DICED

TOURNAMENT

An original MSX game

It is 1915, somewhere in the Wild West.

Once a year, the best players meet to take part in a tournament of a special kind. Skills like aiming or shooting faster than his shadow are of no help here. It is all about intellect, strategy, endurance and luck. And the ability to drink hard.

It's about a dice game as brilliant as it is simple. asy to learn, hard to master.

Put your wits up against over 190 unique opponents in 17 tournaments. Crush the competition. Or be crushed. Outclass your fellow players with sovereignty and strategy. Or outsmart them.

I am Dolus Ictis, teacher and trainer, coach and contributor, patron and philanthropist. I will accompany you at the tournament and analyze whether you have what it takes to become a champion.

If you don't know the game yet, or want to have the rules explained again, or just want to compete against some helpless dummies, I recommend you come to my dojo to play a few matches.

Quickstart

If you want to jump right in, this chapter gives you the absolute minimum information you need for playing.

As the game features a fully interactive tutorial chapter, introducing the game mechanics and controls. This takes around 30 minutes and is highly recommended to play it as an alternative to reading this manual. Especially if you play the game for the first time.

General controls

The game can be played with keyboard, mouse or joystick. The latter two can simply be plugged into any port and used immediately (but not simultaneously).

The keyboard can be used in parallel at any time.

In most scenes, the cursor is simply moved by pressing the desired direction with the cursor keys. Joystick controls work in the same way as the keyboard, just tilt the stick in the desired direction. When using the mouse, a pointer will appear in scenes where there is something clickable.

The mose control is activated as soon as a mouse is plugged in. As soon as the cursor keys are used, the control switches to keyboard mode. To reactivate the mouse control, simply shake the mouse briefly.

Trigger A: left mouse button, space, joystick button 1
Trigger B: right mouse button, ESC or Backspace, joystick button 2

Confirming a selection is done with Trigger A, aborting or going back is done with Trigger B..

Tutorials

The options in the game expand as you progress. Next to the aforementioned tutorial chapter, which is purely optional, mini tutorials will pop up from time to time when something new becomes available or when something important is happening. Each of these will only pop up once, and you cannot review them again - unless you restarting the game.

Dice game controls

Mouse:

Roll dice: Click on the Roll button

Lock / unlock dice: Click on the dice

Score roll: Click on the category in the green scoreboard.

Order drinks: Click on the bell in the lower left corner (if available)

Keyboard / Joystick:

Roll dice: Press R on the keyboard or Trigger B on the Joystick

Lock / unlock dice: Move left / right to select the dice and press space / Trigger A. With the keyboard, there is an even faster method to lock / unlock dice: Press the number keys 1-6 to toggle dice with the corresponding **values** up and down. Selecting a dice is not necessary. Does it work? Hell, yes! But how? Just try it, it sounds more complex than it is!

Score roll: Move up / down to select the category in the green scoreboard and press space to put the score.
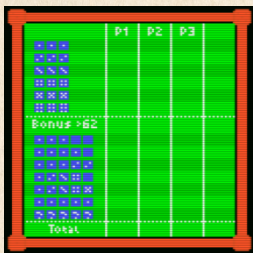
Order drinks: Move up / down until you see the floating hand over the bell. Press space / Trigger A to order.

Loading and Saving

The game features a simple password system. That's it. Not more, not less.

Glossary

Abacus

This is a board where the scores of all players are recorded during a -> match. At the beginning, the Abacus is very simple - not more than a notepad. However, it can be expanded during during the game with useful upgrades.

Category

A cell in the Abacus where the player scores are recorded. Each category has its own scoring rules. Some categories have a fixed score, and some sum the values of the dice. There are 13 categories.

Roll

The result of throwing the dice. In the first roll of each turn, all players roll their 5 dice. In subsequent rolls (=rerolls), the players can choose 1 to 5 dice to reroll.

Turn

A sequence of dice rolls. In each turn, all players can roll their dice up to 3 times. After the third roll, a category must be chosen to score the 5 dice.

Players can end their turn prematurely after the first or second roll and choose a category. They must wait until all other players have ended their turn as well.

Match

A single game. All players start a match with 13 available categories to fill. In each turn, one category must be filled by each player. The score is tracked in the Abacus. At the end of a match , the points of all categories are summed up, bonuses are added and the players are ranked from highest to lowest score. A match ends after 13 turns.

Reputation

You start as a bloody beginner. Whenever you win a tournament, you gain experience. More experience raises your reputation level. And reputation is required to unlock items in the game.
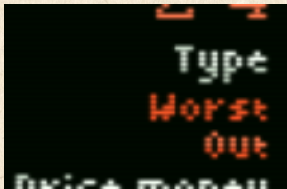
The tournaments

A tournament is a series of matches. The exact number of matches depends on the number of players and groups allowed in a specific tournament.

Earning money and reputation - the two currencies in the game - is done by winning tournaments. Every time you win a tournament, you get a fixed price money and whenever you win a specific tournament for the first time, you get an additional bonus.

The reputation you gain depends on where you play. In the beginning, you play local tournaments and thus, get only little reputation, but if you are good, that will change faster than you can say Tukkuthkutchin Terminator.

There are two types of tournaments, with Worst-out and K.O. matches.

Worst-out tournaments

 as shown in selection screen

In a worst-out tournament, players are divided into groups between 2 and 4 players. After each match, the player with the lowest score in the current match is eliminated from each group. Keep this in mind, as the total score doesn't count until the very end, in the final match of each tournament, which is always a 1:1 match. So even a player with a higher overall score in the current tournament can be eliminated if he was the worst score in the current match. To win such a tournament, you don't have to win every match - it's enough to have the highest total score at the end.

And you also get price money and reputation if you place 2nd - but only half of it.
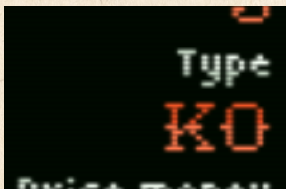
as shown in selection screen

K.O. tournaments

These are more difficult: only the best player of a match advances after each match, all other players are eliminated. You meet all new opponents in the next match, and the points from the previous match don't count. To win such a tournament, you have to win every match. However, the price money and reputation is higher than for worst-out tournaments.

At the beginning, you can only choose from tournaments at a level that corresponds to your skill level. You have to earn the privilege of competing against better players. Once you have won all the tournaments in a level, the next level will be unlocked. Don't be afraid to lose a tournament. You can always try again.

In each league there are a different number of tournaments. If you can win all of them, you will have to take a final challenge before moving up to the next higher league.
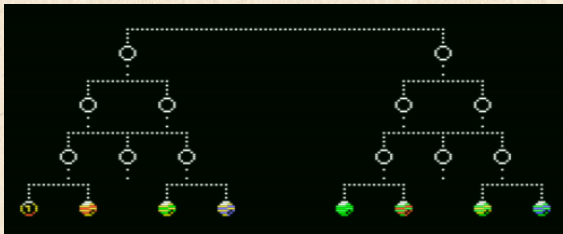
There are 3 leagues:

3rd league: Real Rookies Realm

2nd league: Pure Professionals Pool

1st league: Crazy Champions Club

Each tournament takes place in a different location. At the beginning, don't expect clean sites or high prices. Of course, this changes as the difficulty increases.

The Tournament Map

After you have joined a tournament - as well as after each match - a visual tree of the current tournament with all matches is being displayed. This shows you how many matches you still have to play, all groups in the tournament, the opponents in each group and which players have already been eliminated.

You are displayed with the icon

The Prize Money

For every tournament you win, you will receive a prize money. If you win a tournament, there is an additional bonus on top - but only the first time.

In a K.O. tournament, only the winner gets the prive money. In a worst out tournament, the second place still gets half of it.

You can spend you earned money to improve your Abacus, buy your fellow players a drink, or expand the musical repertoire of the piano player.

The Sites

The saloon

A tournament always takes place in the respective saloon of the site. Each will have a store with improvements for your Abacus as well as a bar with drinks, where you can order a round for you and your teammates for the next match. Why? Well, it's an old truth: be close to your friends, but even closer to your enemies. More on that later.
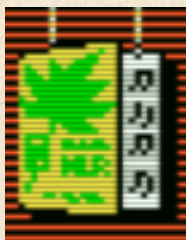
The Piano player

"When I arrived at Leadville," Mr. Oscar Wilde said, "in the evening I went to the Casino. There I found the miners and the female friends of the miners, and in one corner a pianist—the typical pianist—sitting at a piano over which was this notice:

'Please do not shoot at the pianist; he is doing his best.'

Of course, there is a piano player in each saloon to provide a musical entertainment for each tournament. Initially, he player plays only two pieces at the beginning.

In each league there are two additional pieces of music that you can buy. Once purchased, they become part of the piano player's repertoire.

musical score sheet at the paino player's shop

Personal playlists

Normally, the piano player chooses which pieces he wants to play during a match. However, as soon as you have 3 or more pieces of music, you can compile your own playlist of up to 3 pieces before each match that the piano player should play in sequence. To do this, select the next piece of music right before a match starts while the timer is running with the left / right control and confirm the selection.

However, this service is subject to a fee. The prices are advertised in the saloon.

Important note:

The two music tracks per league are unique. So don't forget to buy both of them before you advance to the next league. There will be no way to get them later.

The Abacus store

Shawn the Shopkeeper says: "Pimp your dice gear!"

These upgrades allow you to keep track of your score in the heat of a match.

Two of the upgrades show the current score in the upper section. This makes it easy to keep track of how many points you are missing until you reach the bonus score at the end of a match.

Two other upgrades show the current total score. With this, no opponent can win by surprise anymore.

With the "Bonizer (1)" the current sum of your scores in the upper section is displayed in a cell between the upper and lower section. The bonus of +35 points is reached if that sum is more than 62 points. Once that is the case, it will be displayed accordingly with "+35".

The upgrade "Bonizer (*)" is the same as the "Bonizer (1)", but you will see the sums of all opponents.

With the "Cumulator (1)" you always keep track of the current total score. This is displayed at the bottom in the cell "Total" - including the bonus, if it has been reached.

Similar to the Bonizer, the upgrade "Summarizer (*)" shows the current total score of all opponents.

This if for the inner Monk. Some dice (with 2, 3 and 6 eyes) can have different orientations after rolling. With this upgrade, all dice will be oriented in the same direction.

The bar

Bart the Bartender says: "Howdy stranger. Get yo'self some fine drinks to improve your luck of dice!"

Here you can choose a drink to be served to your teammates during the match.

These can be requested and served at any time during the match via the bell symbol [screenshot 08-Bell], but only once per match. Your opponents are not stupid and let you make them drunk so much that you have an easy game.

The drinks are high-octane and have varying effects on the opponents, above all they put them into a state of influence. The duration of the effect depends on the drink. While the state lasts, different… tricks… can be performed.

In any case, you can tell when the state of influence has worn off by looking closely at their faces.

There are 5 different drinks available:

Reprise Royale

Ancillary Aqua

Tukkuthkutchin Terminator

Shape Shot

Superfluous Spritzer

Important Notice:

Since you can only order one round per match, choose the drink wisely: the bartender will mix the drinks right after you pay. If you change your mind, you will have to pay again for the new drinks.

One more thing:

Let's be clear, the only reason for you to buy your opponents drinks is to push your luck… to your favor. But hey, they are not stupid, so you need some experience to pull off some of the tricks. The barkeeper will only sell you the drinks that you can handle, so up your reputation!!!

And one more thing:

If you don't have the drinks served during a match, the bartender will drink them himself!

Appendix B contains more details about the effect of the drinks, their duration and strategic use.

Controls in the dice game

Selecting and positioning the dice

Mouse control

Move the mouse cursor over a dice and click the left mouse button to move it to the Held Dice Area or to the Roll Dice Area, depending on its current position.

Keyboard / Joystick control

Use left and right to select a postiion. Press spacebar / Trigger A to move the cube to the Held Dice Area or to the Cube Area, depending on its position.

Selecting a category

Mouse control

Move the mouse pointer over a free category cell. The pointer will disappear and show a focus rectangle instead. Click the left mouse button to select that category. Move the mouse up / down to select another cell, or left / right to show the cursor again.

Keyboard / Joystick control

Use up and down to select a free category cell.

With spacebar / Trigger A the current roll is scored into the category. The actual score is determined by the rules of that category, which can be a sum or a fixed score. Be careful with the selection: There is no undo!

The selected category is additionally displayed in the info area below the Abacus.

Additional shortcuts in the dice game

Professional players can use the following shortcuts during a match as an alternative to cursor control:

"R" to roll the dice

"O" to ring the bell (order drinks).

Press the keys 1-6 to place the dice with the respective value in the Held Dice Area or in the Roll Dice Area. Depending on the position of the dice, these will be moved in one direction or the other.

E.g. if 2 is pressed in the example above, the leftmost dice with the value 2 in the Roll Dice Area will be moved up into the Held Dice Area. Pressing 2 again will move the next dice with the value 2. If there are no more dice with the value 2 in the Roll Dice Area, the leftmost dice in the Held Dice Area will be moved to the Roll Dice Area. Pressing 2 again will move the next dice tieh the value 2 down. If there are no more dice of that value in the Held Dice Area, it starts over. It doesn't sound like it, but it's very intuitive.

Dice game rules

The easiest way to learn the rules of the game, it is recommended to play the fully interactive in-game tutorial.

Appendix A

Drinks und Strategies

Reprise Royale – Restart roll

Activation conditions: Only until dice have been locked / unlocked

Begins: Immediately after use

Ends: After the re-roll

You watch them gulping down the drinks and take your chance to reroll your last rolled dice again, unnoticed. You must use the same dice that you just rolled. And you must not have moved any dice to or from the held dice area.

Shape Shot - Change dice

Activation conditions: None (can be activated any time)

Begins: Immediately after use (timer starts after activation)

Ends: After timer

The drink hits so hard that for a short moment, the distant vision is blurred. You take this as an opportunity to subtly cover up one cube from the current roll with your hand and cleverly roll it over an edge. Unfortunately, you can't see exactly what's coming next. Maybe you have enough time to roll it again, for another 1 or 2 seconds? You need to go fast here. Practice makes perfect. The more experienced you become, the time you have to pull the trick seems to stretch.

Ancillary Aqua - Extra dice

Activation conditions: None (can be activated any time)

Begins: Immediately after use

Ends: After choosing a category

The player gets an extra 6th dice for the rest of the turn.

Note:

The drink has got it, the eyes start squinting and the opponents can no longer count their own fingers. This is the right moment to bring a sixth die into play.

Superfluous Spritzer - Extra roll

Activation conditions: None (can be activated any time)

Begins: Immediately after use

Ends: After the 4th roll

The mood is great and you join in the merry laughter. And at the end of the round you manage to convince your opponents that you missed a roll and that you will roll again. A fourth time.

Tukkuthkutchin Terminator - Force turn end

Activation conditions: None (can be activated any time)

Begins: Immediately after use

Ends: After choosing a category

This drink will make them will-less. You can convince them that was the last roll in this round. "Time to choose a category! No more rolls!"

Credits

Development

Michael Stellmann: Game design, gameplay, code, music, graphics

Daniel Simon: Graphics, music, anything else

Musical Scores

A Black Hand by Robert Hoffman - 1908

Black and White Rag by George Botsford - 1908

Buzzer Rag by May Aufderheide - 1909

Columbia Rag by Irene M. Giblin - 1910

Maple Leaf Rag & The Entertainer by Scott Joplin - 1899

Poker Rag by Charlotte Blake - 1909

The Wish-Bone Rag by Charlotte Blake – 1909

Five Finger Shuffle & Fun in a Bottle by Kevin MacLeod

Beta-Testers

Thomas Stellmann

Markus Stellmann

Sarah Stellmann

Pauline Simon

Elisabeth Simon

Final words from Daniel

I would like to thank the following people who have made it possible that DICED is now a reality:

To my daughters Pauline and Elisabeth for their feedback while test playing. Thanks for dealing with this old man and his strange pixelated museum computers.

To Markus for his creative impulses and your ability to bring people together in the MSX scene.

For Mom. Thank you for encouraging and supporting me all my life, always supporting artistic vein. Rest in peace.

Final words from Michael

My thanks and appreciation goes to all those people supporting my passion and hobby in all episodes of life, and especially

To my family for their love and sympathy.

To all Beta testers for their support and inspirations to make this possible.