

“Viking Liar’s Dice”

Background:

Meier is a Danish dice game that seems to date back to the Viking Age. Rectangular 6-sided dice have been found in Viking burial mounds, usually made of bone or antler, but we can assume wood was common as well. This unique dice shape results in different probabilities than the standard cube-shaped dice used for most games. The game has been reconstructed using modern variations of 2-dice Liar’s Dice games, but has been adjusted to account for the changes in probabilities due to the unique dice shape.

Setup:

3+ players (no maximum). Each player begins with 6 “lives” (use dice, coins, trinkets, etc whatever you have in your pockets) to keep track of your current life points. A pair of 6-sided rectangular Meier Dice (these dice are 1” x ¾” x ¾”), so 2 faces will be shaped like squares, these will show to 1 & 2 pip results. The remaining 4 faces will be rectangles, these will show the 3, 4, 5, & 6 pip results. You’ll also need an opaque box in which the dice can be rolled.

Gameplay:

A round begins when a player rolls the dice, secretly, in the dice box. The player will peek at the dice result and declare the result out loud to the table. The declared result may either be the truth (exactly what is showing on the dice) or a lie (either a higher or lower result than is showing on the dice).

Play then moves to the next player clockwise. The next player may either accept or challenge the declared result. If they accept the result, then they roll the dice (just like the previous player did) and declare a dice result, but the declared result **MUST** be either equal to or higher in value than the previous declared result (even if it requires the player to lie to do so).

Play then continues to the next player who will choose to either accept or challenge the declared result. If a result is challenged, then the dice are revealed to the players. If the dice result is equal to or greater in value than the declared result, then the challenger loses 1 life. If the dice result is less valuable than the declared result, then the challenged player loses 1 life. After the reveal, the round ends and a new round begins with the player who issued the challenge.

If “Meier” (1-2 result) is declared as the dice result, then no further rolls may be made in this round. The next player may accept the result, in which case they will lose 1 life without the dice result being revealed. If the next player challenges the Meier, then the dice result is revealed to the players. If the declared Meier is true, then the challenger loses 2 lives, but if it was a lie, then the liar loses 2 lives.

Dice Result Values:

Due to the unique dice shape Meier uses a slightly different value system than other dice games. The sequence below shows the dice results starting with the highest in value on the left and the lowest in value on the right.

1-2, 1-1, 2-2, 3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6,
2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 4-5, 4-6, 5-6

You’ll notice that the values are ranked based upon the lower number being more valuable, this is due to the lower probability of 1’s and 2’s being rolled. Meier is actually statistically more likely to be rolled than a 1-1 or 2-2 result, which makes it slightly more risky to challenge an opponent who declares “Meier”.

Dice Result Value & Probability Table		
Meier 2%	Low Double 1%	High Double 4%
1-2	1-1, 2-2	3-3, 4-4, 5-5, 6-6
Low Mixed 4%		High Mixed 8%
1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6		3-4, 3-5, 3-6, 4-5, 4-6, 5-6

For the sake of simplicity you may choose to declare the results as a single number, using the lower of the dice results as the tens position and the higher of the dice result as the ones position. For example: a “5 & 6” dice result could be read as “Fifty-Six” and a “1 & 3” dice result could be read as “Thirteen”, but for doubles it is usually more clear to simply say “Double Threes”.

Winning:

Game play continues until the least 1 player loses all their lives. If playing in a tavern, the first player to lose will buy the next round of drinks (resulting in everyone else winning) and then a new game can begin. Alternatively, players may play the game for the purposes of gambling, which would require an ante from all players at the start of the game, then the game continues until there is a single surviving player who will collect all antes from the other players as their prize.