

# Minden Playing Card Cricket

## 2-Player Competitive Game

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### Introduction

Minden Playing Card Cricket plays wonderfully well for the solo player who wants to replay cricket matches. However, as it stands, MPCC isn't well suited for a competitive match between two human players. During each over, there is little scope for strategic decision making by both sides, as each over is determined by the lucky (or unlucky) turn of the top card. There can also be limited involvement for one of the players as he watches the other player turn the cards for each over.

The following rules attempt to create a genuinely competitive game of MPCC for two players which is not only simple, but which also retains the excellent system that MPCC uses for generating its results. The rationale behind each of the rules is also given.

### Rules

#### ***At the Start of Each Innings***

Deal 3 playing cards to each player, and place the remaining stock of cards face down on the table. A discard pile will eventually form next to this stock pile.

*The hand of each player is limited to three cards to prevent each player from holding all four of one kind of card.*

#### ***Game Play.***

At the commencement of each over, the bowling side draws one playing card from the stock pile and adds it to his hand. He then chooses any one card from his hand (now containing 4 cards) and passes it to the batting side. The batting side adds this card to his hand, and then plays one card from his hand (of 4) face up onto the discard pile. *This card determines the result of the over.*

*This rule simulates the action of the bowler and the response of the batsman, and provides both sides with the opportunity to play strategically in every over.*

#### ***Extras.***

Whenever an over contains any *bowling* extras (no balls or wides), the batting side selects one card at random from the bowling side's hand and adds it to its own hand. It then discards any one card it desires from its own hand. This discarded card has no effect. No card is drawn if the extras are *fielding* extras (leg-byes or byes).

*This rule reflects the fact that bowling extras can be costly to the bowling side. Not only does it prevent them from hoarding the high scoring cards, it may actually cost them a potential dismissal if the batting side chooses to discard a dismissal chance card!*

#### ***Farming the Strike.***

The batting side may not farm the strike as described in the MPCC laws. If the batting side

wishes to farm the strike, it must achieve that result by playing an appropriate card from its hand. In other words, if the batting side wants the current striker to retain the strike for the next over, then it must play a card that will score an odd number of runs.

*This rule allows both the bowling and batting side to play strategically in situations where farming the strike might occur.*

### **Dismissals.**

When the bowling side wishes to play a dismissal chance card, it may choose to either pass it to the batting side as normal, or it may play it on to the discard pile for immediate effect. If the second option is chosen, then this dismissal chance card determines the result of the over, and the batting side cannot play a card of its own. The normal MPCC checks are then made to see if a dismissal actually occurred.

*This rule allows for great tactical play. On the one hand, the bowling side can try to 'surprise' the batting side with an immediate dismissal attempt. On the other hand, it can try to 'build pressure' against the batting team by introducing dismissal chance cards into its hand, thereby limiting the batting side's choices and increasing the possibility of a mistake in the following overs.*

*This rule also reflects the fact that a good spell of bowling with repeated dismissal chances puts the batting side under great pressure. Such spells often limit their scoring rate and lead to mistakes from the batsmen. Batsmen must take care to survive such a period of bowling.*

The bowling side does not have to play a dismissal chance card as soon as it draws one from the stock pile. It may choose to play the dismissal chance card in a later over.

When the batting side chooses to play a dismissal chance card, the dismissal check is made against the *current bowler*, not against the bowler who originally delivered it to the batting side.

*This rule not only keeps things simple, but it also mimics the fact that a tight spell of bowling by one bowler often ends up rewarding another.*

### **After a Wicket Has Fallen**

In the event of a dismissal, MPCC Law 1.5.3 requires that an additional card be drawn to determine whether another wicket has fallen in the over. This additional card may be drawn by the bowling side *either from the top of the stock pile or randomly from the batting side's hand*. The over is resolved according to MPCC Law 1.5.3., with the bowling side making any subsequent extra card draws in the same manner.

*This rule keeps all dismissal chance cards in play and prevents the batting side from hoarding them.*

In the unlikely event that the batting side has no more cards left in its hand for the bowling side to draw from, then the bowling side must draw the extra card from the stock pile.

### **Close Fielding Tactics**

When close fielding tactics are employed and a 7 is played, MPCC Law 1.7.2 states that an

extra card must be drawn to check for a possible dismissal. In this two-player game, with close fielding tactics, a 7 can be played just like a dismissal chance card. In other words, *it can either be played by the bowling side on to the discard pile for immediate effect, or it may be passed to the batting side.* Once a 7 has been played on to the discard pile and resolved, the extra card is drawn from the *stock pile* by the bowling side and resolved as per MPCC Law 1.7.2.

### **Free-Swinging Batting Mode**

In free-swinging batting mode, MPCC Law 1.6.3 states that two cards are needed to resolve the over. For this two-player game, the first card is obtained as normal: The bowling side draws a card from the stock pile and then plays one from its hand – either passing it to the batting side, or playing it immediately on to the discard pile if permitted. To obtain the second card, the batting side draws one at *random* from the bowling side's hand. These two cards are then used to determine the result of the over as per MPCC Law 1.6.3 for free-swinging batsmen.

*This rule helps to prevent the bowling side from hoarding high scoring cards.*

### **At the End of an Over**

Once an over has been *completely resolved*, each player must ensure that it has three cards in its hand before the next over commences. Beginning with the bowling side, each player draws the required number of cards to bring its hand back up to three cards.

### **Stock Pile Exhausted**

If the stock pile becomes exhausted, then a new stock pile is formed immediately by shuffling all the cards in the discard pile.

### **Reshuffles**

Whenever the MPCC laws call for a deck reshuffle, *only the cards from the stock and discard pile are reshuffled.* The cards from the players' hands are always retained and never included in the reshuffle.

## **Tactics**

Generally, the bowling side should try to pass low scoring cards to the batting side to limit their scoring rate. Likewise, the batting side should try to play high scoring cards as often as possible. However, there will be many occasions when a different strategy needs to be adopted.

### **Batting Side Tactics**

The batting side should seek to play its Flurry and BR cards when a higher ranked batsman is on strike. Similarly, it should play any BwR cards against a lowly ranked bowler. This will maximise the batting side's scoring.

The batting side should think carefully about how each card they play will affect not just the current over, *but the next over as well.* Which batsman will be on strike, and who will be bowling? Careful thought will often be required to prevent a lower ranked batsman from coming up against a high ranking bowler. Sometimes it may be necessary to sacrifice a few runs to protect a weaker batsman.

Careful management of dismissal chance cards is crucial. If the batting side keeps too many in its hand, it limits its scoring opportunities and could potentially result in a batting collapse. Always pay attention to the ratings of the current bowler and try to get rid of any dismissal chance cards when they are least likely to produce a dismissal.

Be conscious of the strengths and weaknesses of those batsmen who are yet to bat. This is especially important when playing the advanced game when the same playing card can produce two different results for two different batsman. A card that results in only a few runs for the current batsmen, may be a Flurry result for another who is yet to bat. It is important to know your players.

### **Bowling Side Tactics**

Bowl to a plan. If you want to keep one of the batsmen on strike, and aren't concerned about giving up a few runs, then feed the bowling side odd-scoring cards. Similarly, if the batting side is farming the strike and you want to get the weaker batsman on strike, play some even-scoring cards. Try to anticipate how the batting side will respond to the cards you give it.

Bowlers may have greater success at dismissing a high-ranking batsman by applying pressure with dismissal chance cards, rather than attempting an immediate dismissal. Not only will it limit their scoring rate, but with some timely bowling changes you may end up forcing them to play these cards against one of your highly-ranked bowlers!

Try to remember how many dismissal chance cards you have given the batting side. If a wicket falls, and you know that they still hold some in their hand, then choose the extra card from the batting side's hand, rather than the discard pile. You maximise your chances of taking another wicket and may even force a batting collapse! However, you must be careful not to waste your opportunity. Remember that the dismissal chance must be checked against the current bowler. It's no good drawing a Jack, for example, if your current bowler only has a rank of 4.

If you want to play a dismissal chance card immediately, then increase its chance of success by setting up a weaker batsman. In the previous over, entice the batting side with a high-scoring card that will likely be played immediately, but which will also leave a lower-ranking batsman on strike. Then, in the next over, POW! Play your dismissal chance card with greater effect.

### **4-Player Variant**

This strategic two player game of MPCC can also be played in partnership with four players. Shuffle *two decks* of playing cards together and determine which partnership will bat and which partnership will field. At the start of each innings, the players in each partnership determine which of the opening batsmen or bowlers they will represent. Three cards are dealt to *each player*.

Then, for each over, *the player representing the current bowler* takes a card from the stock pile as normal, and passes it *face up* to *the player representing the current striker*. All players must be able to see which card was passed. The current striker then plays a card from his

hand to determine the result of the over. Play continues in this manner until there is a bowling change or dismissal, when the player representing the outgoing bowler/batsman assumes the role of the new bowler/batsman.

In every over, any decisions for the batting side are made by the player representing the current striker. Similarly, any decisions for the bowling side are made by the player representing the current bowler. Partners must never disclose to each other what cards they have in their hands.

This variant also allows for great partnership play as players work together to either work out a batsman or maximise their scoring rate.