

Hippo

Here is a very simple yet very enjoyable game I created once upon a time in my younger years, after meditating beneath a Horse Chestnut tree.

The game gets its name from the Latin for this tree, "Aesculus Hippocastanum".

The theme of this game involves rolling Conkers across the ground, hoping to retain as many as possible and accumulate the highest score.



Any number of people can play this game, indeed the more the merrier, yet traditionally between 2-5 players works best.

All players harvest and agree on a maximum of five Conkers to be played amongst the group. The rounder they are the better they will roll.

Conkers entered for play must conform to a strict rule regarding their equal play worthiness. This rule states:

Before play, each of the five Conkers must be rolled individually to prove all Conkers are not unequally weighted and will eventually fall to both knotted and blank sides at least once, upon coming to a halt.

Whilst a few rolls of each Conker may be required to pass the test, as long as each Conker falls to both knotted and blank sides at least once, then it may enter the game.

To commence, each player takes it in turns to roll all five of the Conkers chosen for play across the ground.

Any of the Conkers landing knotted side up score 1 point each and are retained for another roll.

Any of the Conkers landing blank side up are eliminated from the round.

The player then continues to roll the remaining Conkers which scored in the first roll and to pursue a similar or better outcome.

Again, any Conkers landing knotted side up score 1 point each and are rerolled, whilst the blanks are eliminated.

If a player only has one Conker remaining in play, this final Conker instead scores incrementally, 1 point, then 2 points, then 3 points and so on, each time it is triumphantly rerolled.

The player thus attempts to continue rolling the Conkers for as long as possible and to continue accumulating points until the very last Conker lands a blank.

Play then passes to the next player in this round.

Should a player roll all five Conkers knotted side up, the word “Hippo!” is called and the player scores double, thus 10 points.

Once all players have rolled Conkers and accumulated a score, the second round begins.

Each round all the points from the previous round are carried over and contribute eventually to a grand final score.

There are five rounds per match. The player with the most points at the end of the fifth round wins the game.

Theoretically, even if all Conkers have passed the prior fairness test, the game could go on forever.

Choose thine Conkers wisely.

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