

There's a New Game in Town

by Tom Simpson © March 2000 (revised November 2002)

Let's look at a couple of alternatives to the same ol' game. **Triple Play** (also known as Triple Crown) is a game that's fun and calls for the entire range of shot making, safety, and strategy play. In addition, it's fast moving, spectates very well, and gives you more bang for the buck on a coin-op table than anything else. My old friend Joe Oshins and I developed this game a few years ago, and people seem to like it. Try it as a ring game.

Essentially, it's 9-Ball played with 15 balls. Here are the twists:

- Rack up all 15 balls. 1-ball in front, 2 and 3 on the corners, 15 in the middle, 5 & 10 directly behind the 15.
- There are three "money balls" – the 5, the 10, and the 15.
- Each money ball is worth one point (one jellybean, one dollar, whatever).
- If the same player makes all three money balls, they get an extra point. If they run out all 15 balls, they get 2 extra points. Play races to some number of points, for example, 10 or 20 points.
- After a scratch, shoot from the kitchen. If the lowest numbered ball is in the kitchen, toss it in a pocket. If it's a money ball or the ball just before a money ball, spot it. Remove as many balls as necessary to comply with this rule.
- No Ball-In-Hand. Whenever a player fails to make a legal shot, the incoming player can choose whether to shoot or let the opponent shoot again.
- Shoot a rack until all three money balls are down. Then rack again, and the player that sank the third money ball breaks.

Triple Play will provide many opportunities to try really challenging shots. Enjoy them. But always be aware of where the money balls are.

Fargo is an excellent single-player practice game, named after the home town of the inventor, Mike Page. It can also be played competitively by alternating frames with your opponent. Like Bowliards, a complete game is comprised of 10 racks (or frames). In each rack, you break, spot anything that went in, and take cueball in hand to begin the frame. Shoot until you miss or run out the rack, and then let your opponent shoot their next frame, or shoot your next frame if you're playing alone. This is not the most practical game to play on a coin-op table.

- Each frame is worth up to 30 points, so a perfect score would be 300 points (nearly impossible).
- Rack the balls in any sequence you choose. Break any way you like, so long as it's from behind the head string. This is worth some thought & experimentation.
- After the break, begin shooting with cueball in hand anywhere on the table. Call all shots (you only need to call the ball and the pocket). Additional balls that go in on a legal shot count and stay down. Scratches are misses.
- If you shoot the balls in rotation order (like 9-Ball or Rotation), they score 2 points each. Otherwise, they count as 1 point each.
- Before you begin shooting in rotation order, you must somehow declare that you have switched to rotation. One convenient way to do this is to post your score for the frame to this point. Up until your first rotation shot, all legally pocketed balls count 1 point each. So, for example, if you have made six balls, and then decide to switch to rotation, you post your 6 points, and then begin shooting in rotation. *You may only switch one time – once you begin rotation, there is no going back.* In our example, if you continue in rotation and make 4 more balls before missing, you get 8 points for those balls, making your total score for the frame 14.
- If you run all the way through the rack without switching, remember to switch for the 15th ball, so you can get 2 points for it (giving you a 16 for the frame).

Fargo is a challenging game that will really force you to think ahead, play carefully, and balance your greed with realism. If you play it for a few hours, and if you develop some consistency in your break, your scores will improve greatly. If you are scoring over 100, you're playing well. 150 is excellent. 200 is monster. 250 is Efen.