

# RAIDIN' DA JOINT

## GANGSTERS Newsletter

### 2005 World Boardgaming Championships

Just nine days from today rogue gangs will take to the streets of Chicago (although it may look like Lancaster, PA) and attempt every known criminal deed in order to assert domination. Don't miss your chance to be among Prohibition's Finest!

This newsletter summarizes the changes from last year's tournament and contains a special treat -- the strategy article written by Mark "Ladykiller" Love that served as Nick "Dusk" Henning's introduction to Gangsters last year (immediately prior to his becoming Godfather). I hope you enjoy a useful refresher right before the action!

For full details on the tournament, go to the tournament website:

[http://www.gameaholics.com/gangsters\\_tournament.htm](http://www.gameaholics.com/gangsters_tournament.htm). The website has lots of articles, all the details from last year, links to AREA, and up-to-date lists of nicknames! Don't forget to bring your name tag! (Let me know if you've misplaced it so I can make a new one.)

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#### 1. Schedule

Here's the complete schedule for Gangsters in the 2005 WBC:

##### Tuesday

Demo 9 pm

Heat #1 10 pm

##### Wednesday

Heat #2 2 pm           Advanced Rules Encouraged

##### Thursday

Demo 10 pm

Heat #3 11 pm       Official Squirt Gun Heat

##### Friday

Heat #4 4 pm

Semi-Final 7 pm

Final 10 pm

Plan to be there early and often!

## 2. Help Wanted

If you're willing to teach Gangsters to a small group during the demo times (Tuesday at 9 pm and Thursday at 10 pm) at the location for the following heat, let me know. I will be teaching during both times, but I discovered last year that the demo works better with small groups. I'd love to have two or three simultaneous sessions going so that everyone who attends can see the board easily and learn the game as well as our current Godfather did last year!

Many thanks to Steve "Muscles" Quade for teaching a terrific demo last year.

## 3. Changes for 2005

- 1) The big change deals with the sign-in process. Players should present themselves, their convention badge, and filled in player chit to the GM as soon as possible upon arrival.

Players who bring a copy of the game will then be assigned a table number (and allowed to choose the options that govern their game). The owner will automatically play the brown gang (the West Side Association). Each table will have a small sign prominently displaying the table number.

Everyone else will draw a card from the deck. The card will tell them both the table number they'll play at as well as the color of the gang they'll play. A table can begin playing the moment it has four players! If a player draws a table where a hometown friend, relative, or team member is already sitting should request to be reseated (i.e., draw a new card and have the old one shuffled back into the deck).

With the game owner's consent, tables will be pre-designated to use the advanced rules (Heat #2), squirt gun (Heats #1, 3, & 4), or be an early semi-final. Be sure to draw from the deck matching the options you want to use!

- 2) Secondary tie-breakers will no longer be calculated for any player whose completion percentage is less than 70% (to save the GM time). This should result in no observable difference whatsoever.
- 3) Late night heats will have results posted on the kiosk by 11 am the next morning.
- 4) All early semi-finals require five players.

There were no changes to the rules clarifications this past year. You can review all questions and clarifications at: [http://www.gameaholics.com/gsr\\_format/gsr\\_clarifications.htm](http://www.gameaholics.com/gsr_format/gsr_clarifications.htm).

## 4. End of the Game & Tie-Breakers

2 hours and 15 minutes after the official start of the event (per the convention program) the 30-minute Warning will be given. Fifteen minutes later, the 15-minute Warning will be given. At the 15-Minute Warning, each player moves one more time AND then a complete game turn is finished. A turn is judged to have begun if the dice have been rolled. The winner of each game should turn in completed player chits for everyone in his/her game.

This process guarantees that, in games which don't finish, all players move the same number of times and get to move at least one more time after the final warning. It also guarantees that every game is finished with 10 minutes to spare so that players can always get to their next event while the GM is able to ensure all critical paperwork is turned in.

For games where no one meets the victory conditions, the following tie-breakers are used to determine the winner. These tie-breakers are also used for every game to determine alternates for the semi-final. After last year's newsletter and voting, the cash penalties have been retained for both tie-breakers.

**Primary Tie-Breaker:** Maximum percentage completion of any strategy. For example, suppose you own 9 joints; your completion percentage is 90%. 4 of 5 purple joints? 80%. \$9,300? 93%. Cash totals will be reduced by \$350 for a missing Thug, \$700 for a missing Racketeer piece, and by \$1,050 for a missing Vamp.

**Secondary Tie-Breaker:** Percentage of total assets (cash, joints, & gang) compared to the winner of your game. For example, suppose the winner had \$10,500 in cash, 3 joints worth \$1,200 including upgrades, and 4 Racketeers (\$1,000), 1 Vamp (\$300), and 5 Thugs (\$1,500) for a total of \$14,500. You had \$7,800 in cash, 9 joints worth \$3,700, and 8 Racketeers (\$3,600), 1 Vamp (\$300), and 0 Thugs (-\$350) for a total of \$15,050. Your secondary tie-breaker would be 104%.

## 5. Copies of the Game

I have some copies of the game available. I will bring a few of them to the WBC. If you let me know ahead of time, I'll bring what you want.

\$50.00 New, Shrink-wrapped  
45.00 Unpunched  
35.00 Used -- Guaranteed Complete and in Good Condition  
25.00 Used -- Missing Parts or Damaged

These copies are also available from me throughout the year -- with an additional \$7.00 shipping charge (within the USA). The prices will change based on what it costs me to obtain copies. Email me at [john@gameaholics.com](mailto:john@gameaholics.com) for foreign shipping.

The profits from these sales are used entirely to fund additional inventory as well as prizes, name tags, and other mementoes for the WBC tournament.

## 6. How to Win at Avalon Hill's Gangsters

You can also see a copy of this article with nicer formatting at:  
[http://www.gameaholics.com/gsr\\_articles/gsr\\_how\\_to\\_win.htm](http://www.gameaholics.com/gsr_articles/gsr_how_to_win.htm)

How to Win at Avalon Hill's Gangsters  
by Mark "Ladykiller" Love, 2001 World Champion

- (1) Know where all the ONE-JUMP JOINTS are - by heart – where you get a Public from the cup into a joint.
- (2) Understand how to use the SUBWAYS to move cops and gang members. While waiting for your next turn, focus on what die-rolls are needed to get pieces where you want them.
- (3) Between turns, figure out WHAT ROLLS are needed to get Publics into YOUR joints, especially if a Public is already in an opponents' joint. If you see that number on the die, you know what to do!
- (4) Getting FIRST PICK is probably the BEST thing that can happen for you, especially against good players. a. You should try to buy two ONE-JUMP joints in the same color, if the other players do not interfere, unless you are trying to win with 10-joints.

b. With two joints in the same color, you can DOUBLE a ONE-JUMP joint in the BUY phase (BEFORE ROLLING) and possibly MOVE your Racketeer OUT before the other players can seduce your racketeer with their vamps. 3-time Champion Pitt Crandlemire always starts his rack in Greenwood Park (or the Downtown Bus Station), so all the other players had their Vamps waiting for him in the 2001 WBC final!

c. In a 4-player game, a player who buys a ONE-JUMP joint but FAILS to buy the other one in the same color (when he or she can) might be someone who has no real strategy to win. They might also need reminders BEFORE rolling - to move the Public out of opponent's joints, or send a Cop after an extorting opponent's gang member.

d. It is extremely dangerous to start ANY game with LESS than 5 Racketeers (whether you go first OR last). If a Vamp seduces you, you are reduced to 1 move per turn.

(5) Michael Anchors' BUS STATION STRATEGY is hard to stop. (It was used by Pitt Crandlemire to quickly win the 2003 WBC.) In the initial purchasing phase, he buys the Downtown Bus Station, the #4 Green one-jump joint (Brizelli's Riverside), and usually Taylor's Machine Shop or SMC Cartage. With \$300 remaining cash at the start, and his racketeer placed in the Bus Station, he PURCHASES a new joint level BEFORE the start of his first turn. This DOUBLES a payoff for the Bus Station, if a Public enters it. He then buys a THIRD level and thereby triples payout, as fast as he can afford to do it. If he rolls a 6, the Public then pays between \$900 and \$2700 in ONE payout. (See #8 below).

(6) With 2 ONE-JUMP JOINTS at the START of the game, there is a 33% chance of getting a Public out of the Cup into your joint. They should be the same color for doubling payoffs. Pitt's second choice is now the 2 Yellow one-jumps, taking Greenwood Park first. I prefer the 2 Blue one-jumps, because of the possibility of getting a rare Blue monopoly. If you have 3 one-jump joints with different dice to get in, you now have a 50% chance of getting the Public in at the start of the game!

(7) VAMPING the racketeer who immediately FOLLOWS you in turn order improves your chances of getting a double collection on that player's turn. Both Paul Bolduc and Pitt left a Public in my joint in the 2001 WBC final, since they only had one move and more important things to do - giving me a public payout on THEIR Turns. The player who PRECEDES you in turn order should be your best ally - so they don't do this to YOU!

(8) With SO MANY ENTRANCES, it's not hard to keep one of the Publics nearby the BUS STATION or GREENWOOD PARK at ALL times, even if another player moves the Public out. That's why Michael Anchors and Pitt double the Bus Station or Greenwood Park on Turn 1, respectively. And why they win. You need to constantly move Cops AWAY, to prevent raids and loss of joint levels. So if you have these joints, do NOT start ANY NEW Cops AT ALL, if possible. Your opponents can use the subways to send them after YOU! Just move existing cops.

(9) With the BUS STATION STRATEGY, Michael Anchors typically keeps his racketeer there the ENTIRE game - which doesn't last very long (6 turns?) If another player sends in a cop while the Public is in the joint for a RAID, it knocks off a joint level. Michael then buys the level right back again, since he already has the racketeer in the joint. If another player sends in a gang to face 2 or THREE joint guards (who have a 50% success chance and 2 shots apiece against invaders), the racketeer is allowed to absorb any hits made by the invader. (Pitt has NOT followed this strategy when he sets up in Greenwood Park. He doubles the joint and tries to move out and avoid being vamped. But you could try and triple it, if you buy 3 Yellow joints at the start.) An Alternate Method: After raising the Bus Station to a 3-joint level, move the Racketeer OUT to Brizelli's Riverside (or another Green joint you own) and move that joint up to a 2-level or 3-level. Brizelli's is close to a subway, so you are vulnerable to Vamps.

(10) The PUSSYCAT CLUB is a DANGEROUS place to buy DURING the game. I've seen Pitt move his racketeer towards there from Greenwood Park. Nick, Paul and I seduced him down to a 1, so he turned around and gave up. PussyCAT's 3 entrances, directly next to a subway, makes it the EASIEST joint to enter with a seducing vamp or

raiding or arresting Cop. You **MUST** do that to an opponent going for the Pussycat Club, since the \$500 to \$1500 payoff by a Public is bested only by the hard-to-reach (red) Martin & Sons.

(11) **BIG RACKETEERS** allow manipulation of **MULTIPLE** Publics on one turn. Pitt and Michael both will use their Vamps to seduce strength away from other players' racketeers early in the game, which also weakens their shootout possibilities. But vamping alone will not win the game (although it helps for getting a 4-joint Red monopoly). If you are **NOT** collecting cash or joints, you make enemies fast, and become a target.

(12) The Bus Station and Sneak Up Strategies go for **CASH WINS** all the way, (a 72% chance of winning anyway), so players have the thug and vamp **EXTORT** for cash if possible. At an average of \$700 collected per turn, they get \$5600 by Turn 8. Add a few public collections and they can win the game. (Pitt adopted the Bus Station Strategy in the 2002 PBEM final and the 2003 WBC final.) Pitt is a 3-time WBC champion - his patience to quietly collect cash is legendary!

(13) **DEFENSE**. I picked **LAST** and still won the 2001 WBC tournament, so you can **STILL** win if someone else takes the Bus Station, Greenwood Park, or the 2 Blue one-jump joints. You can use the fourth place starting position to prevent the Bus Station or Greenwood Park buyer from getting the other one-jump joint in that color, in the game-starting Buy Phase (Brizelli's Riverside or Franklin Hostel.) You will need cooperation of other players if someone gets those two joints and starts using them correctly. Once they've doubled the joint you need to: a. Get as many cops as possible on the board circling the Bus Station and/or Greenwood Park. Anticipate that the player with those joints will move them away. Move them **BACK** or start **NEW** ones. Move distant cops closer with the subways (you may pick a bigger one from the cup!)

b. **VAMPING** costs only the extortion opportunity lost – vamp them off the board – especially a racketeer in the Bus Station. Kill off the gang members early and often for players who are obviously going for a cash win. It's the only certain way to force them to spend that cash.

c. After your Vamp has seduced the Racketeer in the Downtown Bus Station or Greenwood Park, all those entrances now work in **YOUR** favor. On your next turn, if you get the right roll, your Vamp may be able to leave the joint, re-enter and seduce again and **AGAIN!**

d. Get **ALL** the Publics **OUT** of the Cup, so they cannot get the big payoff. If you've got one-jumpers of your own, you want to **COLLECT YOURSELF**. But if the Bus Station is at Level 3 and the player is extorting, you can get in big trouble fast. (While Michael Anchors won the PBEM final and had the Bus Station, I don't think he ever collected on it in that game, because of this defense by his opponents.)

e. Keep a close eye on the Public near the Bus Station and Greenwood Park - you **DON'T** want them within **ONE** die roll of getting in. It gives that player payouts **AND** you are forced to use your movement allocations to constantly move the Publics **OUT**. In the 2001 WBC semi-final, I accidentally left the X3 Public in Michael Anchors' (red) Martin & Sons for a 2nd \$1800 payout to him on Turn **ONE**. But **ALL** the other players focused on Michael's cash, and **COOPERATED**. He got **NO** collections - the rest of the game.

(14) **BLUE MONOPOLY**. I won a blue monopoly in 2001 by starting with a one-jump and Huff's Cafe. But I think Taylor's Machine Shop (green) as the 3rd initial buy gives you a quick route to Huff's without being obvious about what you are doing - so you can buy both blue one-jump joints at the start. Play as though you are going for a 10-joint win, except buy the blue joints. (As a backup plan, buy another color if you can't get to a blue joint. But I barely had enough money to win in 7 turns without doing that.) Look at the subways and the blue entrances - you should be able to move from one blue joint to another fairly fast, with even low rolls. I did not use the vamp for anything except extortion, and barely had enough to buy back the last joint, after losing it in a high-risk shootout, to win the game.

(15) If someone is going for a **PURPLE MONOPOLY**, don't worry one bit. The Purples are a sucker bet, and no one has **EVER** reported winning with a Purple monopoly. Count the number of spaces from each subway to each Purple

joint, after doing it for the Blue joints. One more blue joint is required for a monopoly, but the Purples are much farther away from the subways. By the time a prospective Purple Monopolist gets a racketeer to the joints, the other players will either pound him or her, or have won themselves.

(16) I think the RED MONOPOLY is best won by having ZERO red joints early in the game. It's a good backup plan, when the conditions and dice are right. And have LOTS of CASH before you buy a second one. Starting with Martin & Sons (which is hard to reach during the game), or any Red joint, makes you an immediate target. That's what happened to John Pack in the 2001 PBEM final. As soon as you buy the second Red joint, you will be Target #1. Someone will immediately buy a vacant Red joint - the best defense – forcing a shootout or raid. The two red joints adjacent to one another can be quickly bought, one after another - which might help get and keep the Publics in them, too. In a 26-turn PBEM game (which was won with 10 joints), we spent almost the entire game trying to STOP a red monopoly, so you want to have enough CASH to buy enough MUSCLE to win a shootout to get the the last red joint, or to defend the one someone fights to take away from you.

(17) DOUBLE ANY RED joint, if you can - it's likely to get hit in a raid or shootout, so you want a second joint guard, and it PAYS BIG if you get a Public there. I had 2 red joints in the 2001 WBC final, and Nick Smith took one away in a shootout (when he was still strong). But then he brought a Public in for the cash, and I took out the joint with a raiding Cop - and then went back in and bought it back - one turn before moving into the 4th red joint for the win. Nick still says that he should have passed on the Public payoff, (which he didn't need, as he was going for 10 joints) at a time when I still had 2 red joints.

(18) RED MONOPOLIES are easier to get if another player has already been weakened from a shootout or extensive vamping, or if they are playing Pitt's "Sneak Up and Get You with Cash" (the Tortoise and the Hare Strategy), and has the self-discipline to stay out of shootouts. If you are trying to win a Red monopoly, your opponents will ultimately have to either win first themselves, or have enough muscle/money to come into your joint and fight, against poor odds that favor YOU. So if you see that your opponents are weak on the board, buy that 3rd Red joint and force them to SPEND their money to enlarge gangs to stop you, delaying them from getting \$10K. (If nobody pays attention, it is possible to buy all 4 Red joints, without a fight.)

(19) SHOOTOUTS: Come well armed or not at all (unless someone is about to win and you have no choice.) I had about an 8 Rack and a 6 Thug for the final shootout to take the 2001 plaque with a Red monopoly. My opponents saw me spend about \$6,000 for more thugs late in the game. They knew that there was no turning back for me - I was sacrificing a possible win with \$10K in order to pursue a Red monopoly. The odds of hitting an opponent's Joint Guard are only one chance in 6 with a Racketeer, so you better be big enough to survive the fight – which continues on EVERY player's turn if you FAIL. You need a LOT of cash to win a red monopoly - it seems to be most effective if you start the game with a one-jump joint strategy to get cash.

(20) GO FOR CASH. The reality is that most face-to-face games are won with \$10K. Plan on winning that way and use a monopoly or 10-joints as a BACK-up strategy. If players cooperate to stop the Bus Station or a monopoly, consistently extorting with Thug and Vamp (the Tortoise strategy) pays off. Much of the game, all 4 Publics are on the board, which diminishes the value of the one-jumps.

(21) Nick Smith's 10-JOINT SOUTHERN STRATEGY is the best method I've seen to try to win that way. He buys cheap joints in the SOUTH that are NOT CLOSE to any subways. In the 2001 WBC final, I had 3 Red joints and Nick had 9 random joints. If I couldn't get my racketeer and thug into Martin's for a Red monopoly, I needed to use all that muscle to knock one off ANY ONE of Nick's joints. I looked at the map and, even using subways, I couldn't get to any of Nick's joints! (Nick learned to do this after his racketeer was nearly vamped off the board at the start of the 2000 WBC final.) Buying joints in the south protected his racketeer from both the vamps and shootouts. But I think it's easier to get to \$10K cash before 10 joints can be bought.

(22) Try to figure out HOW your opponents are TRYING to win, to anticipate what they will do next. If a player, such as Nick, does NOT buy one-jump joints (other than Brown ones) at the start of the game, they are probably going for 10 joints - a low probability of winning (22%).

(23) Be UNPREDICTABLE yourself - without hurting your own chances. Don't play to be a spoiler, always PLAN to win yourself, no matter what goes wrong. I admire Pitt Crandlemire's ability to continue playing with a 1 racketeer - and win or nearly win. Michael Anchors suspended his Bus Station strategy in the 2001 PBEM final, spending money on his gang and coordinating with me to stop John Pack's red monopoly. Michael then took over John's red Martin & Sons joint with a very risky shootout, that left him with a 1-racketeer. Michael then won with \$10K on 2 subsequent Public collections.

At the start of the 2001 WBC final, I bought two one-jump joints, but to avoid having my racketeer seduced on the first turn of the game (a common practice), I unpredictably put it in the third joint. Pitt's vamp got me anyway, but I turned around and killed her in a low-probability shootout. When I saw that I could win a Red monopoly, I deliberately put my own Vamp in a low-mobility joint - COLORED side up - which meant she would NOT extort any cash. I had enough money to win, even if I lost a Red joint and had to have a 2nd shootout to buy it back. So I didn't need the extra money - and you MUST have all 3 gang members on the board to win. I didn't want to lose the game because all 3 of the other players had cooperated and manipulated a cop into my Vamp's hideout. A cop could do nothing to her if she was NOT extorting. It drove my opponents nuts, since they knew I was about to win. Pitt lost the 2002 PBEM final because his opponents kept knocking a member of his gang off the board - he lost, even though he had OVER \$10K!

24) I've seen Nick Smith PULL HIS CASH OUT and SHOW IT to his opponents, to prove that he is nowhere close to \$10K. He did this to prevent a dumb attack on himself, and to encourage opponents to attack someone else, who really was about to win the game.

25) 5-Player WBC option used in semi-finals and Finals:

- a) With an extra player, your gang can be vamped and removed by Cops very quickly, making it almost impossible to compete. So be more cautious about having your gang in High-Mobility joints, especially in the beginning.
- b) 10-joint strategy is much more viable, since the Grey joints can be bought. Winning with a Red monopoly is harder with an extra player to stop it, but it HAS been done.
- c) I've never won in BPA's 5-player option and think that game is still evolving!

Games constantly evolve as players find ways to defeat "unbeatable" strategies. Novices can succeed at this game! And you never know what dice will do. So Good Luck!

That's all folks! See you in Lancaster in one week!

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