

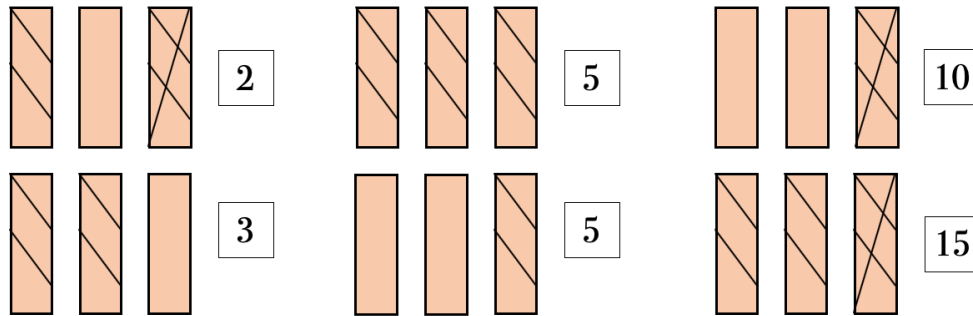
How To Play Patol House

An adaptation of a traditional horse race game of the Tiwa Indians of New Mexico and Texas

Using the counting sticks:

Hold the three counting sticks level with your chin in your right hand. Bring your hand down, and release the sticks 6 to 8 inches above the center circle on the game board (but no closer than 6,

see “Strategy” below). The sticks hit the center circle, and fall with one face or another showing. The diagram below shows how many spaces you may move your horse, depending on which sides of the counting sticks are showing:



Game play:

Each player throws the counting sticks, the one with the highest points goes first.

The first player throws the counting sticks, and starting from the blue circle nearest to where they are sitting, moves their horse that number of spaces. Players may move either clockwise or counterclockwise as they wish, but once they begin moving in one direction they must keep moving in that direction in subsequent turns. However, if they throw a 10, this would place their horse in a river, which is not allowed, so they should throw the counting sticks again until they throw a number that will not land them in a river.

The next players may begin from the same river that the first player started from, or from a different river. They may move either clockwise or counterclockwise, but once they begin moving in one direction they must keep moving in that direction.

Player's horses may pass over other players' horses. However, if one player's horse ends up on the space occupied by another player's horse, the other player's horse is considered dead and must return to the circle where they started, and start again. A player may have to start over several times during the course of a game.

If you start over, you must start in the same river you started in before. However, if you start over, you can choose to go either clockwise or counterclockwise (but once you choose a direction, you have to keep going in that direction, unless you have to start over again).

Winning the game:

The first player whose horse makes it all the way around the circle, back to their starting point or past it, wins the game.

Variations:

(1) If you're playing with 4 to 7 players, each player has two horses, and takes a separate turn for each horse.

(2) No-kill version: two horses can occupy the same space, no horse can kill another horse. Worth trying for younger players.

Strategy: This may seem like a game of chance, but it is really a game of skill. A skilled player can hold the sticks in their hand and bounce them in such a way as to get the number they want. (This works best if you can find a flat stone to fit in the center circle, as the sticks will bounce better off of a stone than off the game board.) But—you *must* release your hold *well before* the sticks hit.