Don’t Tell Me the Odds

By Collin Krueger

In Don’t Tell Me the Odds, you try to swing the odds in your favor to outscore your opponent. You can play safely and gain points slowly over time or play risky and try to beat the odds for a boatload of points all at once. Can you reach 100 before your opponent? All it takes is one roll of the dice!

To play the game, you need a deck of cards and a 20-sided die. Take your deck and set aside cards with a face value of 6 through 10, Jack, Queen, and King. For this game, Aces count for 1. Add a single 10 that you put aside back into the deck for a total of 21 cards.

To start a round, shuffle and deal 3 cards facedown to each player, then deal one card face up. That number is the *total*. Then, alternating turns, each player can choose to do one of two things on their turn. First, they can choose to *add* a card from their hand to the total; or they can choose to *go for it.* When a player goes for it, they are trying to roll equal to or higher than the *total.* However, when they declare this action, the other player gets to add a *rider* from their hand or blindly from top of the deck*.* The *rider* increases the target value of the total before the roll. The player who starts the round cannot *go for it* on their first turn.

There are many ways to score in this game. When a player *goes for it*, on a success, they gain an amount of points equal to the total. For instance, if the total is 11, and the player rolls a 19, the player gains 11 points. However, if the *total*, before the *rider* is added, is 9 or higher, the points earned by the player who *went for it* are doubled. If the player chose to *go for it* and does not hit the target number, the other player gains 10 points.

Additionally, you can score by *busting* the total. If you play the card which brings the *total* to 20 or higher, then you gain 5 points. If the card you play makes the *total* exactly 20, you gain 10 points instead, but give the other player an opportunity to *steal.* When this happens, the other player rolls the die. On a roll of a 20, the player *steals* all that player’s points.

### Design Pillars

**Simple*.*** This game is easy to understand and does not have too many rules to bog down gameplay. The intention was to make a game somewhere in complexity between blackjack and poker.

**Fast-Paced­.** This game can be played in 10-15 minutes was the goal and this is about what we hit with the longest game taking 20 minutes and the shortest taking about 5.

**Strategic but Varied.** This game is strategic but does not have a single best strategy. This was achieved by having a hand size of three. You can have a strategy, but it must adapt based on the different hands you get.

**Meaningful Gameplay.** The choices in this game have immediate feedback and affect the rest of the game. Every card played and each attempt to go for it has meaningful feedback in terms of winning, bringing your odds of winning up or down.

**Interactivity and Dependence.** The choices made not only impact yourself but also your opponent and give players the ability to foil the strategy of the other player. This was achieved through the option of *rider.*

### Video Demonstration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1HfdTqipYU&feature=youtu.be>