

Army veteran brings military-rooted Spades tradition to Arkansas campus tables

After two university pilots, Grunt Spades looks to recurring community play

JONESBORO, Ark. — At a table in the Carl R. Reng Student Union on October 19, a game familiar to generations of service members became the starting point for a new conversation: how can a shared set of rules give people a reason to meet again?

Grunt Spades, a project founded by U.S. Army veteran R. B. Porter, brought its military-rooted partnership version of Spades to Arkansas State University. Thirteen people attended, including 12 first-time participants and Porter as facilitator. Two tables were in play.

Six participants returned feedback forms. All six rated the experience excellent and said they would play again. Five rated the rules very clear and one mostly clear. Scoring prompted two questions, offering a practical lesson for future demonstrations. Feedback represents six of the 12 participants, not the entire group.

The A-State pilot followed a September 30 event at the University of Central Arkansas, where five people played, five more expressed interest and three respondents said they would return. Across the two events, 17 player participations yielded nine returned surveys; all nine respondents said they would play again.

On his public website, Porter recalls that “a familiar game gave us a place to gather and a little normalcy.” He established Grunt Spades through Arkansas-based 3rd Floor Standards, LLC to preserve a game tradition passed down around military tables. The project offers free civilian rules and a beta scorekeeping Field App. Official playing cards, manuals and kits are still being developed. No product-sales results are claimed from the pilots.

The company is pursuing regularly hosted tables that can bring veterans and civilian neighbors together for teamwork and friendly competition. The activity is community recreation, not a clinical intervention; research on social connection has not established outcomes.

ABOUT GRUNT SPADES

Grunt Spades is a veteran-founded Arkansas project that preserves a military-rooted partnership version of Spades. It combines free rules, a beta scorekeeping app and guided community play to help veterans, students and neighbors gather around one shared table.

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