

Cozen^{0.2.2}

a card game by zach gage

Cozen (pronounced cousin) is a game of strategy, guts, and deception. It is played with a traditional deck of playing cards (modified slightly).

Each game plays out over a series of rounds in which both players attempt to capture their opponents cards and defend their own. Unlike many traditional card games, the cards you or your opponent capture do not return to their decks, affecting future draws in future hands.

To win Cozen, you must be the first player to capture at least 70 victory Points worth of your opponent's cards.

Game Setup

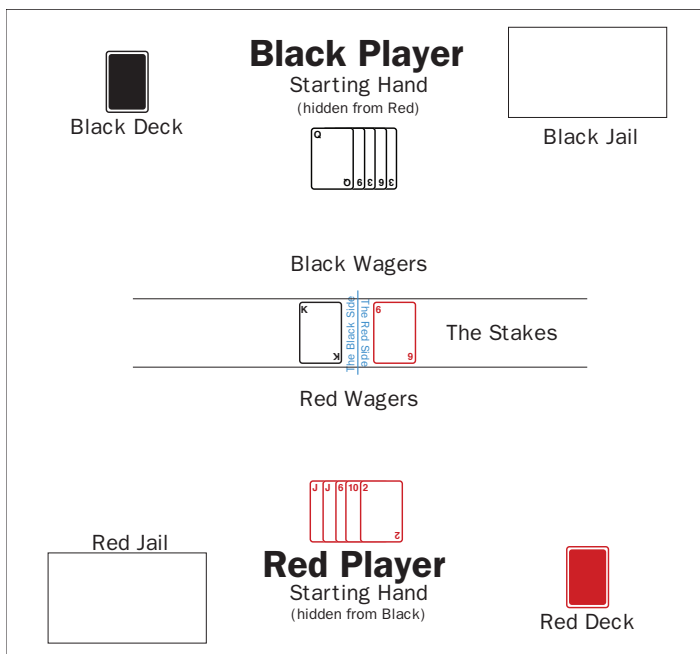
Separate the Black and Red cards.

Hand all of the Black cards to one player and all of the Red cards to the other. If this is your first time playing with a new deck, take a sharpie and draw X over the face of the king of hearts and the king of spades.

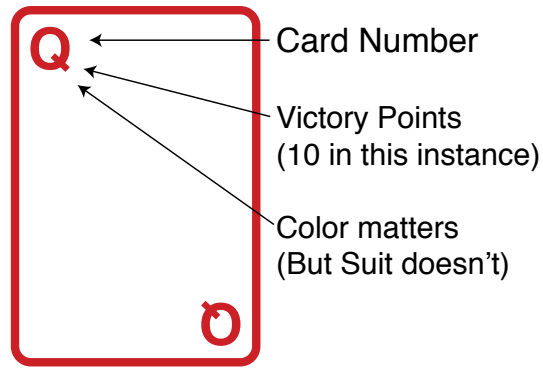
Hand Setup

Each round of Cozen starts with both players shuffling their decks, flipping a single card off the top and placing it face up in the Stakes row, and then drawing a hand of 5 cards. Each player may look at their own cards, but not the other player's.

At this point, whoever is closest to the box the cards came in hands it to the other player. That player receiving the box goes first. On subsequent hands, continue passing the box in this way to alternate starting play.



Anatomy of a card



Each Player's Deck contains 26 cards: Two copies of each card, A->K.

Each card is worth Victory Points based on its number. All face-cards are worth 10 Victory Points. Each Marked King is worth 70 Victory Points.

Suits do not matter beyond coloring the card Red or Black.

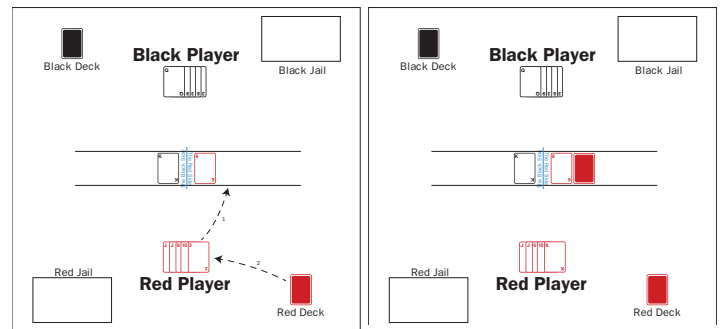
Player Turn Actions

Each turn you must do one of two actions: Stake & Draw or Wager.

All cards played to the table are played face-down, and remain face-down until the end of the hand. At any time you may peek at your face-down cards if you forget them.

STAKE & DRAW

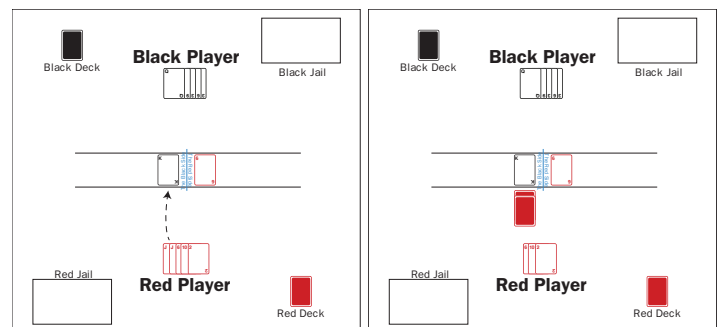
Place one card in the stakes row (to the right-most position). Then draw one card from your deck into your hand.



WAGER

Place as many cards from your hand as you want in a hand below any one card in the Stakes Row (play the cards to your side of the table). Do not draw any cards.

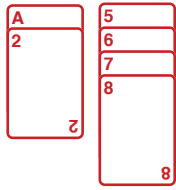
Wagered cards may never be moved, but you may always play additional cards to a hand later.



What Cards do I Wager?

While there are many reasons to wager one card (or set of cards) over another to a particular hand, in player, you want to play cards that combine to generate strength.

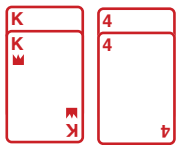
There are two types of card combinations that generate strength: Straights and Pairs.



STRAIGHTS

Two or more numerically ordered cards. Straights are worth 1 Strength per card in the sequence.

Aces can be low (Ace, 2) or High (King, Ace) but not both (King, Ace, 2)



PAIRS

Two numerically matching cards. A Pair is worth 3 Strength.

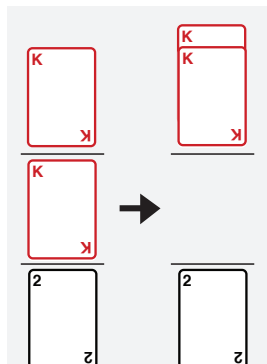
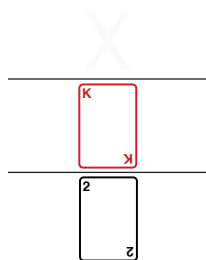
A single player's hand may contain any number of pairs and straights, but no more than one straight may contribute strength in a given hand.

A single card counts for only one combination. The hand to the right has a Pair of 7s and a 5,6 Straight.

The order that cards are played does not matter. The hand to the left has a Pair of 8s in it.

The card in the stakes row...

Typically the card in the stakes row exists strictly to be fought over. It does not count towards the Strength of it's owner's side of the hand. The black player, even a single lowly 2 under red's King stake would win it.



However, if the owner of a card is able to bring it into a combination on their side of the hand, they may do so at the end of the hand when cards are revealed.

In this example, Red played a King and can thus bring it's King stake into the hand to form a pair.

You may only do this if the stake is yours. Red can do it here because the stake is red.

The End of a Round: Contested Hands

Once a player has Positioned all five of their cards (and thus has an empty hand) the round is over. The remaining player is given one more turn to stake or wager, and then all cards in contested hands are revealed and resolved.

Cards in uncontested hands are not revealed and are returned directly to their owners decks.

Any hand that contains both red and black cards (including the stake) is considered Contested. If both sides contain cards, Flip them over and calculate how strong each side is. If only one side has cards, do not reveal them as that player wins by default with high-card.

The player with the higher strength wins all the opposing cards in the hand. Won cards go to that player's jail, where they are displayed organized and face up, and count as victory points. Their own cards are returned to their deck.

Breaking Ties

If both players strength totals are equal in a hand, the player with the highest card wins (not counting the stake, unless it has been brought into a combination for it's owner). If the highest cards are equal, go to the next card down the line. If both players are tied all the way down, return all cards in the Hand to their owners.

In the hand to the left, both players have 0 strength (Red has no card, and black has played one uncombined-card. Black wins, because they have a higher card than Red's nothing. The stake does not count for Red since it has not been brought into a combination. Black need not reveal it's card.

In the hand to the right, both players have 3 strength (they each have a pair). They also have the same high card (Jack). Red wins because their next highest card is their other Jack, while black's next highest is 4.

In the hand to the left, both players have 3 strength, but black has the highest card (Jack), which counts as a high card even though it is not in a combination. Red also has a high card not in a combination (the Queen) but because it is red's stake and it hasn't been brought into a combination, it doesn't count.

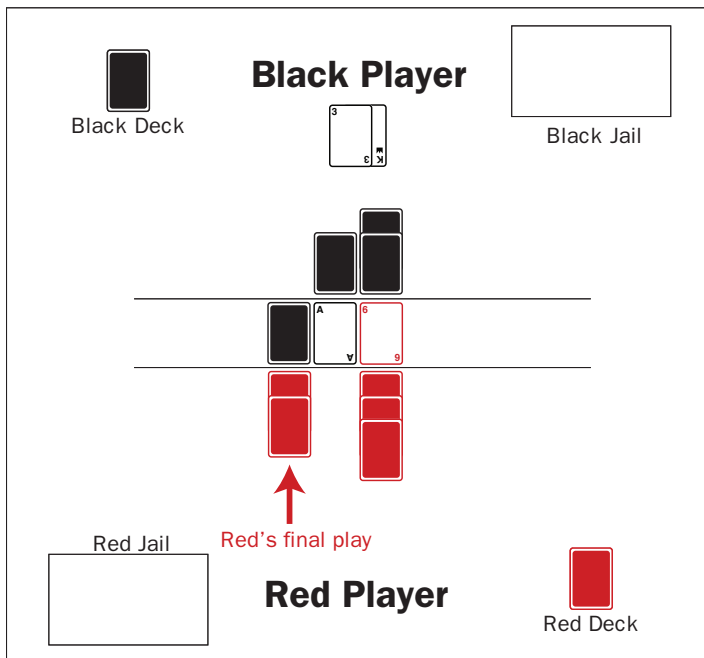
Winning / The next round!

If either player has 70 or more Victory Points in their jail, they have won the game. If both players cross 70 in the same hand the player with the higher total wins. If their totals are equal, or neither player has crossed 70 Victory Points, start the next round.

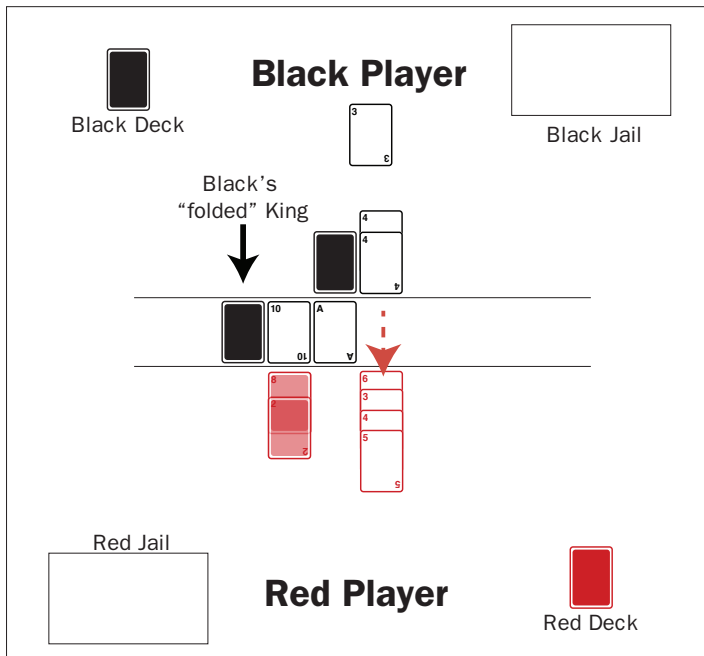
Once all the contested hands are dealt with, players should return all non-jailed cards to their decks, shuffle them up, and then begin the next round.

There is one exception — if neither player captures any cards at the end of a round, do not clean up the initial face-up stakes. At the start of the following round, play two new stakes as normal, so that the round begins with 4 face-up stakes.

Sample End of Round Resolution



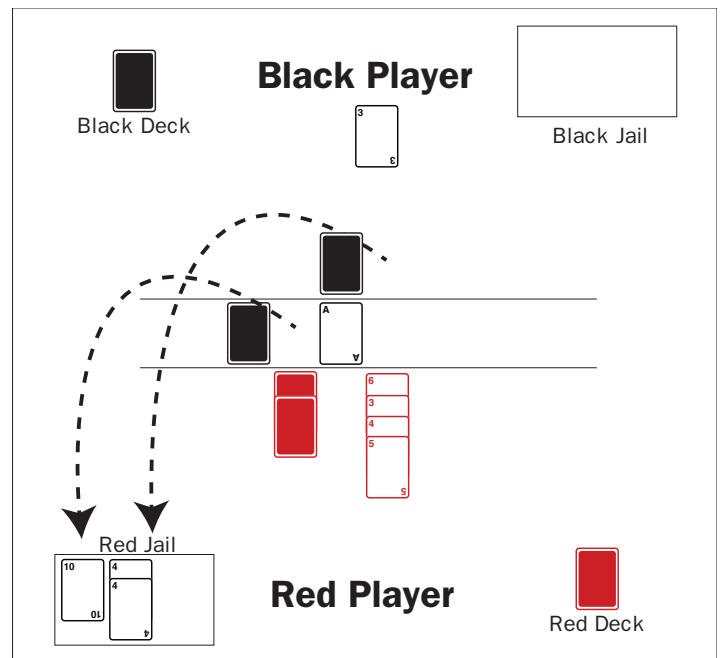
Red has just Positioned their final 2 cards behind Black's face-down stake on the left. Black has one move left to play. With only a 3 and their marked King left, Black chooses not to risk the loss of either, and "folds" by staking with their last play (playing their Marked King face down in the Stakes Row). The turn moves to the resolution phase.



All contested cards are revealed. Red has bluffed, playing a 2 and 8 (Strength 0) to win Black's formerly face-down 10. Red's cards are not revealed. If Black had risked their King in defense, they actually would have won this Battle with a high card, but they'll never know that.

Black was hoping Red would play into their trap on the center row Ace, since they'd secretly played a Ace behind it, making a pair, but Red did not bite. This will remain unrevealed to red.

The red 6 is hotly contested. Black has 3 Strength thanks to their Pair of 4s, but Red has a Strength of 4 due to their Straight (3,4,5,6), bringing their stake 6 into the straight. This results in Red's victory.



Red takes their winnings (the 10 that they bluffed on, and the two 4s that Black had attacked with), and places them in the Red Jail, netting 5 Points in the process.

The remaining Red cards all return to the Red Player Deck, and the remaining Black cards all return to the Black Player Deck.

Those decks are then shuffled for the next hand. The 10, and two 4s remain in the Red Jail for the remainder of the game.

Strategy Tips

Remember that pairs give you the most Strength value per card, so a deck with a strong likelihood of drawing pairs, is a strong deck. Thus, a deck with many single jailed cards is weak and a deck with many jailed pairs, is strong. If you have to risk losing a card to your opponent, it is best to risk a card that will pair with a card they have already captured.

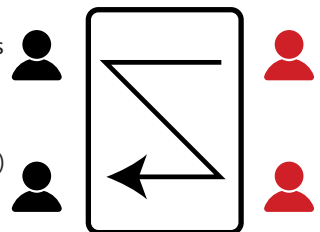
A medium hand can beat a strong hand if you can trick your opponent into split up their strong hand across a few battles.

Be careful with your high cards, even if they're Paired or part of a Straight. Every move in Cozen is both a strategy and a wager.

2v2

To play cozen 2v2 you'll need two full decks of cards. Have one team sit across the table from the other team, but next to each other.

Place the turn order card (on next page) in the center of the table. Turn order happens as shown on that card (and in the diagram to the right).



Each player gets half a deck in their color. Teammates may not communicate with each other, but may look at their partners played cards. Play continues until one team surpasses 100 victory points in their jail.

At the start of a round only the first player and the following player should flip stakes.

Quick reference card

Pair = 3 Str
Straight = 1 Str/card (min 2)

**You may only score one
Straight per hand.**

**Regardless of run use,
Ace = high as high card**

2v2 turn order reference card

