



Spudnik



You're willing to do whatever it takes to become the next president. The only things standing in your way are four swing states and the looming threat of a starchy Russian satellite in geosynchronous orbit above the White House.

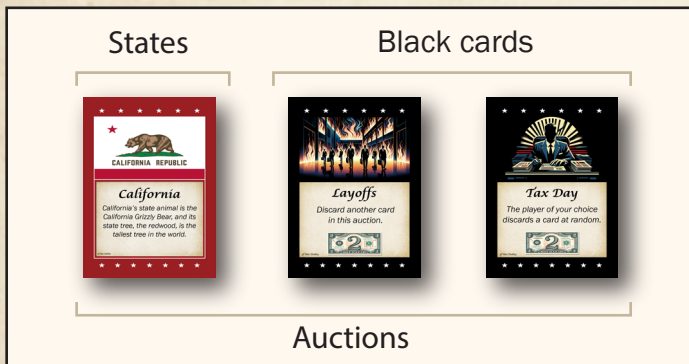
Objective

Spudnik is a deck-building card game where you use cards to bid in auctions. Win black cards to gain money, and use that money to win states. The first player to get four states wins the game.

Setup

Each player starts with a deck of six cards. Give each player one Spudnik, then have them pick red, yellow, blue, or green. Give them one Senator, two Spies, and two Citizens of their color.

Return unused starting deck cards back into the box. Separate the remaining black cards from the states and shuffle them. Divide the black cards into two stacks, then place them and the states face up in the center of the table. These stacks form the three *auctions*. Finally, have everyone shuffle their deck and draw three cards from it into their hand.



Your Turn

On your turn, you use *turn actions* and *card abilities* to win auctions. Each turn choose one of two possible turn actions: *place a bid* or *draw three cards*.

You place a bid in an auction by placing a card from your hand near it. If you already bid in that auction, stack your bids. You can't rearrange the order of your bids, but you can look at your face-down bids. If your hand is empty, you can't choose to place a bid as your turn action.

In the diagram below, player one has one bid on California and one bid on Layoffs. Player two has one bid on layoffs, and player three has two bids on Layoffs. No one has a bid on Tax Day.



Card abilities help you win auctions and are written on the cards. You may bid face up to use a card's ability immediately, or bid face down to save it for later. Turn one of your face-down bids face up to use its ability. Don't change its position in your bid stack when you do this. On your turn, you may use any number of card abilities at any time.

Your turn ends when you draw three as your turn action, or when you finish placing a bid and using card abilities. The player to your left goes next.

Ending Auctions

You win auctions by having the most money bid in them when they end. You end auctions you have a bid in when you draw any number of cards with an empty hand.

When an auction ends, turn all bids in it face up to identify the winner. If there's no money in the auction or a tie, no one wins. Everyone who didn't win the auction *discards* their bids on it by shuffling them back into their deck.

When you win a black card, shuffle it into your deck. Then pick one of your bids on its auction. You may *trash* that bid (put it back in the box), or keep it. Then discard your remaining bids in that auction.

When you win a state, set it aside with any other states you won. If this brings you up to four states, you win the game. Then discard your remaining bids on that auction.

Spudnik

Spudnik is a bomb. When it's face down in an auction and on top of your bid stack, Spudnik is armed. If an opponent reveals Spudnik, for example with their Spy, Spudnik gets disarmed. If an opponent bids in an auction where you have an armed Spudnik without revealing it, Spudnik explodes: You immediately win the auction.

Start Playing

If you have two or three players, start playing! Otherwise, read the four player section first.

Four Players

When playing with four players, split into teams of two. Set up and play as usual, except for the following modifications:

Play with four auctions instead of three: One state auction, and three black auctions.

Teammates sit together and combine decks. The shared starting deck contains 12 cards, and any new cards gained are added to the shared deck.

Both teammates place bids into a shared stack on each auction. You can look at bids played by your teammate, and on your turn, you can use their card abilities too.

Teammates may not look at each other's hands

or communicate secretly. If you talk, everyone gets to listen!

Spudnik does not explode on teammates. See the FAQ to resolve minor four-player ambiguities with Bearer Bonds and Recall if they come up.

Keywords

Reveal: When a bid is revealed, turn it face up without using its ability. Aside from Senator, cards don't lose their money when revealed.

Discard: To discard a card, shuffle it back into your deck.

Draw: To draw a card, put the top card of your deck into your hand. If you don't have enough cards in your deck to draw, you draw as many as you can then stop.

FAQ

Don't read this section until specific questions about cards arise.

Bailout: Drawing three with Bailout doesn't end your turn.

Bearer Bonds: With four players, Bearer Bonds counts the teammate with the most cards in hand.

You don't need to use Bearer Bonds by turning it face up; it automatically has the money. You must keep your hand above the table and state your hand size if asked. Bearer Bonds gains money from Investor and The Constitution.

Conspiracy: You can use two Conspiracy cards together infinitely. You are not allowed to stall the game by doing this.

Executive Action: The extra bid doesn't count towards your turn actions. You can place the extra bid at any time during your turn. However, drawing three still ends your turn as usual.

Golden Spudnik: When you win a Golden Spudnik, you upgrade both your Spudnik and Golden Spudnik cards. They are now armed from anywhere in your bid stack, not just on the top. You must publicly track how many Golden Spudniks you have won.

Investor: You must publicly track your investments. If the invested-in card is returned to your hand or discarded, it loses the extra money. However, it keeps the money if the investor is returned to your hand or discarded.

Recall: With four players, the player who uses

Recall gets to choose which opponent or teammate gets the returned card.

Senator: If this card is turned face down, it regains its \$2. The only way you can turn a card face down is with the card Conspiracy.

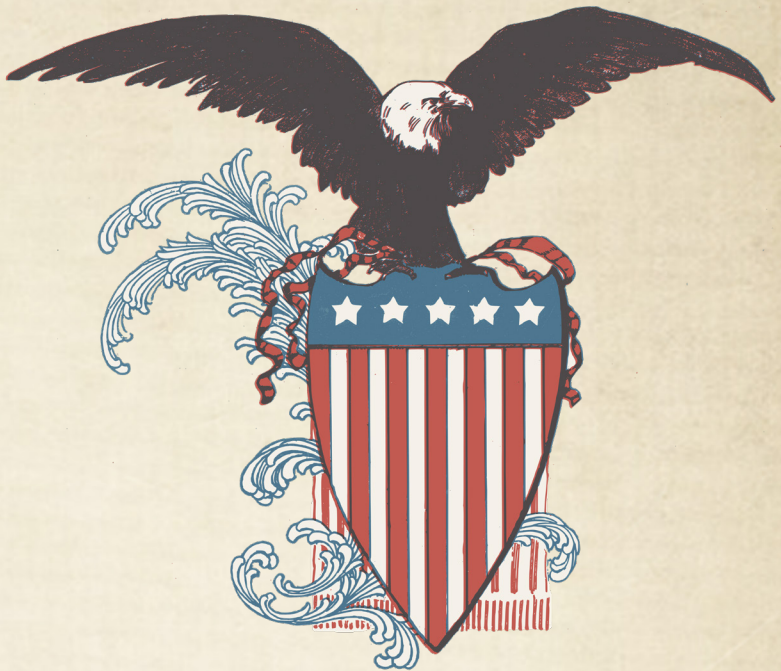
Spudnik: Spudnik does not explode on teammates. Bidding Spy face up may disarm Spudnik, but bidding Spy face down explodes Spudnik. You can't bid Spy face down then change your mind because a Spudnik exploded.

Super-PAC: If you choose an opponent who has an empty hand to draw a card, they must end their auctions.

Tax Day: To discard a card at random, shuffle your hand and let an opponent choose a card from it face down.

The Constitution: The Constitution gives money to itself. Only bids in the auction at the time of The Constitution being used will gain the money. You have to publicly track these bids. If one of them is returned to hand or discarded, it loses the extra money. They don't lose the extra money if The Constitution is returned or discarded.

Vice President: If two players get to four states at once, whoever has the Vice President wins the tie. If two players tie on an auction, then whoever has the Vice President wins the tie. This card is worth a state in your deck, your hand, or in an auction, but not if you trash it after winning a card.



Game design and art by Alec Shelley

Playtesters: George Crowley, Greg Crowley, Nelson Shelley, Ryan Saklad, Charalampos Kikidis

© 2025 Alec Shelley. All rights reserved. "Spudnik™" is a trademark of Alec Shelley.