

THREE-DRAGON ANTE: DICE GAMBIT



Three-Dragon Ante is a time-honored card game published by Wizards of the Coast and appears in some versions of D&D as a gambling game played by the wealthy. Specifically, the PHB for 5E D&D includes the Three-Dragon Ante set under gaming sets of the tools list. This ruleset, which is loosely based on the card game rules, is intended to be a "game-within-a-game" with which characters can have proficiency. This version plays faster than the official card game, but is more in-depth than skipping past actually playing a mini-game by merely rolling checks such as Intelligence, Sleight of Hand or Deception for cheating, Perception to notice someone else cheating, etc. in which a larger set of rules isn't necessary.

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BASICS

Three-Dragon Ante: Dice Gambit is a variant of the card game Three-Dragon Ante which is played with polyhedral gaming dice instead of the official Three-Dragon Ante deck of cards. This is intended to be a "game within a game" for use with tabletop RPG games.

THE GAMBIT

A gambit of Three-Dragon Ante consists of three rounds. On your turn in each of the three rounds you roll a dragon "card" into your dragon flight (your dragons in play) and ante (pay) gold to the stakes (the pot) equal to the dragon's strength.

GAMEPLAY STEPS SUMMARY

- (1) Turns & Starting Ante
- (2) Play a Gambit of 3 Rounds
[On each round, every player plays a "dragon card" & antes gold]
- (3) Special Dragon Flights
- (4) Settle Debts
- (5) Determine Gambit Winner
- (6) Game Ends or Repeat

POWERS/SPECIAL FLIGHTS

Dragons have special powers based on their alignment or if they are a dragon god. In addition, certain combinations of dragons provide rewards.

WINNING

Typically, the player with the strongest dragon flight (sum of strength of all dragons in a dragon flight) at the end of the gambit wins the stakes from that gambit.

The overall winner of the gambit is the player with the largest dragon hoard at the end of a gambit, though winning the stakes greatly increases the chances of being the overall gambit winner.

TIE BREAKERS

Break any ties in this order of precedence: largest dragon hoard, most dragon gods played, most good dragons in dragon flight, unmodified d20 rolls (with advantage for characters that own a Three-Dragon Ante gaming set).

GAMING SET

Characters that own the Three-Dragon Ante gaming set can make all game rolls with advantage (who goes first roll, dragon strength rolls, and tie breaker rolls) by rolling two of the specified type of dice and keeping the highest result. (Advantage is used instead of the character's proficiency bonus in this ruleset since game elements such as a 1d4 strength roll potentially adding a +6 bonus turns the game on its head.)



DRAGONS

DRAGON CARDS

Each turn a player will roll for a dragon card from this table. Specific directions are provided in the gameplay steps.

Dragon Card Table:

D12	Type	Alignment	Strength
1	Tiamat [god]	Evil	1
2	Brass	Good	1d4
3	White	Evil	1d4
4	Copper	Good	1d6
5	Black	Evil	1d6
6	Bronze	Good	1d8
7	Green	Evil	1d8
8	Silver	Good	1d10
9	Blue	Evil	1d10
10	Gold	Good	1d12
11	Red	Evil	1d12
12	Bahamut [god]	Good	13



DRAGON POWERS

Dragons have powers based on their alignment or status as a dragon god. Additional directions are provided in the gameplay steps.

EVIL DRAGONS [REGULAR]

When a non-god evil dragon is played, steal gold from the stakes up to a value equal to 1/2 the strength dice type of the played dragon (i.e., 1/2 of a Green dragon's d8 strength dice equals 4, thus the player would steal 4 gold from the stakes). If the full amount of stealable gold is not available in the stakes, the player steals as much as they can, but the stakes is not responsible for any debt incurred due to theft).

GOOD DRAGONS [REGULAR]

When a non-god good dragon is played, the player can choose an opponent that has an evil dragon in their flight. The chosen opponent must "return" gold to the stakes up to a value equal to 1/2 the strength dice type of the dragon that was just played (i.e., 1/2 of a Gold dragon's d12 strength dice equals 6, thus the chosen opponent pays 6 gold to the stakes). If the opponent does not have the full amount of gold, they pay as much as they can now and owe a debt to the stakes for the remaining gold amount).

TIAMAT [DRAGON GOD]

If Tiamat is still in play at the end of the gambit, the weakest dragon flight wins the stakes. Her apparent strength of 1 is magical treachery to make her more likely to win through use of her dragon power.

BAHAMUT [DRAGON GOD]

When Bahamut is in play, the owner may choose to sacrifice him at any time to destroy a Tiamat of choice that is in play. Each player immediately plays a replacement card, with a red dragon card replacing any removed Tiamat card and a Gold dragon card replacing any removed Bahamut card. The owner rolls the new dragon's strength as it enters play.

GAMEPLAY STEPS

URNS & STARTING ANTE

To play a gambit, players supply 50 gold (or other agreed to amount) as their starting dragon hoard.

All players roll 1d12. The player that rolled the highest value goes first and play continue clockwise. Every player antes gold equal to the largest value rolled to the stakes, except the player going first only pays half the starting ante (rounded up to next whole number).

PLAY A GAMBIT

A gambit is made up of 3 Rounds. On each player's turn, they plays a card by rolling a d12 to determine the dragon's type from the "Dragon Card Table", then roll the listed strength dice to determine the dragon's strength (dragon gods have a set strength, thus no roll is needed). The dragon type, alignment, and strength represent the dragon card that is played.

Optionally, a player can instead choose to withdraw from the game on their turn instead of playing a new card, forfeiting any gold they have in the stakes. If they owe any debts, they must pay them in order immediately from their remaining dragon hoard until they have no debt or no gold.

After playing a card, the player then antes gold to the stakes equal to the strength of the dragon card they played. If the player does not have enough gold, they ante what they have until they are out of gold, and owe a debt to the stakes for the remaining gold amount.

When a dragon is played, the dragon's power is triggered (except for Bahamut's power which is triggered at a time of the owner's choosing). Carry out the instructions stated for the dragon power when it is triggered.

SPECIAL DRAGON FLIGHTS

In the order of play, evaluate each player's dragon flights with the following criteria in the following order and carry out the associated instructions (dragon gods still count as dragons).

(1) **God Flight:** A player that rolled a dragon god at the start of each of their 3 turns may take 1/2 of the stakes (rounded down) and add it to their dragon hoard. The dragon god cards are not required to still be in the players dragon flight.

(2) **Triplet Flight:** Three dragons of the same strength in a dragon flight rewards the player gold equal to 1 of those dragon's strength from all opponents. If an opponent does not have enough gold, they pay what they have until they are out of gold, and owe a debt to the player for the remaining gold amount.

(3) **Allied Flight:** Three dragons of the same alignment in a flight rewards a player the strongest dragon's strength worth of gold from the stakes. If the full amount of gold is not available in the stakes, the player takes as much as they can, but the stakes does not owe a debt.

(4) **Leader Flight:** Add the strength of all dragons in each player's dragon flight together. The player with the strongest dragon flight (or weakest if Tiamat is in play) is the leader and wins the stakes. See basics above for breaking ties.

SETTLE DEBTS

Debts are settled at the end of a gambit before a final winner can be declared. Players must pay back their debts (if possible) in the order they were incurred. However, if the player's dragon hoard is empty or runs out during this step, they do not owe anything else.

DETERMINE GAMBIT WINNER

The player with the largest dragon hoard after settling debts is the gambit winner. See basics section for breaking ties.

When the game is organized by a tavern or gambling hall, the winner is typically awarded an additional prize.

GAME ENDS OR REPEAT

The game ends once a gambit winner is declared. Optionally, players can continue playing additional gambits by repeating the gameplay steps. If multiple gambits are played, the player that collected the largest combined sum for their dragon hoard is the overall winner.



PLAYER TRACKER

Optional gambit trackers for players to use.

Three-Dragon Ante: Dice Gambit – Player Tracker			
Dragon	Type	Alignment	Strength
1			
2			
3			
Total Strength:			
<input type="checkbox"/> God Flight <input type="checkbox"/> Triplet Flight		<input type="checkbox"/> Allied Flight <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Flight	
<u>Dragon Hoard</u>		<u>Debts Owed</u>	

Three-Dragon Ante: Dice Gambit – Player Tracker			
Dragon	Type	Alignment	Strength
1			
2			
3			
Total Strength:			
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<u>Dragon Hoard</u>		<u>Debts Owed</u>	

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<u>Dragon Hoard</u>		<u>Debts Owed</u>	