BUNCO Rules

How the dice-and-rounds party game actually works.

SETUP

12 players form 3 tables of 4 (the host's table is the head table). Partners sit across from each other. Each table needs 4 score cards, 1 table tally sheet, 3 dice, and 4 pencils. The head table also gets a small bell and a "traveler" — a fuzzy item passed to whoever rolls a real BUNCO.

THE ROUND

Round 1 you roll for 1s. Round 2 you roll for 2s. And so on through Round 6. Each die that shows the round number is one point for your team. Three of a kind of the round number is a real BUNCO — call BUNCO! out loud, score 21 points, take the traveler, and ring the head-table bell. Three of a kind of any other number is a baby (or "mini") bunco worth 5 points.

ENDING THE ROUND

A round ends when the head-table team that is currently rolling reaches 21 points and rings the bell. Once the bell rings, every table stops — losers freeze whatever score they have. Tally the round on the table sheet; the winning pair earns 1 win and the losing pair 1 loss. Each player marks their own card.

ROTATION

After each round, winners advance up a table (head-table winners stay where they are). Losers move down or stay at the bottom. Partners swap so you play with someone different every round.

A FULL GAME

A typical bunco night is 4 sets of 6 rounds each — 24 rounds total, about 90 minutes. After the last round, every player tallies wins, losses, BUNCOs, and baby BUNCOs from their own card.

PRIZES

Most groups award prizes for: most wins, most BUNCOs, most baby BUNCOs, holding the traveler at the end of the night, and (the consolation favorite) most losses. House rules vary — pick what fits the group.