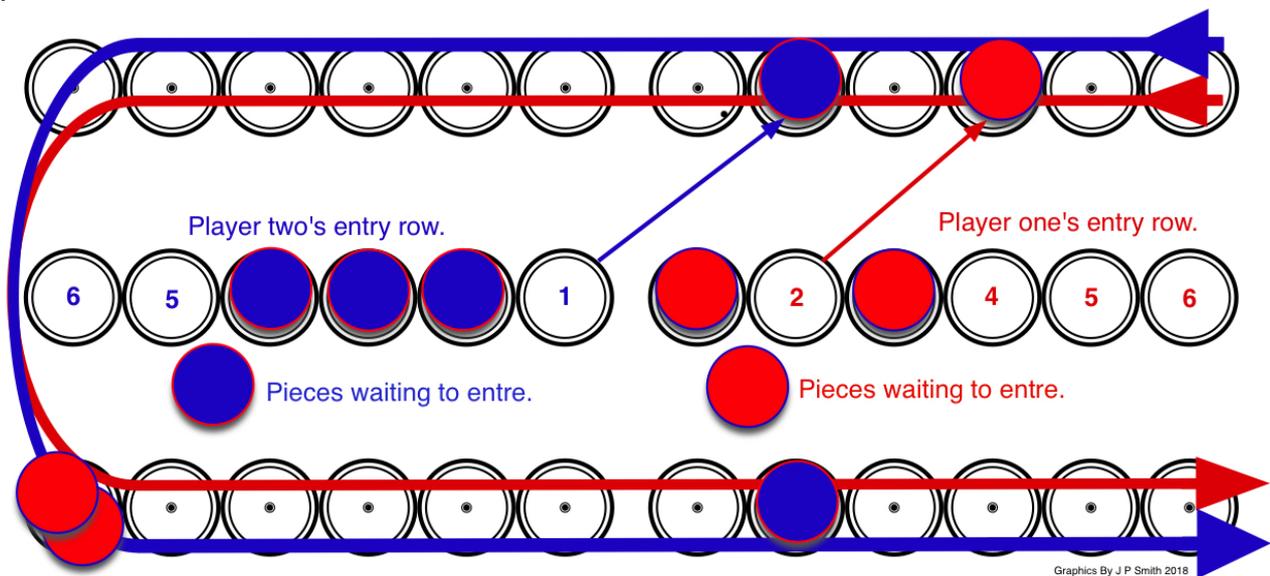# DUODECIM SCRIPTA

Ludus Duodecim Scriptorum or Duodecim Scripta for short is Latin for Game of twelve Marks. It was a game made popular by the Roman and can be dated back to around the 2nd century BC. It is believed, and more than likely is, the precursor to backgammon. The game Tabula is also thought to have derived from Duodecim Scripta and also believed to be a contributor to the formation of backgammon.

" Archaeologists have excavated all sorts of boards, pieces and dice, and there are even some descriptions of the game in Latin poems, but there is no ancient set of real rules……The oldest Roman boards have three rows of twelve playing squares, divided down the middle by a gap, which is sometimes decorated. Romans had a fondness for marking out their boards with letters instead of squares, sometimes with rude messages……Later the boards were reduced to two lines of twelve. These new forms certainly look more like backgammon boards." *Part text by Dr Irving Finkel in his book: Games - Discover and play 5 famous ancient games.*

Contents:

(*All vector graphics are done by J P Smith on Eazydraw*. 2018)

Player two's entry row.

Player one's entry row.

Pieces waiting to entre.

Pieces waiting to entre.

Graphics By J P Smith 2018

Duodecim Scripta is a two player race game. The game is known to be played with three 6 sided cube dice and 15 playing pieces each. The rules for this printed version are taken from the rules put forth by Dr Irving Finkel in his book: Games - Discover and play 5 famous ancient games, published by The British Museum. I have include more than enough printable counters for one to play with 15 pieces if they wish. I have also included 2 printable spinner dice 1-6 if normal dice cannot be found (It may prove awkward trying to spin two at once, but it is all about having fun). For the rules set below use 6 playing pieces each and only two 6 sided cube dice.

The aim of the game is to get all your pieces onto your entry row in the centre of the board and from there onto the race track to travel round and off first. Pieces going onto the entry row can go on in any order according to the roll of the dice. If you roll a 3 and a 2 you can enter pieces on entry points 2 and 3 and so on. But only one piece can enter on an entry point at a time.

1. To start, both player roll both dice and the highest score goes first. Always throw both dice together throughout the game.
2. Begin with all the pieces off the board. Pieces can only enter at the middle row. You must throw the dice to enter your pieces.
3. Once a piece is entered it can move onto the racetrack and start. All entry points count the same, so a throw of 3 puts any entered piece onto the third racetrack point.
4. Each time you throw you can chose whether to: a) enter a piece on any entry point, b) move an entry piece onto the racetrack, c) move forward a piece already on the racetrack, d) move a piece up the entry row, if you don't want to move a piece on the racetrack.
5. A single piece is knocked off if the opponent lands on the same point and must re-enter the game when possible.
6. You can double two or more of your own pieces on the same point and move them as a pile together as though one.
7. A pile of two or more can knock off an opponent's pile of the same amount or smaller but not an opponent's pile that has more than yours.
8. Exact throws are needed to bear off pieces of piles.
9. You must always move if you can.
10. If the piled pieces fall over, you can deposit all but one in the centre space, as long as you can remember how many the single piece on the track represents.

If you already know how to play backgammon then this game will come naturally.

SCRIPTA

DUODECIM

DUODECIM

SCRIPTA

**Printable counters.
Cut out and stick to card.**
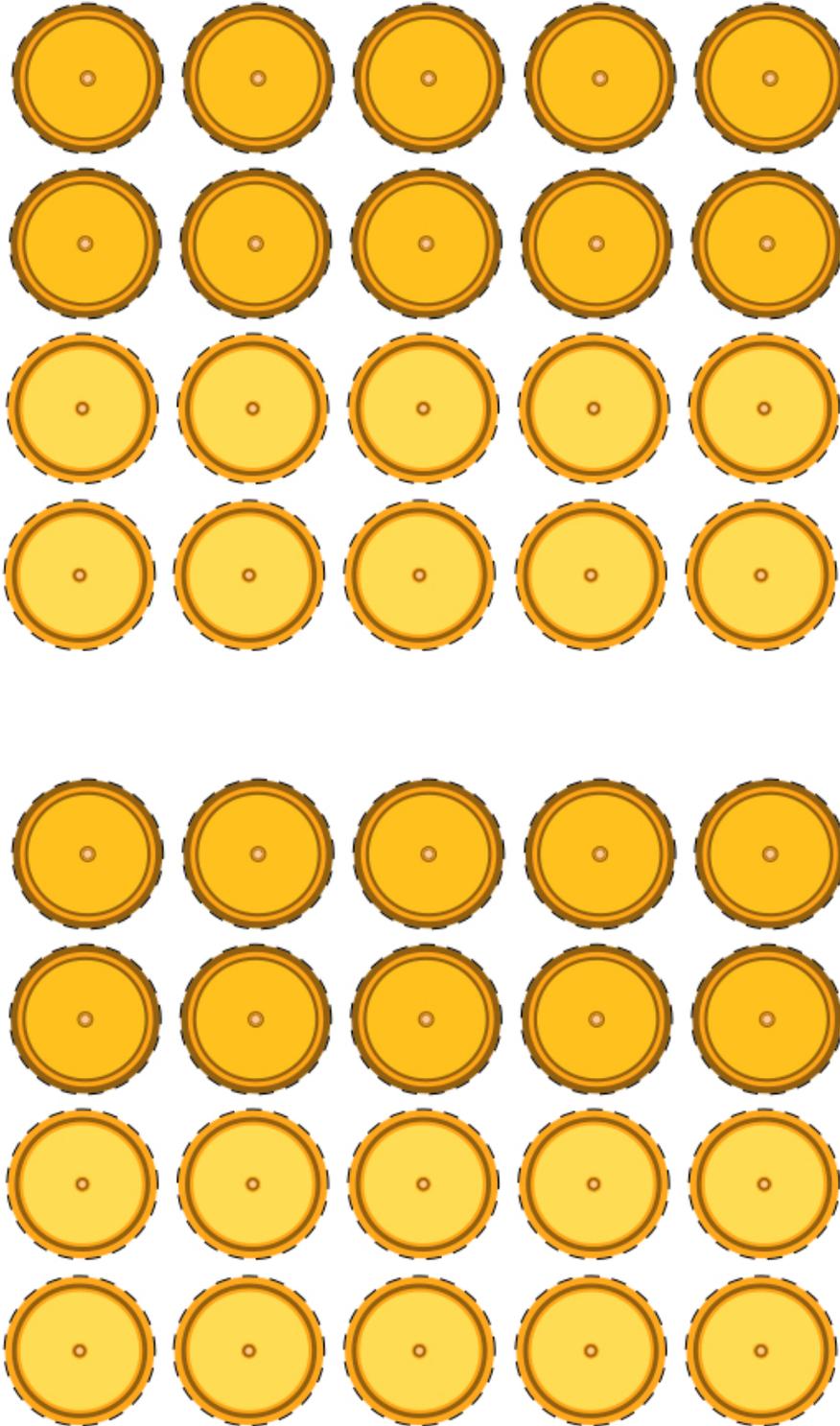
Printable spinner dice.
Cut out and stick to card.
Insert a pointed stick or small pencil through the centre.