

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?



SPIN DOCTOR

THE CARD GAME OF DIRTY POLITICS

Spin Doctor is a turn-based strategic card game where players take on the role of candidates for the President of the United States.

Accumulate votes by collecting state cards while thwarting opponents with great debates and sleazy scandals.

Be the first candidate to win a majority of electoral votes to win the election.

GAME SETUP

Shuffle the deck and deal each candidate six cards. The deck is then placed in the center of the table. This is the Election Stack that candidates will draw a card from on their turn. Leave space next to the deck for the discard pile.



HOW TO PLAY



Starting with the player to the dealer's left, candidates take turns in a clockwise rotation.

Turn Sequence:

- DRAW a card from the election deck
- PLAY a card from your hand and perform that action for that card (if any)
- If you cannot play a card, discard one card from your hand
- Play is passed to the player to your left

Each round ends when either an Election Day card is played or the final card from the election deck is drawn.



The Cards: How Each Are Played



State Cards

Every state (plus D.C.) has a State Card. The number of electoral votes you receive for winning that state is printed on each card. A state card is "tabled" by placing it face up in front of yourself in view of the other candidates.



Scandal

Placing this card in front of a candidate puts them under a scandal that severely limits their ability to campaign and win states. See "Scandals" sections for details on restrictions and options on how to clear your name.



In The Bag



Landslide Victory

These protect your tabled state cards from being lost to Win Debate and Democratic/Republican Nominee cards. "In The Bag" protects one state card. "Landslide Victory" can protect up to three cards (can be less than 3). Play the card over any currently tabled state card(s). The state card value must remain visible to other candidates.



Spin Doctor Media Connections President of the US

These cards allow you to get out of scandals. Media Connections removes a single scandal card but requires you to sacrifice one of your tabled state cards. Spin Doctor removes all active scandals. The best way to get out of a scandal is to call in a favor from your friend the "President of the United States" which removes scandals and immediately gives you another turn. See "Removing Scandals" section for more details.



Win Debate

This allows you to take another candidate's highest-value unprotected state card. Place the "Win Debate" card in the discard pile and add the state card to your tabled state cards.



Democratic Nominee Republican Nominee Independent Candidate

By laying one of these cards, a candidate declares himself for a party (or running as an independent). For details, see the "Becoming a Nominee" section.



Dark Secret Skeleton in the Closet

You don't want these! When a round ends, you will lose state cards if you have them. You cannot discard or play them, but can (and should) trade them whenever possible.



Good Public Relations

These prevent scandals from ever getting started. Each card blocks a specific scandal type from being played against you (and removes it if present when played). Once tabled, you keep the card (and its protection) for the entire round.



Election Day

When you are ready to end the round, play the election day card. The card cannot be played by someone currently in a scandal. See "Calling an Election" section for details.



Trade Secrets Rumors Take a Poll

Stuck with cards you don't want? These allow you to exchange a card or cards with other players. See "Trading Cards" section for details on how each of these cards work.

SCANDALS

In Spin Doctor (as in real life), a scandal can destroy a candidate's chances for election if not handled quickly. So, constantly miring your opponents in endless scandals is a great way to ensure victory.



On your turn, place a scandal card in front of an opponent to "Scandalize" them. A player can be under several scandals at once, but only one of each type.

While scandalized, a player still draws a card at the beginning of their turn, but is limited in what they can do. A scandalized player cannot table additional states, protect tabled states, win a debate, become a nominee, or call for an election. They can, however, play scandal cards on other players and trade cards (see "Trading Cards"). If the scandalized player cannot play a card, they must discard one of their cards.

REMOVING SCANDALS



To remove a scandal, you must play one of the following cards.

Media Connections - This card allows you to remove one scandal but you have to sacrifice one of your tabled state cards to do so. When played, place this card, the removed scandal card, and the sacrificed state card on the discard pile. State cards that are protected can be sacrificed, but you also lose the protection card as well (i.e. Landslide or In The Bag).

Spin Doctor - This card removes all scandal cards that have been played against you. When played, put this card and the removed scandal cards on the discard pile.

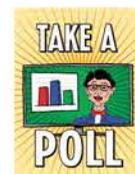
President of the US - Call in a favor from the POTUS to get you out of your troubles. This card removes all your active scandals plus gives you another turn. Draw a card and play again.

Good Public Relations - Each of these cards protects you from one specific type of scandal. Place this card in front of you when played and remove the scandal type (if present). This card remains tabled for you until an election is called.

TRADING CARDS

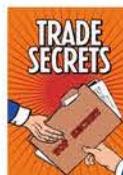
There are times when the cards you have aren't the cards you want - like when you are holding the DARK SECRET card. This is when you will want to trade cards with other players by spreading rumors, taking a poll, trading secrets. To start a trade, play one of the cards below. After making the trade (see directions for each below), place the card on the discard pile.

When you start a rumor, everyone joins in. When the RUMORS card is played, every player selects one of the existing cards from their hand and passes it to the player to their left.



The TAKE A POLL card allows you to take cards from other players. Starting with the player to your left, pick one card from their hand and look at it. If you want it, keep it, and give them a card from your hand. If you don't want it, give it back. Continue to do this with every player.

TRADE SECRETS allows you to swap up to three cards with another player. Choose the cards in your hand (up to 3) that you want to swap. Pick a player and randomly take the same number of cards from their hand. Then give them the cards from your hand that you previously selected.



BECOMING A NOMINEE

Becoming the nominee for a major party is a huge boost for any candidate's chance of winning the election. To play either nominee card (D or R), place it in front of you with your tabled states. When played, you get to take one unprotected state from every other player and add it to your tabled states. Your nominee card remains in place until an election is called.

Didn't get to become either party's nominee? Well, all is not lost. You can declare yourself as the Independent candidate. Place this card with your tabled states. When played, discard one tabled protection card of your choice from each player.

A player can only play one of these cards (i.e. you can't be both party's nominee)



CALLING AN ELECTION

Under normal rules, a Spin Doctor game consists of several rounds. Each round ends with the calling of an election. An election happens when the last card of the Election Pile is taken. That player completes their turn and then the election occurs. You can call an election at any time by playing an ELECTION DAY card during your turn. Just put the card in the discard pile and the round ends. Time to start tallying the delegates.



DO WE HAVE A WINNER?

Candidates need 270 votes to win the game, but you can decide to set the value lower if you want to have a shorter game, but all players should agree on this prior to play beginning.

When the election is called, the player holding the DARK SECRET card must discard their highest point value table state card (even if protected). Likewise, the player with the SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET card must discard all of their unprotected state cards. The players do not add the discarded state cards to their delegate vote total for that round.

All candidates sum up their tabled state cards and write down the number of votes they received. If this is not the first round, this count is added to their total vote tally. If, at this point, no player has received the required vote count (normally 270), the cards are reshuffled and dealt to start a new round.

NOTE: All cards are put back in the deck at the end of each round. Good Relations and Nominee cards are not kept after a round ends.

GAME VARIATIONS

FULL ELECTION CYCLE

This variation matches the real US election where candidates need 270 votes to win the election and become the POTUS.

In this game type, tabled states are never discarded. When a MEDIA RELATIONS card is played, the sacrificed state moves to the player that is not scandalized that has the most tabled states delegates. If all other players are scandalized, then the player does not have to sacrifice a state card when playing this card.

When an election is called, players holding the DARK SECRETS and SKELETON cards pass the state cards to the player with the highest delegate count instead of discarding them. Then the votes are tallied. If no Candidate has 270 or more votes, all untabled cards (i.e. discard pile, players current unplayed cards and the Election Stack) are reshuffled and redealt. Play resumes starting with the player who is currently leading in delegates. All GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS and NOMINEE cards remain tabled with the players.

If no candidate has received 270 votes after three elections have been called, then a runoff will determine the winner (see below).

SINGLE DECK GAME

For this variation, all ELECTION DAY cards are removed from the deck prior to dealing out the players hands. The game ends when the last card from the Election Pile is taken. That player completes their turn then the votes are tallied like normal. If no players reached the 270 votes needed to win, then the two candidates with the highest vote count enter into a runoff election (see below).

RUNOFF ELECTION

All state cards from the other candidates (tabled and still in their hands) plus any state cards in the discard pile are shuffled together and dealt alternating to the two finalist, starting with the one with the highest current vote count. These cards are added to each candidate's vote total and a winner is declared.

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