

President Card Game

Introduction

President has many alternative names: **Scum**, **Asshole** (in Britain: **Arsehole**), **Rich Man Poor Man**, **Bum**, **Landlord**, **Emperors and Scum**, **Root Beer**, **Warlords and Scumbags**, **Butthead**, **Capitalism**; in France it is **Trouduc** or **Trou du Cul**; in Germany: **Einer ist immer der Arsch**; in Hungary it is **Hûbéres** (meaning vassal); in the Netherlands it is **Sluitspieren** or **Kloutzakken**.

The game has recently spread throughout the Western world, especially among young people, but is probably of Chinese origin. In games of this type (which I call [climbing games](#)), each player in turn can either pass or play a card or combination which beats the previous play, and the usual object is to get rid of all one's cards as soon as possible. Such games have been known in the West only for the last twenty years or so, but there are many of them in China, perhaps the most famous being [Zheng Shangyou](#).

The Basic Game

Objective

The aim is to get rid of all your cards as soon as possible. The last player left with cards is called the *scum*, or whatever term of derision is locally used.

Players and Cards

About 4 to 7 people using a standard 54 card pack with the jokers included. The suits are irrelevant and the cards rank, from high to low, **Joker, 2 A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3**.

Deal

The first deal, the players with more cards (if there are some) go first.

The game is played clockwise. All the cards are dealt out counter-clockwise. Some players may have one more than others.

Play

The player to dealer's left starts by leading (face up) any single card or any set of cards of equal rank (for example three fives). Each player in turn must then either pass (i.e. not play any cards), or play face up a card or set of cards which beats the previous play.

A single card is beaten by any higher single card. A set of cards can only be beaten by a higher set containing the same number of cards except for the Joker. So for example if the previous player played two sixes you can beat this with two kings, or two sevens, but not with a single king, and not with three sevens (though you could play two of them and hang onto the third).

It is not necessary to beat the previous play just because you can - passing is always allowed. Also passing does not prevent you from playing the next time your turn comes round.

The play continues as many times around the table as necessary until someone makes a play which everyone else passes. All the cards played are then turned face down and put to one side, and the player who played last (and highest) to the previous "trick" starts again by leading any card or set of equal cards.

For example the play might go:

A	B	C	D	E
44	Pass	Pass	66	99
JJ	Pass	Pass	Pass	KK
Pass	Pass	AA	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass			

C then starts again by leading any card or set.

When a player whose turn it is to play has no more cards left, the turn passes to the next player in rotation. Therefore in the example, if the two aces were C's last two cards, it would then be D's turn to play anything.

Social Status

The first player who is out of cards is awarded the highest social rank - for Americans this is *President* - the next is *Vice-President*, then *Citizen* and so on down. The last player to be left with any cards is known as the *Beggar*, *Scum*, or by various terms of abuse. For Europeans the ranks can be *King*, *Minister*, ... , *Peasant* or *Boss*, *Foreman*, *Worker*, *Bum*.

If keeping score, the players get points depending on their position – points for the winner (the new president) being equal to the number of players and then going down by one from there. More importantly, the players of higher status are entitled to enjoy and generally abuse their power over the lower ranking players.

For the next hand the players move seats. The President selects the most comfortable chair, the Vice President sits to the President's right, and so on around to the Scum who sits to the President's left, probably on a crate or packing case.

The Scum is responsible for shuffling, dealing and clearing away the cards when necessary. As the players are now seated counter-clockwise in order of rank, the first card is dealt to the President, the second to the Vice President, and so on down. This backwards dealing gives the higher players an extra card, making it perhaps a little fairer for the lower players.

When the deal is complete, the Scum must give his two highest cards to the President, and the President gives back in exchange any two cards which he does not want. The vice-president and the second to last ranked player must exchange one card, the second to last player giving up his highest card. With five players, the middle player doesn't give up any cards, and with six or more players, the middle players may trade cards if they want.

The Scum leads any card or set of cards and the game continues as before.

End of Game

The number of deals depends on the number of players. This chart describes the *minimum* number of deals:

Players	Cards	Deals
3	4 player minimum	
4	13	13
5	10.4	11
6	8.67	9
7	7.43	8
8	6.5	8
9	5.78	8
10	divide into two 5-player games	

There are many variations to this game available on the Internet. Some allow for the President to change some of these variations.