Tavern Games

It's all fun and games 'til the half-orc loses his gold

This package contains some simple rules that allow players to actually experience a game of Billiards or Darts as their character, against other PCs or NPCs. Gambling and tavern games can be a good way to make a few extra coins, make a few enemies, or show off some dexterity.

A mundane adventure for tired or relaxing characters

by Level Zero

GETTING IN THE GAME, IN THE GAME

There are many harsh lessons to be learned from the gambling experience, but the harshest one of all is the difference between having Fun and being Smart.

—*Hunter S. Thompson*

GAMBLING

A way for a character to make a little money, without too much effort is gambling. It's never too hard to find some back alley tavern with a dagger laden dart board in the back room. It makes for some fun down time and a few silver pieces, or with the right set of characters, a tense situation with a heavy bar tab on the line.

Generally a person can only make so much in a tavern, a small sack of silver at most, considering the common crowd's pockets aren't very deep. So in a big city one might find a dedicated gambling hall or some sort of casino, in order to make some substantial money, so long as he has a little to put down first.

SETTING THE ANTE

Antes are set differently in different settings. If a rogue, a bard, and a warlock walk into a bar with a 20 pound sack of gold and jewels, it's not likely that anyone will be able to meet an ante of their caliber (unless the drunken owner is willing to bet the tavern). So generally in a tavern, the common patron is willing to part with twice the price of a meal served there at most.

The table below shows the difficulty class (DC) for convincing tavern goers to part with their money

Tavern Gambling – Finding an Opponent

Value	DC	Difficulty
½ Price of a Meal	15	Medium
Full Price of a Meal	20	Hard
Double Price of a Meal	25	Very Hard
Triple Price of a Meal	30	Nearly Impossible

As a general rule, once a character loses the amount they were "talked into losing" they'll quit. Any charisma roll made to persuade them to play again will be made with disadvantage.

In some settlements the party might run into a gambling hall or a casino of some kind. Here is where people don't really need to be talked into betting at all. Typically a character can walk right up to a billiards table, drop an ante and join at the start of the next game. At the end of a game, the winner takes all.

PLAYER SKILL

In a billiards hall there are typically different groups of players at different tables, they naturally divide themselves by skill, and are willing to bet more on themselves if they fancy their own skill. So, if there are 3 billiards tables in the hall there are 3 levels of difficulty.

The table below indicates how much the 3 difficulty categories are typically willing to bet on themselves. In a tavern setting to determine the skill level of an opponent roll 1d6-2 and refer to the table below. Rolls that would be reduced to 0 count as novice. It's best to roll the skill level of an opponent before the PC interacts with NPC.

NPC Proficiency Bonus & Typical Ante

Player Skill	Prof. Bonus	Ante Per Player
1) Novice	(+1)	3sp
2) Regular Player	(+3)	5sp
3) Experienced Player	(+5)	1gp
4) Tournament Competitor	(+7)	2gp

When players and NPCs make skill rolls they add their dexterity modifier and any applicable proficiency bonuses. A gaming set proficiency (usually gained with *noble* or *solider* backgrounds) could be applied to billiards or dragonchess, or dragondarts alike.

PRICE REFERENCE

What's a piece of gold worth anyway? It's easy for adventurers to forget the real worth of gold pieces, since they come across it piles at a time it seems. A three silver is like nothing to a ninth level rogue, but to the common man, it's the meal for a day. Next time you find 4 gold on a hobgoblin, think about the fact that you just got a night stay in a 5 star hotel and dinner for a prince!

Food, Drink & Lodging Prices – 5e PHB pg.158

Item	Cost
Food & Drink	
Gallon of Ale	2 sp
Mug of Ale	4 cp
Loaf of Bread	2 cp
Hunk of Cheese	1 sp
Chunk of Meat	3 sp
Pitcher of Wine	2 sp
Bottle of Fine Wine	10 gp
Tavern Meal	
Squalid (Warm beans)	7 cp
Poor (Leg of rabbit)	1 sp
Modest (Meat pie with veggies)	3 sp
Comfortable (Lamb stew, dinner roll & ale)	5 sp
Wealthy (Steak, with veggies & wine)	8 sp
Aristocratic (4 course meal, by a star chef)	2 gp

Billiards

The rules here are for shooting pool in general, you can use them for just about any game played with cues, balls, and pockets on a pool table. Here I'll explain a game of 8-Ball played by two people.

In 8-Ball the game is played with a set of 15 numbered balls and a cue ball. Each numbered ball is a different color, the first seven are solid, and the last seven have a stripe across the center. The 8 ball is solid black. Each player chooses stripes or solids, then they try to hit the cue ball with the pool cue into the numbered balls so that they fall into one of the six pockets around the pool table. The game is won once a player sinks seven solids or stripes and then the 8 ball.

In the game, the DM will keep track of the number of balls sunk by each player. The first player to sink 8 balls is the winner.

Rolling The Game

Rolling starts after the players decide who will break. The break happens automatically, no need to roll until shooting begins.

Lining up a shot: Before each shot is made, the DM will "line up" a new shot. The DM will briefly narrate a player looking for a good shot. The DM will then roll for the difficulty of the shot by rolling *1d6+1d4,* then that number is doubled. This becomes the DC that must be succeeded to make the shot. (It will be between 2 and 20 with an average of about 10-14) The player gets to know the DC of the shot, this way they can determine if they want to make a trick shot or play it safe.

Shooting: The player will have to make a dexterity check, adding their proficiency if they are proficient with a gaming set (as long as they choose billiards or at least a sport close enough) as well as any bonuses they may have from spells or other miscellaneous sources. If the player beats the determined DC then they made the shot and they take another turn (The DM lines up a new shot and the cycle continues). If they miss or scratch the next player takes their turn.

Trick Shots: If the player is feeling confident they can decide to try a trick shot. This adds +7 to the shot's DC. If the shot is made successfully then on their next turn the player will have advantage. If the shot is unsuccessful it counts as a miss and the player ends their turn.

Scratching: A scratch happens when the cue ball falls into a pocket, which is basically a fowl. If a player scratches, their turn ends and the opponent gets to place the cue ball wherever they wish, giving them an advantage. In the game, if a player rolls a 3 or less while attempting a shot it will scratch (even if the shot was successful).For example, if the shot DC was a 4, and the player rolls a 3 but

adds +3 for their dexterity bonus, the numbered ball will land in the pocket, scoring them a ball, but the cue ball also happens to roll into a pocket. This ends their turn, and the opponent has advantage on the first shot of their turn.

As if scratching wasn't bad enough, if a player scratches while attempting to sink the 8 ball, they automatically lose the game. (believe it or not, it's incredibly amusing to see.)

Dragon Darts

Dragon Darts is a simplified version of "501". The game works by throwing at a dart board identical to it's real world counterpart, starting at 100 points, making your way down to zero or lower. However, getting to zero isn't enough to win. One must get to zero and then land a bulls eye. The first person to have zero points and a bulls eye at the end is the winner.

In the game, the DM will keep track of each player's score. Starting at 100 and subtracting point values until zero.

Rolling The Game

Rolling starts after the players decide who will throw first. Each player takes their turn starting with 3 darts, after throwing all three the next player takes their turn. Pretty simple really. As many people can partake in one game as the DM wishes.

Hitting the target: The dart board is a small inanimate object, that hangs on a wall seven feet away from the throwing line. To hit it, the player must make a ranged attack with a dart, dagger, shuriken or similar object. **The dart board has AC13** meet or exceed that on your ranged attack roll to hit the target.

Scoring: If the attack misses then the throw is wasted, and no points are awarded. If the attack hits then the thrower will roll **1d20** and **1d6.** The value rolled on the d20 is the base score (the numbered section that the dart landed on) The d6 is used to determine if the dart landed on one of the multiplier rings (the thin rings near the edge of the scoring area and between the edge and center of the board) If the value on the d6 is 5, then the base score is doubled. If the d6 value is 6 then the base score is tripled!
-To clarify. If you hit the dart board and roll a 20 on the d20 and a 6 on the d6 the total amount that you scored with that dart is 60.
The points are then subtracted from the player's score until they reach zero. Once a player reaches zero points they aim for the bulls eye. The bulls eye has AC23. Once they hit it, they win!

Critical Hits: If a player rolls a natural 20 on their attack roll, they can choose to hit either a triple 20 (for 60 points) or the bulls eye (worth 50 points or the win.)