

Goblin Gambling Dice

(a.k.a. grabby, looky, pokey)

While the origins of this game are undocumented, local scholars agree that Dwarven Battle Dice could have been the influence for this simple yet intriguing dice game which consists of three six-sided dice: two regular dice numbered with pips and one with the symbols of a hand, eye and dagger engraved twice each on opposite faces (referred to as the HED die). The game has been an invaluable tool for solving disputes and dividing treasure without resorting to bloodshed.

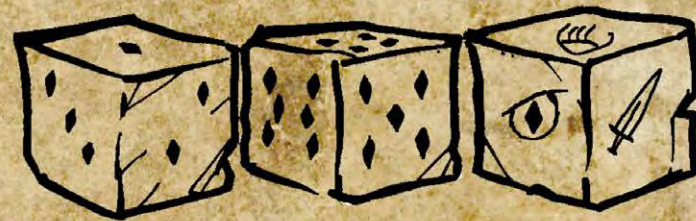
To play the game, each participant should have their own set of dice. Everyone throws at the same time, with the highest value of pips winning the roll – doubles beating non-double values of the same amount. If two or more results are equal then the symbol on HED is referred to: hand beats dagger; eyes beats hand, dagger beats eye. If symbols are also a tie, HED is rolled again until one player wins.

Stand-off: With three players it is possible to have a three-way tie if the pips of all dice are equal and each player has rolled one of the symbols. HED should be rolled again by everyone until one player stands victorious. Should a stand-off occur with more than three players, the majority symbol will claim victory and those players roll HED again until there is a final winner. If there are multiple majorities, which is possible with five or more players, then the minority symbol is eliminated first, followed by the regular chain: hand grabs dagger, eye sees hand, dagger pokes eye.

Eye of the Beholder: When a set of dice show two single pips and the eye symbol – the bane combination for all other players – it is considered to be victorious over all other rolls.

Methods of Play: Two players may find it more interesting to have a 'best of' situation: best 2 of 3, best 3 of 5, etc. Games with higher numbers often eliminate one player at a time, resulting in several matches, as opposed to a 'sudden death' situation where one roll is used to determine the victor immediately.

While often found as simple sets of dice carved from wood or bone, it is not uncommon for the HED die to be smeared with an enemy's blood, stained by a favourite wine, charred black, or coloured in another fashion to help distinguish it from other dice on the playing surface.



Goblin Gambling Dice and artwork
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