When there are only two cards remaining in the deck to draw from the game is over.
10. Discard pile cannot be touched other than to pickup top discard.
11. Three games are played in a Hollywood. Scoring is to 200 when you play head to head and two-man teams. Three-man teams play to 300, four-man teams to 400, etc. You can adjust scoring as needed when playing with larger group like a two 7-man teams (our club's record) or when time is limited.
12. When all members of a 3+ team wins they get additional points called a "Barn-Burner," A three-man burner is 25, Four-man burner is 50, etc.
13. No outside advice can be given to players in head to head and 2-man team competition. 3-man teams or more, advice is allowed by teammates.

### **ETIQUETTE**

1. Have fun & keep verbal abuse & cackling within 97 decibels.
2. No crying & moaning about losing, pace of play or lack of talent.
3. Don't touch the discard pile if you value your life (or your fingers.)
4. If a player misses a knock layoff, say thank you while shuffling.
5. Non-player help is not allowed unless they are conjoined twins.
6. If you have thin skin don't play gin.

*Gin is like sex...if you have a lousy partner, you better have a good hand.*

Woody Allen

\*As per Wikipedia

## Card Abbreviations & Game Terms

CARD SYMBOLS (*similar for all cards*)

A♠ (*ace of spades*), A♣ (*ace of clubs*), A♦ (*ace of diamonds*), A♥ (*ace of hearts*)

GAME TERMS

**Around-the-corner:** A meld that uses a king, ace, duce in a suited run, such as K♠ A♠ 2♠.

**Barn-Burner:** When all members of a 3+ team win they get additional points. A 3-man burner gets 25 points, 4-man burner gets 50, etc.

**Bunch:** When a player asks his competitor if he wants to throw the hands in and redeal.

**Case card:** The fourth card of the same value discarded or plucked from the deck or discard pile. (*fourth J, fourth 2, etc.*)

**Covered-card:** A card that is partially safe to discard.

**Deadwood:** Unmelded cards

**Getting under the count:** Being aware of how many points you can lose without losing a street. In team gin: to protect your partner's points won while not losing so many points to get you on, or lose a street.

**Hollywood:** A game of three streets typically played to 200 points.

**Knock-card:** The up-card indicating the maximum number you may knock for. Face cards are 10 points, aces play for gin. Spade doubles points.

**Leaning cards:** Picking up a card, which doesn't make a meld, just goes with a card or combination of cards in your hand.

**Lateral moose:** Discarding a card that is close to what you want, if you discard the 5♦ looking for a 4♦ or 6♦.

**Maximizing a hand:** Assessing the best cards in your hand that will meld quickly to achieve a gin or a knock.

**Meld:** 3 or more cards in a suited run (7♠, 8♠, 9♠) or similar value (9♠, 9♥, 9♦)

**MIA:** Missing in action

**Milking your opponent:** This is a moose on steroids! It happens after you've thrown a few mooses looking for one card—usually ginning the hand.

**Moose:** Discarding a card like an A♣ hoping for an A♥.

**New-Card:** An uncovered card, of which none have been played or accounted for in your hand.

**No-Brainer:** A hand where you are dealt great cards and win in less than 4 turns.

**Non-Connected Cards:** Cards that aren't suited J♠, Q♥, K♦ or are skip valued 2♠, 4♣.

**Playing to the Wood:** When players only have two cards left in the deck to draw from—neither player wins the game.

**Plucker:** The hand picking a card from the deck, guided by a mystical force, to pluck a needed card from the deck for a quick knock or gin. When it's not working we jokingly say "I have to bring my plucker in for a tune-up."

**Psychokinesis:** When you will a card out of opponent's hand. Try it, it works...sometimes!

**Safe-card:** A card that your opponent can't use (*100% safe*)

**Specking Cards:** To waltz or lean a card with another card or combination of cards without making a meld.

**Suited-card:** A card in a suited run or meld. Ex: 4♦ & 5♦

**Triangle:** Three cards that give you better odds making a meld. Ex: 7♦, 8♦, 8♠

**Undercut:** When you knock and your opponent has less points left.



## Arranging your cards

As you fan out your hand to see what fate has dealt you, group the cards into melds and potential melds so you can easily see combinations, and deadwood (cards you don't need.) Set up the cards with a system that will allow you maximize you hand, and won't miss a card for a meld or throw the wrong discard.

Establish a system and stick to it. For the most part, I like to set the cards up right to left. I'm a lefty and optically this feels right to me—I also change it up and fan them left to right.

You should consider grouping melds and similar cards which give the most number of combinations to make melds or discarding a covered card.

I know one guy, a good friend and potentially a good player, who is forever adjusting and fanning his cards and every once-in-awhile a card will be hidden behind another card and he will miss a card for a meld or he will make a mistake when knocking for too many points or a broken meld. Set up your hand, fan them out evenly and think about what you need.

Examples:

7♦, 6♥, 5♦, 4♦, 4♣, 2♠, A♠, K♣, K♦, Q♥

5♣, 3♣, 2♦, 2♠, A♣, Q♥, J♥, 10♣, 9♠, 8♥

A♥, K♥, K♠, Q♠, 9♦, 8♦, 7♦, 5♠, 4♦, 4♣,

Because we play around the corner the aces may setup in the middle of the hand. In the examples above, your high and low cards will float left or right as you arrange cards to maximize combinations. And, when arranging cards like this your opponent won't learn anything when you place a card in, or draw a discard from your hand. If you typically place face-cards on the left or right side of your hand a good player will notice when you draw a card from the deck where you place it in your hand.

I also recommend keeping the cards evenly spaced. Some players will dramatically separate melds with extra space and when you look at the back of his hand it gives you a hint of how he's doing.

Think about which cards you need to make melds so when they turn up you won't miss them. As long as you set up a system of displaying the cards, you will see all potential melds and very seldom miss one—along with not tipping off your opponent what's in your hand.





## *Insights & Strategy*

Now, I don't admit to know all the answers to gin or guarantee that you'll have an 80% win ratio. If you're presently around 40% this book should help you walk away from the card table a winner around 60% of the time in head to head matches. Team match win ratios will vary greatly with the experience of your partners and competitors—plus you'll be at the mercy of the cards.

Before you pick the cards up you must realize your opponent wants to win as badly as you do. Think of each hollywood as a war, each street a campaign and every hand a battle.

When you pick up your cards think of them as soldiers and you are the general about to send them on a mission. The main objective of the mission is to win at all costs, to kick butt—especially if there is money on the line. If you discard each card with a mission, which, is to help your hand, it seems like a winning strategy to me.

In the beginning of the game don't tear apart potential melds for the sake of throwing a covered card, discard your deadwood. There's a greater need to discard covered and safe cards later in the game—especially at the end game. You'll find many times, later in the hand, that the deadwood you discarded earlier may work itself into a moose as the game progresses.

If I have the first option to pickup the knock-card (9♥) and neither of us wants it, after I go to the deck for a card, I will look for a discard that is the same value or closely suited to the knock-card for my first toss—that's if it's not in a meld or part or a potential combination. This allows me to throw a partially covered-card rather than a new-card.

Otherwise, I'll throw a card that will help my hand first. It may be a cover-card, moose, lateral moose or a useless card. It will vary with the strengths and weaknesses of each hand. Why discard a card without a mission that may hurt your hand and help your opponents? If you discard a moose he may pick it up, so consider it important information about his hand, and if he doesn't, he should eventually throw the card you are looking for. If you keep sending out mooses and they aren't picked up, your mission of making melds, or to knock or gin, will be an easy one.



If my opponent picks up the 9♥ knock-card and I have the 9♠ and a 10♥ in my hand, and I don't know how the 9♥ is being used, I may wait a few discards to see if I can figure out his meld, or if I have a good hand, and these cards are in the way of me ginning, I will "gut" discard either 9♠ or 10♥. If I discard the 9♠ and he doesn't pick it up, I know his 9♥ is in a suited run. Even if he picks it up, I will know he has, more than likely, four 9's—more intel!—and I'll still keep track of the discards, looking for the 8♠ & 10♠ to make sure that 9♠ isn't in a suited meld.

Many times your hand will have no deadwood cards, just great combinations. Here if possible, you should throw a covered-card, so that, if your opponent picks it up you'll know exactly how it is being used. If it is a moose all the better.

## *Insights & Strategy*

If you need a suited card and your opponent discards the same card of a different suit, wait one turn for his second discard before you consider breaking up your combination to throw a covered card, it may be the suited card you need.

Sometimes cards in the deck will run together and if half way through your hand you may have a lonely uncovered J and you draw a second J, chances are the third J is coming, ar many times I'll give up on two cards that have melded and discard them, if they are more covered, and keep the two J's waiting patient for the third.

As you near the end-game, you may have a choice of discarding a new card or a card yo know will add to an opponent's meld—give him the add-on. 70% of the time he won't pick it up because he needs to make a third meld. He may have a 3-way triangle that gives him better odds to make the third meld, so he won't pick up the add-on.

If you think he will knock, save add-on card: to layoff on his melds. He may give up going for gin and knock and you can layoff your add-ons, hopefully undercutting him.

If you are waiting for your third meld to give you gin with a triangle and you need to throw a safe-card or a covered-card don't be afraid to break up your triangle or peel off a safe-card from your 4-card meld to try to win. This typically happens at the end of the hand when you don't want to throw the game away with a new-card discard. Never throw a new card during the end-game unless circumstances require it—like staying under the count to save the street.

As you gain experience you'll develop an intuition for plays like these.



## Evaluating Your Hand

When you pickup your hand you need to immediately evaluate it. Which basically means determining how easy or difficult it will be to knock or gin, which cards you are keeping to reach that goal, and which cards will be discarded—and whether the discards will be a covered-card, a moose, a lateral moose or just deadwood (*an unmelded or unneeded card.*)

Each hand will play out differently, you may have all leaning combination cards that should meld up quickly or nothing that goes together. So, your choice of discarding a moose or deadwood will depend on the hand.

If you're on a high-spade knock-card, be mindful of the points in your hand. If you or your opponent has a good hand there may be an early knock, and if your hand is bad, assess where your best chances of making melds are and discard as needed—get the points down, moose to make melds, or unload deadwood. If you were dealt a meld or two you may play loose, keeping the face-card combinations, or conservatively by keeping your low cards to knock quickly, catching your opponent with points. Some players like to keep face-cards with a spade, they know their opponent may throw face-cards first to get their points down—know your opponent and how he plays.

Always check the score sheet to see how many points you need to win or you can lose and still stay under 200, which will also help you decide how to play the hand.

An Example Hand:

10♣, 9♣, 7♣, 7♦, 4♦, 2♥, 2♠, A♠, A♦, K♥  
Knock-Card: 4♠

On first glance the example hand is so-so and hopefully will come together with a few good cards. This hand is relatively easy to evaluate because the combinations are obvious and so maybe the first discard, if all goes to plan.

Note that the knock-card is a 4♠'s (*points double*) and could add up to a lot of lost points if your opponent knocks quickly. So you may consider playing conservatively for the first few cards. If your opponent doesn't take the 4♠'s, discard the 4♦'s and then getting your point liability down by discarding the K♥'s, which is a great moose for the K♠'s.

And, if he doesn't take the 4♠'s he may discard what he thinks is a semi-covered 3♠ which you can use with your 2♠, A♠. If you speck the 4♠, he'll hold the 3♠, if he has it, and won't discard another 4 until he knows how you are using the it.

If he takes the 4♠'s, that's good information for you, and bad for your hand. You may have to wait him out too find how he is using the 4♠'s or, once you'd worked the hand down with melds, use the 4♦ or 2♠ too knock, or undercut him.

Every hand will test your ability and you will need to adapt, change strategy and feel your partner out as the game progresses.

If you develop the ability to maximize each hand (keeping the best cards for melding) you will find yourself ginning, knocking and winning more often.



## *Evaluating Your Opponent*

When you belong to a club and play gin with the same guys week after week you get to know their strengths and weaknesses, how well they play, if they moose, remember discards, have a lousy end-game, don't keep track of the score, ad infinitum. Obviously this a major advantage if you are a good player.

The best way to learn about a player is to stand behind him and watch how he plays—after a hollywood or two, you will have a good feel for their game.

Some players, during the course of a hand will make comments that will give their hand away, and give you insight to their melds, or what they may need. Many times your opponent will have a tell (a mannerism) that announces a moose or if he is squirming in his seat he may be holding a lot of points.

During the course of a hand many players will study a discard for a while contemplating whether or not to pick it up and add it to a meld, lean it, or change around a meld—maybe to throw a safe card. Keep an eye open for these subtleties, they will give you an idea what he needs and what's in his hand.

When you know which cards you need ahead of time you will avoid lengthy pauses over a discard. So, take a good look at your hand and consider what is needed to knock or gin.

Some players like to state that they know how the discard you just picked up is being used. When they say that, they are telling their opponent what they have in their hand.

I have a good friend that thinks his game is a little better than it is. One day he said to his opponent, "I know how you're using my

discard. I'll bet you a \$100." Then he mentioned the card and how he thought it was being used in his opponent's hand and restated his bet.

Well to make a long story short he lost the bet, he didn't know how the card was being used and we all had a good laugh at his expense, and he learned a valuable \$100 lesson.

Because my friend had a few cards in his hand that partially covered his discard he thought he knew how the card was being used and he didn't. Announcing that was bad enough but even worse it gave a lot of intel to his opponent on *his* own hand. So avoid making comments like that, even if you are 100% sure—*unless want to throw your opponent off what's in your hand.*

I have another buddy that loves to lean cards, even after we've told him many times it's not advisable to be a serial-leaner. Many new players like to lean cards not realizing how much intel it gives their opponent. They think because they've leaned and won a few times it is the correct way to play. Granted there are a few times I'll lean a card—if my hand has nothing connecting or I'm trying to reduce points to get under the count, but very rarely. Learn to be patient and let the hand come together, hold cards that can develop when you get the right card. With a good player the odds are against Mr. Serial-Leaner.

Some players will habitually discard a new, uncovered-card near the end of a hand that will gin their opponent. Eventually they will come around, but it may take a few negative verbal comments from their partner to wake them up.

One of my mentors, who has since passed on too the big gin table in the sky, used to pick up the knock-card if it was a duce, regardless if he needed it—without looking at his hand. I guess he thought it would bring him luck or cover an ace or just screw up his opponent's hand. That turned-out to be his trademark move—along with winning most of the time!

## *Evaluating Your Opponents Hand*

In the beginning of the hand just worry about maximizing your own hand and trying to avoid tossing discards that your competitor will use. I like to discard cards that will help my hand—mooses, lateral-mooses or deadwood, keeping all potential melds working.

As the game progresses your opponent will usually pickup one or more of your discards. You'll need to figure-out, as best you can, how he is using those cards, which will help you throw a discard he can't use, and hold on to a card he may need—or layoff if he knocks.

If he picks up a few of your discards and doesn't knock, he maybe waiting for a third meld, building a hand or trying to gin. If he starts looking at the knock-card he may be ready to knock—or waiting to undercut you when you knock.

When a hand is bad some players will lean a couple of discards in the beginning of a game trying to build a hand, thinking this will increase their odds of making melds. Sometimes this works but I don't do it often because it gives the opponent intel on my hand.

You'll get to know who leans after a while, especially after you feed them a card that make their lean card a meld, or even worst, gin.

A good player won't lean cards, he will check the score sheet and evaluate how many points he can afford to lose and work his points down while maximizing his hand by keeping the best card combinations to build melds.

There will be times when you won't know a thing about your opponents hand and he'll have a no-brainer and knock or gin without picking up any discards, but that's the way the game goes.

## *Let your cards lead the way*

If you're patient and playing smart, many days, your hand will seem to take on life of its own. Melds will fill, uncovered discards will not be picked up, and mooses will be answered quickly. On days like this you will be knocking or ginning early and catching your opponent with a lot of points.

Take a look at the score sheet, make a decision how to best play the hand, and let the cards direct the course of play, don't tear up your hand early, maximize its potential by keeping the best combinations, even though they may be not suited or in melds. Discard the deadwood (useless cards) and watch your hand come together.

Many newer players are impatient and lean cards, giving their opponent too much intel about their hand, or they'll tear up great combinations to throw, what they think is a covered card. And many times they are answering the opponent's moose.



## *Playing the odds*

The simple truth in playing cards is if you play the odds you are going to win more often than lose, and that's what it's all about—winning, along with having a few laughs with your buddies!

At the start of a hand if you keep all your combinations, and throw only covered and uncovered deadwood for the first couple of discards, this will increase your odds of melding sooner rather than later. If you break-up combinations to discard a covered card, and keep the deadwood, you will reduce your odds of melding.

As you play through a hand you should ask yourself whether a discard you are about to throw has the best odds of not being picked-up. There will be times you will have to discard without knowing that answer—but as the saying goes, *“that's why they call it gambling!”*

With every discard you throw you should calculate the odds of it being used by your opponent. If you have two threes in suited runs and you also have a third unmelded three, the odds are low that your opponent will use it. But before you toss it check for suited cards above and below that unmelded three. If it works out to be your safest covered card discard it, otherwise discard a safer card.

You can also play the odds to improve your hand by moosing. If you have 2-3 moose cards in the discard pile odds are that your opponent will answer with one or two, thinking they are covered cards.

Remember, you'll need to figure out: what's been played, what you and your opponent have for melds, and what has been tossed into the discard pile. If you don't know that, how can you play the odds? You can't! Playing the odds can only happen if you know what's going on, so, play smart-gin and put some effort into remembering what is going on!

## *Playing Combinations & Triangles*

In the beginning, and when building a hand, holding unmelded combinations increases your odds of getting a card or two to create melds, rather than braking up a combination to throw a covered card. After you've made a meld from a combination of four or more cards they could also provide you with covered discards.

I like to parley combinations into one or two melds if my other cards don't look promising. It often confuses an opponent by thinking I may have a suited meld and wouldn't need a similar card of a different suite.

Combination Example: 6♥, 7♠, 7♦, 8♦, 8♥  
You could get a 7♥ to make a meld between your 6♥ & 8♥ or use it with the 7's.

Now, with these cards, after getting the 7♥, I can hope to pluck another 7 or 8 and make two melds, or start discarding covered cards.

Triangles, are a gift from heaven. Just looking at a triangle gives me a feeling of victory around the corner. When you hold a triangle the odds increase substantially, especially near the end game.

Triangle Combination Example: 7♠, 7♦, 8♦, waiting for a 7♥ or 7♣ to go with your 7's or the 6♦ or 9♦ to make a meld with your 7♦ and 8♦.

In the example above, rather than waiting for 2 cards that would gin you there would 4 cards—depending on what has been discarded already, and in your opponents hand. That means you have four chances for gin rather than two.

I tend to favor triangles through-out a hand and will discard two loose same-value cards (ex. a pair of 8's) especially if they are better covered.

## *4-card melds vs 5-card melds*

In 10-card gin there are usually 3 melds in a hand: a 4-card meld & two 3-card melds which equals gin. Or, three 3-card melds and a knock-card. Generally, if you have 4-card meld you won't need or want a 5th card because you are waiting to make another 3-card meld.

There are times adding a 5th card will allow you to: knock, keep a card from your opponent, make combinations that may lead to another meld, or, get your points down if you need to stay under the count.

## *Backing into a meld*

Every once in a while you'll back into a meld. Say a 5 was discarded and you didn't pick it up, later in the hand your opponent throws another 5 and you pick it up because you've been leaning 5's on a 4-card meld (5,5,6,7,8) hoping to get the case 5, making a meld using the remaining three 5's and your opponent may think you are using it in a suited run until it becomes obvious to him you backed into a 5 meld—and if he doesn't figure it out, he'll be in for a big surprise at the end of the hand.



## *No-Brainers*

A no-brainer is a great hand that allows you to gin or knock within the first 4 turns. I've seen players dealt gin from the get-go, or pick up the knock-card and gin or knock before his opponent knows what hit him.

This won't make your opponent happy, especially if you are on a spade which doubles the points, and when it happens to you, just smile and add up the points—ya right!

We used to have a small chalkboard behind the bar and when a player lost over 200 points his name and points were posted for all to see for a few days—or until another player's name replaced his.

## *Quick Knocks*

When you have a hand that melds up quickly, you need to consider knocking or going for gin.

Take a look at the score sheet. If you need to get on a street, or can win a street with a few points—knock.

If you need 35-40 points and have a good chance to gin, figure out the odds. If there are 3-5 cards still available in the deck that will gin you take one or two plucks. That's if it won't hurt you if your opponent knocks or gins before you. You'll have a feel for the hand and if he is holding many points.

If most of your gin cards are gone—knock. You should get close to 30 plus points with a quick knock in the beginning of the game and 15 plus points 6-8 cards into the game.

As the old saying goes, "you never go wrong making a profit."

## *Slip-Meld Knocks*

When you decide to knock, and you think your opponent has a layoff card or two, there will be times you can change your melds around to avoid a layoff.

You may have to knock with a higher number, but if it stops him from laying off an ace or undercutting you, do it.

If your opponent knocks first, check-out his melds to see if there are better layoffs if you change your melds around.

Many a point and street has been lost because of overlooked layoffs by slipping your melds around to save points.

## *Don't be afraid of holding points*

Don't run scared when you are holding aces, which are valued at 15 points, or face cards (10 points) when you are caught with them.

Take a peek at the score sheet and decide if losing "??" points will cost you a street and make a decision how to play the hand. Most times the hand will dictate which cards offer the best odds of making melds. Work with the hand not against it.

Many players get cold feet and unload their high cards, keeping low-cards, deadwood or non-connected cards that won't meld up quickly.

If I know that about you I'll hold my high-cards and wait for you to discard them making my hand easier to win.

## *Specking cards*

Some players tend to spec cards (waltz or lean) with a card or combination in their hand. I don't like or recommend specking cards—in most cases. I wouldn't recommend it unless your hand is terrible and the card really helps, or you have a no-brainer and could knock on the next turn by picking up a low card.

Patience is one of the nuances of the game many players don't have. Ninety-percent of the time your hand will come together without leaning cards, if you'll only develop the talent to keep the best potential cards, and the patience to wait for your hand to come together.

When you lean cards you are giving too much intel to your opponent. Think about it, you have 10 cards in your hand and if you lean a card, that gives your opponent info on about 20-30% of your hand—20-30%!

A few players, drive me nuts with the number of cards they spec in a hand. These guys get lucky every once in a while, but in the long run they'll lose because the odds are against them.

If I have a 6 in a suited run and discard a 6 which my opponent picks up and leans with his 6, he only has the case six left to make a meld and if I figure that out, I'm not throwing the fourth 6 if I get it first. This example illustrates, at its most basic level, the odds working against a player, not to mention the intel—I'm also not throwing a 5, 6 or 7 until I know what's going on in his hand.

Just remember, in this game you need to discard, so why turn a potentially safe discard into a lean and info for your opponent?



## *Knowing when to play aggressively*

There are times when to need to play aggressively to win a hand or to keep your opponent off a street. It doesn't always work but you need to know when to apply this strategy.

1. If your 25-30 points from winning a street you should consider going for gin. Very often a quick knock in the beginning of a hand will get the points needed and will negate the need to go for gin.
2. Let your hand play-out regardless of the number of high cards in your hand. Until you need to unload that is. Take a look at the score sheet and decide how aggressive to be.
3. Don't be afraid to throw a few mooses or uncovered card when needed.
4. Go for gin if you think your opponent may undercut you if you knock.
5. If you're playing team gin, just starting a hollywood, and your partner loses less than 35 points—go for gin to keep your opponents off. If no one has scratched score sheet and you can put your team on first street, that's a big advantage—especially if you win game two to get on second street and get a spade on game three which could skunk your opponents in one or more streets!

Dido for similar crucial moments in a hollywood such as getting points back to save a street, without jeopardizing streets two or three.

These are decisions you'll need to make often during a hollywood so be prepared to recognize these moments.

As you gain experience you will also gain confidence and you will find yourself taking

chances like throwing uncovered-cards and going for gin when you can knock. Some days it will work so well you'll start thinking the game is getting too easy and thoughts of being unbeatable will run through your mind. Then you'll get into a weeklong losing streak that takes you to the brink of suicide.

Welcome to the game of gin, one day you've got it and the next your going to the bank to cover your loses. Eventually you'll figure it out when to be aggressive and when to run for the hills.

## *Playing to win*

When you sit down at the card table you are there to enjoy the moment and to go home a winner. The cards and a bad partner may squash your hopes of doing a victory dance, so play smart, maximize your hand and keep your losses down to a minimum. Double check for layoffs when your opponent knocks. Keep and eye on the score sheet and don't be afraid to double check the score keeper.

Take the advice in this book to heart and reread it until the insights & strategies sink-in, and don't play "stupid-gin!"

## *Playing to lose*

If you are dealt impossible cards, hold on to your seat, evaluate the hand, maximize the best combinations and work your points down before you get caught with a mitt full.

Remember, your opponents hand may be just as bad and every once in a while you'll win one of these hands—and after you pat yourself on the back, say a prayer that you'll never see another hand like that again.

There are times you may have to throw your opponent gin so you can stay under the count. If that card keeps you under 200 points you may lose the hand but not the street— you get another chance to win that street.

## *Playing to Knock*

One of the first rules in gin is getting points on each street so you won't be skunked. The odds are that knocking, if it's done early, will accomplish that. Once you've scratched the score sheet you can play as the cards and your talent dictate.

Many times when you fan out the cards you will notice that with a few crucial cards you'll be able to knock. If the knock-card is a 6 to 10 there is a good chance for a quick knock. When it's a 2-5 more than likely it will take longer.

These hands can be a little scary when you are holding two aces and on a spade. But remember be patient and if things don't work out you can start unloading the aces—or you may pickup a third ace to make a meld.

As the game progresses, if your opponent hasn't knocked there is a good chance that he can't, so knock when you feel it is right. You'd be surprised how often, when knocking, the next card in the deck would've ginned your opponent—timing is everything! If he has a few melds and is not knocking, you need to consider that, if he knows about your melds, he maybe waiting for you to knock so he can layoff a card or two and under-cut you.

If you have three 3-card melds and only have 1 or 2 cards available for gin, knock, for all you know they could be in your opponent's meld or he'll lay them off.

When you're playing as a team and your partner has won enough points to get you close or out of a street you are obligated to knock as soon as you can to protect your partners points and win the street.

I'd say the majority of good players knock more than gin.

## *Playing to gin*

There are many reasons to hang in there for gin, all of which depend on your hand, your opponent's hand, how the street scores stands and if you can win, save or get on a street by ginning.

Say you're ahead on a street 175 points to your opponents 146—all you need are 25 points to win. If you think you have a good chance for gin and have 3-6 cards still in the deck that will gin you—go for it. If the hand takes a little time to come together made sure you are under the count (54 points)—you can afford to lose 53 points without losing the street.

If you can't gin and are holding three melds and a low card, or a layoff card—under-cutting your opponent when he knocks will win the street as well.

The same strategy applies when you are playing team gin. You may need to negate your partner's point loss to save a street or get your team on a street, or to keep your opponents off a street. As you know, it is important to get points on all three streets as soon as possible. If you partner loses 24 points and you have a good hand go for gin to keep them off—especially if losing points won't cost you a street.

If your hand comes together quickly or you are on a spade you could knock and more than likely get enough points to win the street anyway. If the knock-card is an ace you must play to gin.



## *Playing for a draw*

You should play for a draw as you near the end of a game, when you realize that your hand may be un-winnable—because the cards you need to knock or gin are: in the discard pile, your competitor's melds, or hand—and he can't knock because you're both holding new cards that look dangerous, or, each others layoffs waiting for someone to knock.

So, you start thinking about playing for a draw, where neither player wins the hand. If you can work yourself down to the last two cards in the deck, and no one knocks or gins, it's a draw.

You may be 10+ cards out from the last two cards, so you'll need to discard safe cards which your competitor can't use. You may have to peel off a card from a 4-card meld or break up a meld, just too guaranty throwing a safe discard—while hoping your competitor doesn't gin or knock along the way.

When playing for a draw don't be tempted to pick up a discard, unless it's for gin. It may give your competitor another chance to gin or knock or force you to discard a card he may use. If a card looks bad keep it and throw a safe card.

If you realize that your competitor has broken up his hand playing for a draw and is holding a few points, you may consider knocking if you can, only if you know you can get points, otherwise stay the course for a draw.

Another reason to play for a draw is if your partner has won enough points to put you on or out of a street and you don't want to take a chance on being undercut if you knock.

This is another instance when knowing your competitor, his hand and his game will help you win the hand.

Every once in awhile when playing for a draw you or your competitor will stumble onto gin, usually on the last card, so. If you are forced to breakup a meld make it a low point meld if you can.



## Asking for a Bunch

If you are an experienced gin player you know a bad hand as soon as you fan it out—no two cards match (J♦, K♠), skip straights (7♥, 9♥), all unmelded points and near impossible to win.

At our club, we started asking for a “bunch” if a hand looked as described above—or just too much work to play, especially if it is a spade. If both competitors agree, they throw the hand in, and the dealer redeals. If your competitor refuses you’ve just told him your hand is awful and you’ll need to build a hand quickly. Take a look at the score sheet, see how you stand and how many points you can afford to lose.

If you ask for a bunch and your opponent refuses and you have the first option on the knock-card take it. Many players who say no want the knock-card for a meld—after you pick it up ask your opponent again if he wants to bunch.

To our amazement, if the “Bunch” is refused, the person asking for a bunch wins about 60% of the time. When this happens we call it “The Curse of the Bunch.” Amazing, but true, and it proves that the “Bunch” should be not allowed, because every hand can be a winner regardless of how bad it looks.

That said, a “Bunch” does provide a moment relief if accepted, and a few laughs along the way, while avoiding the “Curse.”



## Building a Hand

The building blocks of a gin hand are genetically coded cards that should and need to be together in combinations—which produce offspring, called melds. How’s that for literary creative license?

Arrange your hand, keeping cards of similar value leaning together, even if they are not suited. At this point you are playing for a card or two that will work into a triangle and then a meld. You’ll find that when you group the cards together in this manner there will be obvious cards which don’t fit the game plan—usually on the far ends of your hand.

Example Hand:

7♠, 9♣, J♦, Q♠, K♣, A♥, A♠, 2♦, 3♣, 4♥  
Knock-card 6♥

My first discard in the example hand above would be the 7♠ and hope to meld my aces, or get a card from the deck to lean with any other card in the hand. At this point just about any card drawn should lean or make a triangle with one or two cards in the example hand. If a Q♣ came out of the deck I’d have a triangle with the Q♠, K♣ and I discard the 9♣, and so on until the hand builds with a little help from you.

If you need to work your points down, leave yourself something to play with and don’t just gut your hand by discarding aces and face cards. Take a peek at the score-pad and plan a course of action.

Once you make a meld or two you’ll start thinking of winning the hand.

## Remembering discards

One of the most important functions in gin is remembering the discards. Between knowing what's in your hand, what your competitor has for melds, and keeping track of the discards, you will find gin a lot easier to play.

There are only 52 cards, of which, 10 are dealt out to each player along with 1 knock-card, so that leaves 31 cards left in the deck. If you keep track of the discards, and what your competitor has picked up, you will know if a card is still available and can patiently wait for it—especially if most of the cards around it are in the discard pile.

When you know which cards have been discarded, and how safe or covered a card is, you will seldom throw one your opponent may need or use and you won't lose a hand by waiting for a card that has already been discarded earlier in the game.

Develop a method of remembering the discards and practice it every hand.

*One of the guys has a bad habit of partially showing a discard before he throws it. He'll pull it out of his hand and wave it slightly as he decides to throw it. If he changes his mind he'll put it back into his hand and discards something else. With this little maneuver you can't help seeing his card, thanks to him. I've told him a thousand times and he still does it every once in a while. Some people say an exposed card is a played card.*

## Remembering cards picked up

If you don't keep track of which cards your opponent has picked up, you are going to be an easy mark. One of the keys to winning at gin is knowing what's going on in your competitor's hand.

The cards he has picked up, which you threw him, are like decoded messages that have just been handed to you to help you win that hand. If you don't use that intel why are you playing the game? It may take a while to figure out if a card he took is in a suited meld straight or three of a kind, but at the least you know a little something about his hand.

When you remember the cards picked up, you will know what he has for melds, what he maybe leaning, what he may need, how close he maybe to knocking or ginning, if you should start bailing, if you have a card to layoff, if he has a card you need in a meld—so much intel.

If you don't use that intel you don't deserve to win, and if you do win, it's just dumb-luck!



## *Discarding covered cards*

Gin is a game of skill, odds and luck. If you are a gambling person you know that if you play the odds you'll win more often. So learn to be patient and figure out which cards in your hand are the most covered to discard. When you have a couple of cards to choose from take the time to figure out which card is safer, or best benefits your hand. If you blindly discard without thinking which card is the safest and why, you are going to lose money and the respect of a few gin friends.

I play aggressively and feel every discard should work to your advantage—soldiers on a mission. At the beginning of my hands, the first discards are mooses or deadwood—the most useless cards to your hand.

If you are discarding deadwood, and you have a few choices, discard the one that will help your hand the most, like a lateral moose. After a while your opponent will think every card is a moose and they will eventually throw a card that will help your hand. It doesn't always work, but the odds are with you and you will win more often.

Think about which cards your opponent picked up and how he is using them. Is he using the card in a suited run or a meld of the same value? This is information that is priceless and if you are not considering it you won't know if a discard is covered, and you're going to lose.

If you have two melds of 4's & 6's without the 4 or 6 of diamonds there is a good chance your opponent has a suited run with the 4♦, 5♦, 6♦'s in a meld. If you pluck a 3♦ or 7♦ from the deck you better, check your memory and scan the discard pile for diamond discards above or below those cards. If there are none, consider the odds of discarding it verses tossing a safer card and wait until they become safe to discard.

If three J's have been discarded and you pick up the fourth J don't assume that it is safe because you've seen three J's discarded. That may have been a moose by your opponent looking for the J you are about to discard. Again, check your memory and discard pile for suited cards above and below your J before you discard.



This process should be used to evaluate every card you discard.

The best player in the club, told me years ago you should always know how your opponent will be using your discard before you throw it. That was one of the best insights into gin I've ever learned. That's 100% useful knowledge about an opponent's hand. Remember this and try to apply it as often as possible.

As you get into the game you should keep track of the discards. Develop a system to remember as best you can. This is what separates the winners from the losers.

## *Discarding Safe Cards*

A safe card is a card that your opponent can't use. During the course of the hand, between the discard pile, your melds and your opponent's melds, you will know if a card is 100% safe to throw and cannot be used.

Discarding a safe card becomes very important during the end game when you are trying to play to a draw, gin, knock, or avoid ginning your competitor or being undercut.

Playing to a draw (playing to the wood) is better than throwing him gin, especially when winning or losing a street is on the line.

## *Discarding Deadwood*

Deadwood is a card that is no help to your hand.

In the beginning of a hand, after pairing up, melds & potential melds you will have one or more cards that are no help to your hand. Rather than tear up a potential meld bearing combination to throw a semi-covered card, discard a deadwood card. At this point, you don't know a damn thing about your competitor's hand and any discard you throw could be picked up—it's a 50-50 crapshoot. As the game progresses you need to throw safe or covered-cards.

Every hand has the potential to come together if you don't lose patience. Keep your hand fully functioning by discarding cards you don't need or that will help your hand for the first 2-3 discards. Then back off and try to discard covered cards that will help your hand.

During every hand your game plan has to be flexible. You may meld-up early and only have uncovered cards to discard midway in the game. Change your strategy and keep your opponents guessing, especially if your current game plan is not working.

## *Influencing The Discard Pile*

Another helpful move is discarding cards that will help your hand over the course of a hand. If you need 4 & 5 to fill out melds throwing a low card like a 3 may influence your opponent to throw a semi-covered 3 or another low-card like a 4 or 5. Your first discard, may lead to the next 3-4 discards being of similar value or suit helping to build your hand.

Weaker players tends to throw high cards, semi-covered cards and aces in the opening stages of a hand at the expense of breaking up potential melds and combinations. I like to throw cards that will help my hand, When you have more high-cards and no melds, your first instinct maybe to unload your high-cards to get your points down. Evaluate your opponent and your hand and decide which cards may meld out soon. If you discard a high-card moose your opponent may start discarding high-cards that will eventually fill out your hand.

Check the scores first and if you afford to lose a few points keep your high-card combinations. If you don't fill out your high-card melds soon work your hand down by discarding your high covered-cards.

Influencing the discard pile will help you control the game, whether discarding uncovered-cards or mooses and win more often.



## *Trusting your gut*

Many times during a hollywood you will have to rely on your gut when choosing a discard, especially in the beginning of a hand.

When you pluck that discard from your hand, a little voice in your head may question your choice, and your gut will chime in and vote for another card.

So, before you throw a discard make sure that you've studied the hand and worked out the odds, trust your gut—then send the gut card flying. It's amazing to me how often your gut is correct.

There will be times in a game that you will know nothing about your competitor's hand. If you have a few discards, and they're all equally uncovered, go with what best serves your hand, and listen to your gut.

## *Knowing a Bad Card*

There will be times during the hand you'll have a card that looks and feels bad, usually a new card, or a suit not in your hand or discard pile. An uncovered card at a critical time of the game is a "bad" card and could be potentially devastating to discard.

Think it through and don't play scared. Usually you will have a good idea of what your competitor has in his hand from the cards he has picked up and discarded. Figure out what he has for melds and discard a covered card and hold on to the "bad" card until you see discards that make it safe to throw.

Sometimes you may decide to peel a card off a 4-card meld, which may still allow you to knock rather than gin. And then, you may look at the score sheet and decide it wouldn't hurt to take a chance throwing the "bad" card. He may not need it because all the cards that made your card look bad were still in the deck.

If half way through the hand the discard pile seems to be void of: low cards, a suite, or face cards, and you don't have many or none them in your hand. Chances are your opponent is waiting for you to throw whatever looks MIA. Wait him out until his discards make your "bad" card safe or lay it off if he knocks.

If you have melds of 10's & J's without the 10♣ & J♣, you should consider that your opponent may have a run in clubs is using the 10♣ & J♣.

It is not always the case, but many times you'd be correct, but you need to consider it if you're about to discard an uncovered 9♣ or Q♣.





## *Half the fun of playing gin is teasing your competitors*

With a few players, the maturity level at our club drops by 50 years when they start to whack the hornet's nest. It's all done in fun and "not personal—just business," as Michael Corlione said in the movie, *The Godfather*.

I like to have fun at the table without being obnoxious, during the hollywood. If I picked up an ace to make a suited run, later in the hand I'll ask them, "do you have any more aces?" Or, every once in a while I'll throw a card and say, "watch out, that's a moose."

Sometimes if my opponent has first choice and picks up the knock-card, I'll say "I wanted that card"—and sometimes it's true!

And now, lets talk about down-right-cagey, my buddy every once in a while, likes to show a meld he made using the discard I have thrown him, all the while trying to set me up to discard another card he wants, which will meld with two cards in his hand—usually ginning him!

I fell for this twice, the second time after he promised he couldn't use the card I thought he was looking for, and the minute I discarded it he said "gin"—after we stopped laughing, I swore to him that "there wouldn't be a third time."

One of the newer gin players, has recently introduced a unique idea to team play at Tedesco. He wants to introduce the option to trade a player off his team because of poor play, or karma, for a player on the competitor's team. We haven't worked out all the details, but it will probably take 50-60 years before it is first tested—and he may be the first guy traded. And here again, we chuckle at the expense of a player—struggling at the gin table.

Keeping your opponent on his heels and tripping him up verbally won't affect a good player, but it's a hell of a lot of fun and makes for a few great stories to be repeated for years.

## *Psychokinesis*

Years ago, we had one of the most entertaining and quirky gin competitors at the club. He would claim that through the power of thought he would get you to discard the card he was thinking about—usually ginning him. Henceforth his name comes up a lot when we call on the mystical powers of psychokinesis. Mind over gray-matter...try it, it's scary how often it works.

## *Don't worry about the idiot behind you*

During the course of a game you'll have few guys hovering behind you cackling over, what they consider, an ill-advised play. When you are new to the game this can be very intimidating and will throw you off your game thinking of them, more so, then your next play.

When you can't win a hand or keep losing a ton of points, your partner may be the idiot in front of you reminding everyone how awful a player you are.

When you gain experience and confidence you'll be able to verbally defend yourself as needed, and kick-butt at the gin table.



## Moosing

Simply stated, a Moose is advertising for a card that you want. If you need an A♣'s to make a meld with your Q♣, K♣ you can discard a deadwood A♦'s and hope your opponent eventually answers and doesn't pick it up to make a meld of aces, or K♦, A♦, 2♦'s. If he makes a run in diamonds he may still discard the A♣'s.

A Lateral Moose is advertising for a card you want near your discard. If you want a 10 to go with your two 10's you may throw an deadwood 9 or J.

Try to have multiple mooses in the discard pile, if they are not picked up, they are like gold nuggets waiting to be mined.

There is an art of creating an illusion around discarding blatant, subtle and stealth like mooses. Sometimes the opportunity will present itself with your opponent's discard, or the way you discard yours. You may nonchalantly pick up a card from the deck that will be a perfect moose and after taking a quick peek discard it before you put it into your hand, as if that card was as useless as you know what on a bull. As you gain experience you will develop a few moves of your own.

If you feel your opponent's discard is a moose, discard a card that will help your hand first, try to wait him out before you throw the card you think is a moose. With four of every card in the deck you will have a two out of three chance to miss his moose call. Keep track of his discards and when it safe, toss it. If you decide to answer his moose, there is a chance he'll pick it up and if he does, just smile and say to yourself SOB, and chalk that one up to intel on his hand.

## Milking your opponent for a card.

You have heard the saying "you have to give to get." Sometimes it requires a little work to milk a card out of your opponent. As an example, he may be holding back the 6♥'s because you picked up the 7♥'s he discarded earlier. If you are using it in a suited meld like the 7♥, 8♥, 9♥, 10♥'s (and he knows it) you may have to peel off the 7 of hearts from your 4-card meld to get him to discard the 6♥'s which will meld up your two 6's—hopefully for gin. Make sure the suited cards below the 6♥'s are accounted for otherwise you may meld his 5♥, 6♥'s that he was going to lay off when you knocked.

## Finessing the end game

The end game is what it comes down too when you have to win hand. If you are keeping track of the game, the discards and your opponent's melds, you should be able to work your way to a gin, knock, or draw, while avoiding throwing your opponent gin. He may draw the card from the deck for gin, but it is better than throwing him gin. This is where milking for a card helps finesse a winning end to the hand.

Many newbies will not keep track of what going on and throw a new, uncovered card at a critical point in the end game to lose the hand and often a street. You should never discard a new card at the end of a game unless you can afford to lose points and you want to take a chance to win a street or win back points that your partner lost. Other than going for it you may have to peel off a card from your 4 card meld or breakup a meld to discard a safe-card and go to the wood.



## Scoring

In Tedesco Gin you play three streets (games) of 200 at a time, which is called a hollywood. We have preprinted pads with three streets (columns) for you and three for your opponent (same for teams). When someone (or team) wins the first hand write the points won in the winners first street, if the same person(or team) wins again, the second score goes in his (their) second street and is also added to his (their) first street. If the same person (team) wins a third game mark it on third street and add it to his (their) first & second streets. Do the same for the other player (team) when he (they) wins points. The first person (team) to win 200 points in each street wins that street. When all three streets are won that ends the hollywood.

YOU			OPPONENT		
35	24	52	5	13	6
59	76	60	18	19	38
111	84	109	24	51	
119	133	151	56		
168	175		—		
210					
X					

## Drawing a Line

If an opponent issues a challenge to “draw a line” it means that he would like to start a conjoined hollywood, which starts before your first hollywood has been completed. If the challenge is accepted the scorer draws a line across the score sheet, leaving scoring room to complete the first hollywood and to separate the new hollywood scores. This means there will be another hollywood played concurrently with the first partially completed hollywood.

Multiple games played at the same time, makes for an interesting hollywood—as long as all players agree to the challenge. It’s like doubling down the original game stakes. Simply mark down the points as hands are won until 200 is reached in each street being played.

You can also draw as many lines as you’d like to increase the stakes. Three lines as shown means three times the original stakes.

YOU			OPPONENT		
35	24	52	5	13	6
59	76	60	18	19	38
111	84	109	24	51	64
119	133	151	56	77	93
168	175		—	106	
210					
X					
			26	29	
			55		

## Score sheet strategies

As you gain experience you will come to realize that knowing how the game stands becomes very important. One of your first goals is to get points on each street so you won't be skunked (*shutout*) which doubles your loses.

While you are trying to win points to get on each street, you are trying to keep your opponent off, so you can skunk him—which will make you very happy.

If you don't keep track of the score you will lose games due to your own ignorance. Before each hand you should glance over the scores to see how you are doing in each street. Whether you are winning or losing, you need to figure out how many points you need to win and how many you can lose and stay below 200. This will prevent you from losing a game by holding to many points if your opponent gins or knocks.

If you are aware of how the points stand this will help you decide how aggressive or conservative you will play the hand. There will be times during a hand where you will have the option to go for gin to win a street or back off and knock, depending how fast the hand melds up.

The knock-card will influence your decisions as well. If you are on a low knock-card there's a better chance of ginning, a high knock-card favors a quick knock, and a spade, which doubles points, makes a knock easier to get the 32 points needed to win the first street, as shown in the example score sheet to the right.

If you feel your opponent may knock of gin before you and you are holding to many points, you should discard the cards that will keep you under the count, so you won't lose the street. You will hate yourself when you realize you could have thrown a higher card to save a street—regardless if it gins your opponent.

Obviously, you don't want to throw a card that will gin your opponent unless it is your only option to keep you under the count, and you can't knock or gin.

As the saying goes—lose the battle and win the war. As it so happens, many times on the very next hand played, the knock-card will be a spade and you'll get a great hand and win enough points to win the street. Timing is everything.

If you are ahead in a hollywood and you can win a game by ginning, and you won't hurt yourself by losing that hand, you may want to give it a go. If it is early in the hand a knock may get you the points needed without ginning.

As you gain experience these moments will become obvious—as long as you are watching the score sheet!

Learn to keep score, it will help your game and force you to stay abreast of what's going on. If you're not scoring try to keep tabs on your points won and check totals. Scorers sometimes make mistakes.

In team gin listen to your partner when he gives you info pertaining to the scores. He can also advise you to knock or gin if he hasn't seen if he hasn't seen your opponent's hand.

YOU			OPPONENT		
35	24	52	5	13	6
59	76	60	18	19	38
111	84	109	24	51	83
119	133		56	96	133
168			101	146	168
			150	180	
			185		

## *Team Gin*

Team gin is played with one or more partners. If you have four, six or eight players, you cut the cards to pick teams. We play at a round table with a foursome and with larger teams we use a couple rectangular tables end to end, with a team on each side. After you take a seat cut the cards with the person across from you to see who deals—low man deals, aces are low.

When you play head to head, you just have to worry about your own game. Win or lose, there will be no one else to credit or blame. In team gin, the dynamics change considerably, depending on the skill level of your partners—they may help or hurt you. And you are always at the mercy of the cards.

In two man teams you aren't allow to give your partner advise about his hand, but with 3+ man teams it's ok to give advice, discuss strategy (don't give away your hand) and which card to discard.

When a player finishes his game he has to wait for his partners to finish. Team scoring is calculated from the total combined points won and lost per hand. The winners of the first hand of the hollywood stay in the same seats for the duration of the hollywood and the losing team moves over one seat and plays the next player in rotation until the hollywood has been won. Winning team deals after each hand. After the completion of every game the scorekeeper should announce the standings.

You can vary the points to play for, in a hollywood, up or down. We play to 300 with 3-man teams, 400 with 4-man teams, 500 with 5-man teams, etc.

When all players on a team win their hand in a game, they get bonus points called a "Barn-Burner" in addition to the points won: 25 with 3-man teams, 50 with 4-man teams, 75 with 3-man teams, etc.

As the games progress you need to stay in contact with your partners. Listen to them when they state the points won or lost. If you are still playing, check the scores so you can evaluate what you need to do. If you finish a hand first, win or lose, alert your playing partner how that affects the scores, with that info he will be able to know whether to knock, gin or play to the wood, to win or save a street.

If you have completed your hand and a weaker partner is still playing, you'll want too watch his hand to see if he needs a little guidance.

Before you lend a hand you need to know a few things first:

1. How the score stands
2. Whether he needs to get points, and how many, or if he needs to stay under the count to win or save a game, street or hollywood
3. What his competitor has picked up and might have for melds
4. What's visible in the discard pile
5. What's in your teammate's hand
6. And lastly, which card is the correct discard to accomplish your goal.

These are things you need to know and ask your partner before you give any advice.

If you are relatively new to the game, listen to your teammates advise. Don't be a stubborn know-it-all. If your partner is behind you watching and advices you to discard a different card than you want, reason with him if you feel otherwise and come to a general consensus before you discard. Remember, many years of gin experience make players very intuitive and often correct when trying to avoid ginning your opponent, playing to the wood or winning the hand for the team.

We all hate losing with stubborn players that think they are better than they are—so don't be one. In team gin you don't want to let your partner(s) down or play stupid-gin. When you are learning make the stupid-gin short-lived and make your future gin-partners happy.

## Playing a Hand

Hand #1/ Rick's hand:

Q♣, 10♠, 9♣, 8♠, 7♣, 6♠, 4♣, 3♠, 2♠, 2♣

My Opponent's hand:

A♠, K♦, Q♠, J♠, J♦, 10♦, 8♣, 7♠, 7♥, 3♣

The knock-card is a 9♠

Wow, let's start with a bang! As you know, the spade knock-card indicates double points. So with that in mind, if it's the first game of a hollywood it's no big deal. If you are midway through a hollywood *it is a big deal*. Either way, you'd rather win quickly and get points and lower your points along the way, without tearing your hand apart.

I dealt and my opponent doesn't want the knock-card. I do, so I pick it up and make my first meld. And discard the only card that is not useful in my hand, the Q♣. He goes to the deck and plucks the 4♦ and discards the 8♣, which is deadwood in his hand and he may think my 9♠ is in a suited run and his 8♣ would be covered. I pick it up for my second meld. Now, I can't knock, so I discard my 6♠ keeping all my potential melds working. He goes to the deck and plucks the 8♥, which he holds on to because he just through me the 8♣ and doesn't know how I'm using it. He must be thinking he's in trouble without a meld and his opponent with two melds and a high knock-card, so he decides to unload his A♠ from his hand to lower his points. I pick it up and knock for 2.

Rick's winning knock hand:

10♠, 9♠, 8♠, 9♣, 8♣, 7♣, 2♣, 3♠, 2♠, A♠

Knock with: 2♣

Turnover card: 4♣

Points won: 59 - 2 Knock = 57 x 2(♠) = 114

My Opponent's losing hand:

K♦, Q♠, J♠, J♦, 10♦, 8♥, 7♥, 7♠, 4♦, 3♣

Layoff Cards: Q♠, J♠

Unmelded Cards:

K♦, J♦, 10♦, 8♥, 7♥, 7♠, 4♦, 3♣

The hand came together in three cards, my opponent didn't have a chance...a no-brainer.

Hand #2/ Rick's hand:

9♥, 9♦, 6♦, 3♥, 3♠, 2♠, 2♣, 2♦, A♦, K♣

My Opponent's hand:

A♠, K♠, Q♠, K♦, J♦, 7♣, 7♦, 5♠, 4♥, 3♦

The knock-card is a 4♠

Again with the spade knock-card. I dealt and my opponent doesn't want the knock-card. I do, so I pick it up and make my first meld. My hand has a lot of low cards so it won't hurt too badly if I lose. I decide to discard the K♣ which is a moose and lowers my points as well. He goes to the deck and plucks the 8♣ and discards what he thinks is a covered card, the K♦, he answered my moose quickly. I pick it up for my second meld and discard my covered 2♣, which the safest card in my hand.

Now my opponent knows I have two melds and he may have four layoff cards with the 4♥, 5♠, J♦ & 3♦, and he's hoping to make another meld and undercut me if I knock. He goes to the deck and plucks a 10♣, not the card he was looking for. At this point in the hand he is forced into discarding the 10♣ to keep his points down and layoffs active, and he doesn't know for sure which cards layoff. I go to the deck and pluck a 2♥. It is very tempting to lean it with my 3♥ but I decide to discard it rather than throw the 6♦, which is a new card. At this point I just want to meld my 9's and knock for 3. He goes to the deck and plucks the Q♥, which he is forced to discard and hopes it's safe because I may have a Q♦ with my suited K♦ run. I go to the deck and pluck and discard the J♠, the most covered card according to the K♣ & 10♣ in the discard pile. If he has J's good luck to him. He goes to the deck and plucks and discards the Q♣, which is 100% safe. I pluck a 6♠ and discard the 3♥, the most covered card in my hand and leaves me with two 9's and 6's. He plucks an A♥ from the deck and discards it because I have an A♦ in a run and it's only uncovered at one end. I pluck a 5♥, not good, I decide to toss it, it's actually more covered the 9's & 6's.

## *Playing a Hand*

Up to now I've been very lucky discarding and not melding my opponent, but the other side of that is I have no idea what he has in his hand.

My opponent goes to the deck and plucks the 5♣, which he decides is the most covered and discards it. I go to the deck and pluck the 6♥ for my third meld. I can't knock, I'm now hoping for gin, and I need to discard the most protected 9. I toss the 9♥ and my opponent goes to the deck—great I got by one 9, lets see what happens with the 9♦ later. He picks up a 7♠ for his second meld.

Now he needs to make another major decision, should he throw a new card (8♣) or an add-on—of which he has four choices! Over the years, I've found that giving an add-on was, around 70% of the time, the correct thing to do. First he needs to figure out which cards truly are add-on. He knows about my K♦ run, but doesn't know if it goes from the Q♦ to the 2♦. He doesn't know if my 4 is in a run going down or 4's. He decides to throw a new card the 8♣, which is covered by his 7♣ and the 10♣ in the discard pile. I don't need it so I pluck and discard the 7♥ because it looks safer than the 9♦, wrong, he picks it up and adds it to his three 7's.

Now it's decision time again, only this time he has only the four potential add-on cards to pick from to discard. A J♣ has been discarded earlier, so he decides if I have a 4-card meld I won't need the J♦, so he discards the J♦, lucky boy it's not an add-on. I go to the deck and pluck the 4♦. I decide to use it too knock for 4—and with two layoffs get undercut!

Rick's undercut knock hand:

6♦, 6♣, 6♥, 4♦, 4♠, 3♠, 2♠, 2♦, A♦, K♦

Knock with: 4♦

Turnover card: 9♦

My Opponent's winning hand:

A♠, K♠, Q♠, 7♣, 7♦, 7♥, 7♠, 5♠, 4♥, 3♦

Layoff Card: 5♠, 3♦

Unmelded Cards: 4♥

Points won: 25 undercut x 2(♠) = 50

Interesting hand. In the beginning he probably thought he'd knock out sooner rather later, Midway through the game with two melds I thought I'd be knocking and for a while ginning when I got the third meld. With a low knock-card it's takes a little longer to get the job done. I knew about my opponent's 7 and that was it. I figured if he hasn't knocked, maybe he couldn't. When you know your opponent, you'll know if he likes to undercut when possible.

Hand #3/ Rick's hand:

2♥, A♣, K♦, K♠, Q♥, 10♠, 8♥, 7♦, 6♠, 4♦

My Opponent's hand:

K♣, Q♠, 9♥, 8♠, 7♥, 5♣, 4♥, 3♥, 2♦, 2♣

The knock-card is a 7♣

What an ugly hand. Ok, this hand will show you how to build a hand without leaning cards.

I dealt so my opponent has first option on the knock-card. We both don't want it and he goes to the deck and plucks a 5♦ and discards an 8♠ moose. I go to the deck and pluck the 7♠ and discard the 8♥. He picks up the 8♥ and discards the Q♠. So at least I know he has a run in ♥'s. I pluck a 10♦ and discard a Q♥ knowing it is somewhat covered and his ♥-run shouldn't go that high. He goes to the deck and plucks and discards the 9♦. I pick a 4♠ and toss the covered 7♦. He plucks and discards the Q♦. I pluck the J♠ and discard the 100% safe 7♠.

So far this hand is still ugly, but it's coming together, hopefully I'll start making a few melds before my opponent knocks or gins.

## *Playing a Hand*

He plucks a 3♠ and discards the K♣. I take the K♣ for my first meld and discard the J♠. It's the most covered card and if he takes it I'll know he has J's. He plucks and discards a 9♣. I pluck the J♥. I know he has the 8♥ in a run, but I don't know if it goes up or down. I decide to discard it rather than break-up my hand and he doesn't pick it up. Either his run doesn't go to the 10 or he doesn't need another add-on.

He goes to the deck and plucks and discards an A♥, which is somewhat covered. I pluck a 6♥ and discard my A♣. Now I know his run goes north of the 6. He plucks a 4♣ and discards the 5♦, which, along with the rest of his Unmelded cards, are new. At least it is covered by the 5♣ in his hand and the 7♦ in the discard pile. I pluck a 10♥ for my second meld and discard my 2♥ and keep my 6's and 4's. Now I know he has the 7-9♥. He takes the 2♥ for his second meld and discards his partially covered 5♣.

I go to the deck and pluck a 2♠. Now I don't know how he's using the 2♥ and the rest of my cards are new and one's an add-on. Now I have a decision to make, should I discard an add-on or a new card. I decide to throw the 2♠ and hope for the best. He picks it up and knocks for 3.

Rick's losing hand:

K♦, K♠, K♣, 10♠, 10♥, 10♦, 6♠, 6♥, 4♦, 4♠

Layoff card: 6♥

Unmelded Cards: 6♠, 4♦, 4♠

My Opponent's winning hand:

9♥, 8♥, 7♥, 4♥, 3♥, 2♥, 2♦, 2♣, 2♠

Knock with: 3♠

Turnover card: 4♣

Points won: 14 - 3 knock = 11

As you could see that was an ugly hand, it may have taken a while to come together, but I didn't lean any cards and I'm very happy too only lose 11 points.

Hand #4/ Rick's hand:

2♠, A♠, J♦, 10♥, 10♣, 9♦, 8♥, 7♣, 6♣, 5♥

My Opponent's hand:

K♦, Q♦, Q♠, J♥, J♣, 9♣, 8♣, 5♣, 4♥, 3♣

The knock-card is a 3♥

My hand looks a little more promising, and with a moosing knock-card all the better.

My opponent dealt and I don't want it and neither does he. I go to the deck and pluck a K♠ for my first meld, I like the way this is starting off. I discard a moose 5♥, which is partially covered by the knock-card. He goes to the deck and plucks the 4♦ and discards the 3♣. I go to the deck and pluck and discard a 5♠, a double moose for the 5♣. He plucks a 7♦ and discards the 5♣, what took you so long! I pick it up for my second meld.

My next discard can be one of three mooses 9♦, looking for 9♥, the 10♣ looking for the 10♦, or 8♥ looking for the 8♣, or a new card J♦. If I toss one of the 10's and he makes 10's the J♦ & 9♦ are useless. If I toss the 9♦ or J♦ they both look dangerous, so I decide to toss the 8♥, which really isn't a moose because he knows about my run in ♣, but it keeps my two meld options viable. He goes to the deck and plucks the 9♥ and discards an uncovered 7♦ moose. I goes to the deck and pluck and discard a K♣, which useless in my hand. He plucks a 3♦ and starts to unload by discarding the K♦. I pluck and discard the covered 2♥. He plucks the Q♣ making his first meld and discards the covered 3♦. I pluck a 3♠ and add it on to my run and discard the 9♦, which partially covered by my J♦ and the 7♦ in the discard pile. He picks it up for his second meld. He decides to discard the 4♥ figuring I may have a 4♣ in my 5♣ run and won't need it, and the 5♥ and 3♥ are out. I go to the deck and pluck a J♠. I haven't seen many face-cards in the discard pile and I think he has 9's or a 9♦ in a run, hopefully with a 10, so I decide to discard the 10♣.



## Playing a Hand

He picks it up and discarded the 9♦ which I threw him a few cards ago. So what is he telling me? Does he have 10's or a run using my 10♣, and it does run from the 8♣ to the 10♣, J♣ or Q♣, or something in between? So I go to the deck with these questions bouncing around in my head and pluck and discard the 7♠. He plucks the A♦ and discards the 4♦. I go to the deck and pluck and discard the 9♠. He plucks and discard the 4♠. I pickup the 4♠ and add it to my run getting my points down and discard the 10♥ based on the assumption he has a 10♣ in a run. He goes to the deck and plucks the A♥ and discards the partially covered 9♥. I pluck the A♣ and discard the J♠, because it is the most covered in my hand. He picks it up and knocks for 1.

Rick's losing hand:

4♠, 3♠, 2♠, A♠, K♠, A♣, J♦, 7♣, 6♣, 5♣

Layoff card: J♦

Unmelded Cards: A♣

My Opponent's winning hand:

A♦, Q♦, Q♣, Q♠, J♠, J♥, J♣, 10♣, 9♣, 8♣

Knock with: A♦

Turnover card: A♥

Points won: 15 - 1 knock = 14

As you could see that was an ugly hand, it may have taken a while to come together, but I didn't lean any cards and I'm very happy too only have lost 11 points.

Hand #5/ Rick's hand:

A♥, Q♣, J♠, 10♣, 9♠, 8♠, 7♦, 5♠, 4♣, 3♣

My Opponent's hand:

A♣, K♥, 10♠, 8♦, 7♣, 7♥, 6♦, 6♠, 5♥, 3♠

The knock-card is a Q♦

My opponent dealt and neither one of us wants the knock-card, so I go to the deck and pluck a Q♠, which makes a nice triangle, and discard the A♥. He goes to the deck and plucks the 9♣ and discards the A♣. I pluck the 2♠ and discard a moose 7♦. He picks up my 7♦ and discards a K♥. So much for my moose, I'll have to wait and see how he's using it. I go to the deck and pluck the Q♥ for my first meld and discard a moose 10♣. He plucks an 8♣ which gives him two suited melds and great combinations. He discards the 10 that I moosed for and I pick it up and make a belly shot 4-card meld.

Now, I could knock for 9, but that's a high knock. I know he has one meld, it early in the game, so I decide to go one pluck for gin and discard a moose 5♠.

He goes to the deck and plucks and discards the A♦. I pluck the 6♥ which looks and feels bad to me so I decide to knock for 9 and hopefully get more than a few points.

Rick's winning hand:

Q♥, Q♣, Q♠, J♠, 10♠, 9♠, 8♠, 4♣, 3♣, 2♠

Knock with: 4♣, 3♣, 2♠

Turnover card: 6♥

Points won: 20 - 9 knock = 11

My Opponent's losing hand:

9♣, 8♣, 7♣, 8♦, 7♦, 6♦, 7♥, 6♠, 5♥, 3♠

Layoff card: None

Unmelded Cards: 7♥, 6♠, 5♥, 3♠



## Playing a Hand

Hand #5/ Rick's hand:

Q♥, Q♠, 10♠, 10♥, 7♣, 6♣, 5♠, 3♥, 2♦, A♣

My Opponent's hand:

A♥, K♥, Q♦, K♣, Q♣, J♠, J♠, 8♦, 7♥, 7♠

The knock-card is a 6♦

I dealt and neither one of us wants the knock-card, so he goes to the deck and plucks a K♠, which makes a nice combination with his K's, Q's & J's, and discards a deadwood 8♦. I go to the deck and pluck the J♦ and discard a moose 5♠. I chose it because it's close to the knock-card, which is the closest thing to a covered card I have, plus it's a great moose. He goes to the deck and plucks an A♠ and discard a covered 7♥. I pluck a 4♦ and discard a moose J♦ which he picks up and discards a 7♠. So much for my moose, Again, I'll have to wait and see how he's using it. I go to the deck and pluck the 9♣ and decide to bail a safe card 7♣. He plucks and discards an 8♣. Great, this hand isn't looking healthy. I go to the deck and pluck the 2♥, and discard the 6♣. He plucks a 6♣ and decides bail as well with a moose A♠. I go to the deck and pluck a 9♥ which gives me a better combination, but I need a meld. I discard the A♣ which he picks up for his second meld and has a nice triangle for gin. He discards the Q♦ which I grab for my first meld. Before my next discard I need to think about what he has for melds. He probably has J's and a suited A♣, K♣, Q♣. My 9♣ clubs is the most covered so I discard it. He plucks and discards the 7♦. I pluck and discard a safe 8♠. He plucks and discards a 4♣, he doesn't want to breakup his triangle. I pluck the 3♣ and discard the safe 9♥. This keeps the points down and I still have a great combo with the 4, 3's a 2's. He plucks the 2♠ and since he doesn't know how I'm using my Q♦ and he thinks he has only two cards for gin, he moves his suited ♣ run around, makes K's and knocks for 6.

Rick's losing hand:

Q♥, Q♦, Q♠, 10♠, 10♥, 4♦, 3♣, 3♥, 2♥, 2♦

Layoff card: None

Unmelded Cards: 10♠, 10♥, 4♦, 3♣, 3♥, 2♥, 2♦

My Opponent's winning hand:

K♣, K♥, K♠, J♠, J♣, J♦

Knock with: 2♠, 2♣, A♠, A♥

Turnover card: Q♣

Points won: 34 - 6 knock = 28

All I can say is, "it could have been worst!"

When your hand doesn't come together start bailing your safe high cards and cut your losses.

Hand #6/ Rick's hand:

Q♦, Q♠, Q♥, 10♥, 9♣, 8♠, 8♥, 7♣, 4♠, A♠

My Opponent's hand:

K♥, K♣, Q♣, J♦, 10♦, 10♠, 7♠, 6♣, 3♦, 3♣

The knock-card is a 9♥

My opponent dealt and I pick up the knock-card for my second meld and discard moose 8♠. He goes to the deck and plucks the J♠ and discards a covered 7♠. I go to the deck and pluck a 5♣ and discard a covered 9♠, this tells my opponent that my 9♥ is in a suited run but I'm hoping to knock with another low card. He goes to the deck and picks a 2♦ and discards a 10♠, knowing that I probably have a 10 in my ♥ run and it is covered by the J♠ in his hand and the 7♠ in the discard pile. I pluck a 3♠ discard a covered 7♣, still trying to catch a low card or add-on too knock. He plucks and discards a covered 10♣. I pluck a 5♦.

At this point in the hand my choices for discards are all new cards so I decide to help my hand by discarding a lateral moose 4♠ hoping for a 5. If I had to take the score into consideration, too save a street, I may have discarded the A. He goes to the deck and plucks the 6♥ and discards the covered 10♦. I pluck and discard the 4♥. It was tempting to discard the 5♣ but the 4♠ got by and the odds are the 4♥ will also. He plucks a 2♠ discards his best covered card the J♠.

## *Playing a Hand*

I pluck and discard the 6♠ which my opponent picks up for his first meld and discards the J♦. I pluck a 5♥ and knock for 1.

Rick's winning hand:

Q♥, Q♦, Q♠, 10♥, 9♥, 8♥, 5♦, 5♥, 5♠

Knock with: A♠

Turnover card: 3♥

Points won: 30 - 1 knock = 29

My Opponent's losing hand:

K♥, K♠, Q♣, 6♥, 6♠, 6♣, 3♣, 3♦, 2♦, 2♠

Layoff card: Q♣

Unmelded Cards: K♥, K♠, 3♣, 3♦, 2♦, 2♠

Hand #7/ Rick's hand:

K♦, K♣, Q♥, J♣, 10♦, 9♦, 9♥, 7♦, 5♠, 3♥

My Opponent's hand:

Q♠, J♥, 10♠, 7♠, 6♦, 5♣, 4♣, 2♠, 2♥, A♥

The knock-card is a 9♣

I dealt and my opponent doesn't want the knock-card. I do, so I pick it up or my first meld and discard the moose Q♥. He doesn't want it, so he goes to the deck and plucks a A♦ and discards the J♥. I pluck the 6♥ and discard the 10♦. He plucks the 6♠ and discards the covered Q♠. I pluck the K♠ for my second meld and discard J♠. He plucks 8♦ and discards the 10♠. I pluck the 5♦ and discard a moose 6♥, which he picks up for his first meld and discards an 8♦. I pluck and discard the 10♥. He pluck and discard the Q♦. I pluck and discard the Q♣. A lot of covered face-cards clustered together. He plucks the 3♣ for his second meld and knocks for 6.

Rick's losing hand:

K♣, K♦, K♠, 9♣, 9♥, 9♦, 7♦, 5♦, 5♠, 3♥

Layoff card: None

Unmelded Cards: 7♦, 5♦, 5♠, 3♥

My Opponent's winning hand:

6♦, 6♥, 6♠, 5♣, 4♣, 3♣

Knock with: 2♠, 2♥, A♥, A♦

Turnover card: 7♠

Points won: 20 - 6 knock = 14

Hand #8/ Rick's hand:

K♦, O♠, J♥, 10♥, 7♦, 6♠, 6♣, 5♥, 4♣, 2♣

My Opponent's hand:

Q♥, 9♦, 8♦, 8♣, 8♠, 7♥, 6♦, 5♣, 3♣, 2♦

The knock-card is a 2♥

My opponent dealt and we don't want the knock-card so I go to the deck and pluck the 3♥ and discard a moose Q♠. He goes to the deck and plucks the 9♠ and answers my moose quickly with the Q♥, for my first meld, thank you. I discard a deadwood K♦. My opponent plucks an A♣ and discards a covered moose 2♦. I go to the deck and pluck and discard a covered J♦. He goes to the deck and picks a 5♦ and discards a moose 7♥. He has three 8's without the 8♥ and many times this will give you a hint that your opponent may have that 8♥ in a run. In this case I don't so I pluck for the deck a 4♥ for my second meld and discard the 7♦.

He picks up the 7♦ and changes his meld of 8's to a 5-card suited run in ♦ with a combination and triangle at either end of his ♦ run. He decides to toss a A♣ probably to get his points down and to maximize his combinations. I go to the deck and pluck a 3♦ and discard a 6♠ which should be covered because of his run in ♦, plus it's a moose. If I pick up the 6♥ I'll have a possibility of making a meld with the 3's. He plucks a 10♣ and discards it hoping I have one tied up in my ♥ run, plus it's a good moose for him. I go to the deck and pluck the 4♠ and discard the covered 6♣. He goes to the deck and plucks and discards the covered 7♣. I pluck and discard a covered the 2♣. He plucks and discards the 6 which I pick up for my second meld and discard the A♠. I'm thinking about gin, my opponent go to the deck and plucks the 4♦

## *Playing a Hand*

which he adds to his ♦ run and discards a 100% safe 8♣. I pluck and discard the K♠. He plucks and discards the K♣. I pluck the 5♠ and discard a covered 4♣ which he picks up and makes a meld. He discards the 8♠. I pluck and discard the 8♥. He plucks and discards the 10♠. I pluck and discard the A♥. He plucks and discards the A♦. I pluck the 9♣, which wreaks of a new & bad card. Now I'm thinking if I hold on to the 9♣ and the 3♦ I can't gin and I'll have to play to the wood. I discard the 5♠, thinking it should be safe, he has a 5♦ and a 5♣ in runs and won't need the 5♠. He goes to the deck and plucks and discards a J♠. I pluck the 10♦. I don't remember seeing any ♦ below the 10 and I know he has a ♦ run and the 9♣ smell bad so I discard the 4♠. He plucks and discards the 7♠. I pluck and toss the Q♦. My opponent plucks the 2♠ and can knock but doesn't, guess he thinks I have his layoffs. He discards the 4♦, if he plucks a 9 he still can gin. I pluck the 9♥, add it to my ♥ run and discard the safe 3♦. He plucks and discards the Q♣. I pluck and toss the safe K♥. We made it to the wood.

Rick's hand:

Q♥, J♥, 10♥, 9♥, 10♦, 10♣, 6♥, 5♥, 4♥, 3♥

My Opponent's hand:

9♠, 9♦, 8♦, 7♦, 6♦, 5♦, 5♣, 4♣, 3♣, 2♣

As you can see the game is very fluid and you need to adapt, change direction and work with a hand when it presents an opportunity—in this case going to the wood.



## Playing a Hollywood

OK, the only way to fully illustrate my concepts and strategies of playing gin is to go through a hollywood, hand by hand, and describe my reasoning for each phase of the game. You will see how to apply the insights and strategies that are listed throughout this book and are better illustrated in the heat of battle.

All hands were played as shown—win or lose!

Game #1/ Rick's hand:

Q♠, J♠, 10♣, 9♥, 8♣, 8♦, 7♥, 5♦, 4♣, 2♠

The knock-card is a K♥

I like setting my hand up so I see all the possible melds and it helps me decide which card will be my first discard. As I said earlier you should think of the cards as soldiers and you are going to send each one out on a mission.

The hand looks like it could be a challenge but lets see how the hand flows. I dealt and my opponent has the first option on the knock-card. If he doesn't want it than I can pick it up. He says no thanks—and I do also.

My opponent goes to the deck and plucks and discards a 10♦, I don't need that so I go to the deck and pluck a 7♣ and discard a 10♣ from my hand, which is a good moose. He goes to the deck and discards a 10♥. I pluck a Q♣ which makes a triangle with my Q♠ & J♠. I discard the 9♥, it's well covered, doesn't tear up my hand and if he picks it up, I'll know he has nines. As it turns out he has nines and picks up the 9♥ and discards a 7♦, which I pickup to make my first meld of 7's. I'm holding a lot of points, so I throw my partially covered 8♣ first so my opponent may think the 7♦, I picked up, maybe in a run. He goes to the deck and plucks and discards a 7♣, thank you—if he was willing to give me an add on he must have a good hand and is ready to knock or gin.

All I can do is toss my covered 8♦ and hope to meld my face-card triangle quickly. He goes to the deck and plucks a card and knocks for 5

Game #1

Rick's losing hand:

Q♣, Q♠, J♠, 7♦, 7♠, 7♣, 7♥, 5♦, 4♣, 2♠

Layoffs: None

Unmelded Cards: Q♣, Q♠, J♠, 5♦, 4♣, 2♠

My Opponent's winning knock hand:

9♦, 9♠, 9♣, 9♥, 6♣, 6♦, 6♥, 3♠, A♠, A♣,

Turnover card: 4♦

Knock-cards: 3♠, A♠, A♣

Point won: 41 - 5 knock = 36

RICK			OPPONENT		
			36		

That hand came together for my opponent and he did the right thing knocking to get on first street before he got caught holding two aces.

Game #2/ Rick's hand:

2♥, A♦, K♥, Q♠, 10♣, 8♣, 6♥, 5♥, 4♦, 4♣

The knock-card is a 7♥

Winner deals and I have the first option on the 7♥, which I want to make a meld with my 5♥ & 6♥. Rather than throw the Q♠ which may help his hand, I'll discard the A♦ moose, which helps my hand. He goes to the deck and discards a 9♣ which is a belly shot with my 8♣ & 10♣—two melds. Now I can toss the Q♠ and keep two potential melds viable. He plucks and discards the Q♣. Interesting toss, he's not afraid of adding on to my run, or he may have J's with the J♣, or just taking a chance I have 9's. I pluck a 7♣ to add to my meld. I can't knock and face-cards are in the discard pile so I'd throw the K♥.

## Playing a Hollywood

He goes to the deck and plucks and discards the J♥. I pluck a 5♦ to make a great triangle with my 4♦ & 4♣. I discard the 2♥ which he picks up and discards the 10♥.

I pluck and discard the 6♠ and hope the moose works. At this point in the hand my 5 and 4's are just as bad as the 6♠—so I'd rather discard a moose. He doesn't pick it up, plucks a card and discards a 6♣. Close, but if I could knock I'd pick it up. And wouldn't you know it I pluck the 3♦, say gin and lay down my hand:

Game #2

Rick's winning Gin hand:

10♣, 9♣, 8♣, 7♣, 7♥, 6♥, 5♥, 5♦, 4♦, 3♦

Turnover card: 4♣

Point won: 39 plus 25 for gin = 64

My Opponent's losing hand:

10♠, 8♠, 8♥, 7♦, 3♠, 3♣, 2♣, 2♣, 2♥, 2♦

Unmelded Cards: 10♠, 8♠, 8♥, 7♦, 3♠, 3♣

RICK			OPPONENT		
64			36		

Game #3/ Rick's hand:

A♥, K♦, K♣, Q♠, J♠, 6♠, 6♦, 5♥, 5♣, 3♣

The knock-card is a 9♥

I dealt, my opponent doesn't want the knock-card and neither do I. He plucks and discards 6♣, which I need for my first meld of 6's. I discard the Q♠ moose. He picks it up and discards the K♥ which I pick up for my second meld of K's. Before I discard my J♣, I notice that the K♠ is missing from my meld of K's and more than likely my opponent is using the Q♠ in a suited run. Playing the odds I'll should

discard the J♣ and save the A♥ to knock and hopefully catch my opponent with two aces.

He plucks and discards the 7♠. I pluck and discard the J♦. He plucks and discards the J♥. I pluck and discard the 10♥. He picks up the 10♥ and discards the A♦. I pluck the 2♠ and toss the A♥.

At this point the covered-cards are flying fast and furious and we both know we're holding two melds and it's a toss-up who is going to get the card he needs to knock or gin.

He plucks and discards a covered 7♦. I go to the deck and pluck a 2♥. Now that gives me two 2's and a triangle with the 5♥, 5♣ & 3♣. I tend to favor the triangle and recommend tossing the 2♥ which is the most covered by the K♥ & 5♥ in your hand and the A♥ in the discard pile. Plus my 2♠ may add on to his Q♠ run and he also may have 5♠ in a run. He goes to the deck and plucks 7♥, I pluck a 5♠ to meld my 5's.

I now have the option to knock or go for gin. Because I'm not on street #2 and more than likely my opponent has two melds, and hasn't knocked, and both my deadwood cards may gin him, I knock for 2.

Game #3

Rick's winning knock hand:

K♥, K♦, K♣, 6♠, 6♦, 6♣, 5♥, 5♣, 5♠, 2♠

Knock-card: 2♠,

Turnover card: 3♣

Point won: 12 - 2 knock = 10

My Opponent's losing hand:

A♠, K♠, Q♠, J♠, 10♠, 10♦, 10♥, 8♦, 5♦, 4♦

Layoff card: 5♦

Unmelded Cards: 8♦, 4♦

RICK			OPPONENT		
64	10		36		
74					

## Playing a Hollywood

Game #4/ Rick's hand:

2♦, 3♥, 2♥, A♥, K♣, Q♥, J♣, 9♠, 9♦, 9♥

The knock-card is a 7♠

This hand is gorgeous and I'm on a spade. I take a look at the score pad and note that I could lose 163 points and still stay under the count, and, if I get lucky with the Q♣, I could knock in one card and make a lot of points and maybe win a street.

I dealt and my opponent picks up the 7♠ and discards the 6♣. God knows how he's using it. You go to the deck and pick and discard the 8♦. He goes to the deck and discards a 5♦ from his hand. You pluck a J♥ and start worrying about losing a lot of points if this hand doesn't come together. "Don't get cold feet," I say to myself! I discard the K♣, which lowers my point count, is a moose, and still leaves me with a triangle, which may fill quickly, and a 2 to knock with. I wouldn't discard the J♣ yet, because I don't have the 9♣ in my meld of 9's. My opponent goes to the deck and discards a 6♠ out of his hand. This is good and bad news because he's letting you know a little something about his hand. He may have a meld of 7's or he peeled the 6♠ off his suited run. It looks like a covered card, but he may milking me for a card. And, more than likely he's ready to gin.

So with all that to think about I go to the deck and pluck a 6♦, which is 100% safe to discard. He goes to the deck and discards a partially covered 5♥ from his hand. I pickup the 3♠ from the deck and start to squirm in my mind.

I figure out how many points are in my hand if my opponent gins—looks like 57 doubled, which keeps you under the count. It wouldn't kill you to lose 114 points but it would hurt. I give it a go and discard the 3♠ on a gut feeling. The 3♠ gins my opponent...oops!

Rick's losing hand:

2♦, 3♥, 2♥, A♥, Q♥, J♥, J♣, 9♠, 9♦, 9♥

My Opponent's winning gin hand:

3♠, 2♠, A♠, K♦, Q♦, J♦, 7♠, 7♦, 7♥, 7♣

Turnover card: 4♣

Point won: 32, plus 25 gin x 2 = 114

RICK		OPPONENT	
64	10	36	114
74		150	

My hand looked great but didn't fill, but it is still early in the hollywood, and even if I lose the first two streets I can squash it by winning the third street, where the stakes are doubled. *Patience me-boy!*

Game #5/ Rick's hand:

7♠, 6♥, 5♦, 4♠, 3♠, A♥, K♣, K♦, J♦, J♣

The knock-card is a 8♦

First I checkout the scores and see that I can lose 49 points in the first street and 85 in the second street without going over 200.

My opponent dealt. I don't want the 8♦ but he does and discards the 7♥. I go to the deck and pluck a 10♠ and discard the covered 7♠. He plucks a card and discards a 9♠ from his hand. I pluck an 8♠ and say to myself, "great shuffle buddy." Now, I know he picked up an 8♦ but I don't know how he's using it. He could have 8's or in a suited♦ run which could go down to the 6♦ and I have the 5♦, or up to the 10♦ and I have the J♦. I throw the 10♠ which is somewhat covered and hope to get the J♠ to make a meld. He picks up the 10♠ and discards the Q♦ from his hand which you pick up for your first meld.

## Playing a Hollywood

Now I don't know how he's using the 8♦ or the 10♠, but I do know he has two melds. I have go on my gut and discard the 6♥ and hope he has a 6♦ in run. Thankfully, he goes to the deck and discards from his hand an A♦ which I pick up and add to my run. Now I have to assume he took a chance that I had a run and discarded the A♦ or thought I had Q's.

I take a count of my points and make a decision to get the points down, because he has two melds, and I have only one, I start by discarding the J♣, hoping to fill the other two melds. He plucks and discards a K♠. I pluck and discard the Q♠, I know it a safe card because he has 10's with the 10♠ (the 9♠ is in the discard pile) and he discarded the Q♦ I have in a run. He plucks and discards the A♣, which fills another of my melds. Now I'm under the count on first street, can't knock, but now I'm playing for gin.

Now I have to figure out which of the two layoff cards I'm holding really lays-off, and is the most dangerous. He hasn't knocked so maybe he's waiting to fill a third meld. We both know we have 2 melds, but aren't sure how one meld works. All things considered, I'm under the count, my hand has come together, so I discard the 8♠ because my gut says the 8♦ is in a suited run, plus the 5♦ is a new card, or at the very least, an add-on. He doesn't pick it up and goes to the deck—ya, so far so good! He plucks and discards a 5♥. I go to the deck and pluck and discard the A♠, a good lateral move to get the 2♠. Hopefully he doesn't have 2's. At least it's somewhat covered because he has thrown me two aces, now he'll know they're in suited runs. He goes to the deck and plucks and after some deliberation discards a 5♠—which I pick up and say gin.

Rick's winning Gin hand:

5♠, 4♠, 3♠, 2♣, A♣, K♣, A♦, K♦, Q♦, J♦

Turnover card: 5♦

Point won: 15 plus 25 for gin = 40

My Opponent's losing hand:

10♠, 10♣, 10♦, 8♦, 7♦, 6♦, 5♣, 4♣, 4♦, 2♠

RICK			OPPONENT		
64	10	40	36	114	
74	50		150		
114					

Because he thought I had a 2♣ and a probably a 2♦ in a run, he may have been worried that they were 4-card runs, leaning 2's. So he decided on the 5♠ because there was one out and it was partially covered with a 7♠ in the discard pile and 2♠ in his hand. He didn't want to breakup his combination, plus the remaining cards in his hand were more dangerous to discard. The odds worked against him this time. The 2♠ may have been the best discard because I had one tied up in a run, the odds were I wouldn't need it. But little did he know both cards were gin.





## Playing a Hollywood

Game #6/ Rick's hand:

K♣, K♠, J♣, 8♥, 8♦, 8♠, 7♠, 4♣, 3♦, 2♦

The knock-card is a A♦

OK, we have to gin and this looks like a no-brainer hand, once I pick up the A♦ I'll have two melds. I dealt and my opponent doesn't want the A♦ so I take it and discard 7♠. He goes to the deck and plucks a card and discards a Q♣ from his hand. I pick up the Q♣ and discard the K♠ which he picks up. He discard the 7 and I pluck a K♦ from the deck for gin.

Rick's winning Gin hand:

K♣, Q♣, J♣, 8♥, 8♦, 8♠, 3♦, 2♦, A♦, K♦

Turnover card: 4♣

Point won: 22 plus 25 for gin = 47

My Opponent's losing hand:

K♠, Q♠, J♠, 10♠, 9♥, 8♠, 6♦, 6♠, 6♥, 5♥

RICK			OPPONENT		
64	10	40	36	114	
74	50	87	150		
114	97				
161					

Well, nothing like a no-brainer to make you healthy again, now all I need is a knock for 3+ points and I'll win first street.

Game #6/ Rick's hand:

K♥, Q♥, J♣, J♠, 8♦, 8♠, 6♠, 5♠, 4♣, 3♠

The knock-card is a 4♠

I didn't need a spade, this may bring my opponent back into the game if he wins. At least I have a good hand to work with and it is a low card and may take a little longer to knock.

I look at the score pad and see that I could lose 49 points in street one and 85 points in street two, so there is a little wiggle room if he knocks and none if he gins. It all depends on the first few cards and if I get the knock-card which will fill a for card meld.

I dealt and my opponent doesn't want the 4♠ so I grab it and discard the deadwood 4♣. Sure, I told my opponent how I'm using the 4♠, but I already have a 4-card meld, it's a covered card and I've kept all my potential melds. He goes to the deck and discard a 4♦ from his hand. I pluck and discard the A♣. He plucks and discards the 8♥ from his hand which I pick up to make a meld of 8's. Now I'm looking for gin! I discard the J♣ because it is the most covered of the two J's and is a great moose. He goes to the deck and plucks and discards a 7♣ from his hand. I pluck a 2♦ from the deck and discard the J. He plucks and discards the A♦. I pluck the K♦. Now I have to decide to toss it and keep my count down incase my opponent knocks or keep it in a triangle and discard the 2♦, which is new card. I decide to be cautious and discard the K♦, which he picks up—nice lateral moose! He discards the Q♣ and I go to the deck and pluck the nine which I discard because I've committed to my hand at this point. The duce is just as bad, but it keeps the points down. He plucks and discards the 9♣ from his hand. I pluck a 2♥ which gives me a nice triangle, lowers my points, gets me under the count on second street and I can discard the partially covered Q♥. He plucks and discards the 10♠, which is new card, either he's getting his points down or moosing me. I pluck and discard a 100% safe 10♣. He plucks and discards the J♥. I pluck and toss the 7♥. All of these discards are somewhat covered and better than the cards I am keeping in my hand. He plucks and discards the 10♥. I pluck the A♥ from the deck for gin.

## Playing a Hollywood

Rick's winning Gin hand:

8♥, 8♦, 8♠, 6♠, 5♠, 4♠, 3♠, 2♥, A♥, K♥

Turnover card: 2♦

Points won: 10 plus 25 for gin = 35 x 2(♠) = 70

My Opponent's losing hand:

K♦, Q♦, J♦, 6♦, 6♣, 6♥, 3♥, 3♦, 2♣, 2♠

RICK			OPPONENT		
64	10	40	36	114	
74	50	87	150	---	
114	97	157	---		
161	163				
231					
X					

Looky, looky, who won first & second streets and I may skunk my opponent on third street—happy days are here again! Now on to the next hand to close my opponent out on third street.

Game #7/ Rick's hand:

K♦, Q♥, J♦, 9♦, 8♠, 6♠, 4♦, 3♠, 3♥, 2♥

The knock-card is a K♠

I didn't need a spade again! I just need a few points to go out, so that my goal, without losing to many points.

I dealt and my opponent and I don't want the knock-card. He plucks from the deck and discard the 8♦. I pluck to 10♥ and discard the K♦, which is my most covered discard. He goes to the deck and discards Q♠ from his hand. I pluck a 6♦ and toss my covered Q♥. He plucks and discards a Q♦. So far it looks like we are both playing it safe. I pluck and discard a J♥. He plucks and discards the 10. I pluck the 7♥ and discard the 10♥. He plucks and discards the 10♣. I pluck and discard the J♣.

Now I'm starting to get a little antsy, no melds yet, hope my opponent's hand is just as bad.

He plucks and discards the 9♣. I go to the deck and pluck the 10♦, finally a meld! I discard a moose 7♥, looking for the 7♠. He plucks and discards a 6♥, which turns out to be a lateral moose I pick up to make a second meld of 6's. I can't knock I have to many points so I discard an 8♠. He plucks and discards a J♠. I go to the deck and pluck an A♦ which allows me to knock for 9. It's a high knock, but my opponent would've knocked if he could have to save himself from being skunked on third street. Even if he undercuts me its no big deal—so I turnover my 4♦ and say, knock for 9.

Turns my opponent had a worst hand than me, only one meld and no layoffs.

Rick's winning knock hand:

J♦, 10♦, 9♦, 6♠, 6♥, 6♦, 3♠, 3♥, 2♥, A♦

Turnover card: 4♦

Knock-cards: 3♠, 3♥, 2♥, A♦

Points won: 37 - 9 knock = 28 x 2(♠) = 56

My Opponent's losing hand:

9♠, 7♣, 6♣, 5♣, 4♣, 5♠, 4♠, 2♠, 2♦, A♣

Layoff Card: None

Unmelded Cards: 9♠, 5♠, 4♠, 2♠, 2♦, A♣

RICK			OPPONENT		
64	10	40	36	114	---
74	50	87	150	---	
114	97	157	---		
197	163	213			
263	219	XX			
X	X				

## *The Wrap-up*

This book is my take on how the game of Tedesco gin should be played. I'm sure a professional gin player could add a few chapters and insights into the game as well, but we'll never be at that level of competition.

To date I have not read any books on gin strategies and don't know if there are any, I hope to find and read a few in the near future.

If you are just learning the game or have been playing for years this book with its insights and strategies are going to help you play a better game.

Remember, when you play smart-gin, you and your gin partners will enjoy the game for years.

