

How to Play "Osselet"

The game of Osselet as we know and play it is very interesting. In addition to being a social game (played by a group of people), it's a great game for younger children as it helps to develop and improve fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

In a recent trip to Haiti, the author has observed some interesting new variations that have been added to the game. This shows that the game of Osselet is alive and well in Haiti. These additions make the game more challenging and difficult to play and are only used by the most expert and skillful players.

We introduce here the most basic style of play.

1 - Description of the osselet

There are 4 sides to the Osselets

Back side (*'dos'* in French)



Front side (*'creux'* in French)



Straight edge (*'j'* in French)



Curved side (*'s'* in French)



Up to 4 players can play together.

The first player picks up all 5 Osselets and throws them on the floor or play area, trying to keep them in a small area but not too bunched up that they can be manipulated and picked up during play.

The player chooses one jack to be used as the 'ball' to be thrown in the air while manipulating and gathering the remaining osselets on the ground. The player must complete each round before advancing to the next.

Example of game of Osselet

Summary: The player completes each round

- 1) 1-back, 2-back, 3-back, 4-back (in French, 1-dos, 2-dos, 3-dos, 4-dos) then
- 2) 1-front, 2-front, 3-front, 4-front (1-creux, 2-creux, 3-creux, 4-creux) then
- 3) 1-straight, 2-straight, 3-straight, 4-straight (1-i, 2-i, 3-i, 4-i) then
- 4) 1-curved, 2-curved, 3-curved, 4-curved (1-s, 2-s, 3-s, 4-s) then
- 5) Round-House (in French, Ritournelle) –
pick up all 4 osselets together (1 –back, 1-front, 1-straight and 1-curved)

1 – Complete the round “1-back” (French “1-dos”)

The player picks up the osselets 1 by 1 (individually) after turning them to the Back-side.

The player throws 5 Osselets on the ground and picks-up one to be used as the ball. This one is preferably not showing the Back (round) face. If any osselet on the ground shows the Back face up, then the player throws the 'ball' in the air and picks-up one osselet with the

Back side facing up, while catching the ball before it hits the ground. The player loses his/her turn if the ball hits the ground or if he/she fails to pick up all the osselets in the agreed number of attempts.

If the osselets are showing sides other than Back, the player must flip each osselet to the correct side (Back in this case) before picking it up. The player can flip and then pick-up each osselet individually before going to the next (or all 4 osselets can be turned and then picked up one at a time).

After all 4 Osselets have been picked-up one by one, this '1-back' round is completed and the player advances to the next round which is '2-back'.

2 – Complete the round '2-back' (French *2-dos*)

The player picks up the osselets in groups of 2 after turning them to the Back-side.

The player throws 5 Osselets on the ground and picks-up one to be used as the ball. This one is preferably not showing the Back (round) face. The player must flip and align the osselets to show the Back face up. The player then throws the 'ball' in the air and picks-up 2 osselets at a time without fumbling, while catching the ball before it hits the ground.

The player loses his/her turn if the ball hits the ground or if he/she fails to pick up the 2 osselets together in one sweep in the agreed number of attempts. The next 2 osselets are then picked up to complete the 2-back (*2-dos*) round.

After all 4 Osselets have been picked-up 2 by 2, this '2-back' round is completed and the player advances to the next round which is '2-back' or '*3-dos*'.

3 – Complete the round 3-back (French *3-dos*)

The player picks up the osselets in groups of 3, then 1 after turning them to the Back-side.

The procedure is the same as in step 2 above, except that the osselets are picked up in groups of 3 osselets and then 1 osselet (or 1 osselet and the 3 osselets, after being turned to the back (*dos*) side.

4 – Complete the round 4-back (French *4-dos*)

The player picks up all 4 osselets in one sweep after turning them to the Back-side.

The procedure is the same as in step 2 above, except that the osselets are picked up in group of 4 osselets in one sweep, after being turned to the back (*dos*) side.

5 - Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 are then repeated for the remaining sides of the osselet (Front, Straight and Curved) (In French: *creux, i* and *s*).

6 – Complete the Round-House round (in French: *Ritournelle*).

After a player completes all rounds for all 4 sides, a Round-House (*Ritournelle*) must be completed to finish the game.

The player throws 5 osselets on the ground and picks-up one to be used as the ball.

The player must flip and align the remaining 4 osselets to show each of the faces, one Back, one Front, one Straight and one Curved (one *dos*, one *creux*, one *i* and one *s*. The player then throws the 'ball' in the air and picks-up all 4 osselets in one sweep without fumbling, while catching the ball before it hits the ground.

The first player to complete the whole cycle wins.

Video

To see a video of how the game is played, [Click Here](#) and then press the Play Button > on the video image.