

Rolling A Seven

GROWING UP, I HEARD THE PHRASE “TO ROLL A SEVEN” as a euphemism for death. Someone “rolling a seven” meant the same thing as “buying the farm,” “kicking the bucket,” etc. I can’t find any such usage in my exhaustive search of the internet, so maybe the expression was only used this way locally. Or maybe just by my older brother, who actually is the only person I’ve heard use it that way. “Rolling a seven” makes some sense as a euphemism for death, because in craps, rolling a seven can be either a very good thing or a very bad thing, depending upon—oh, I don’t know, depending upon something, I suppose. I don’t give much of a hoot about craps.

But I like dice, and I thought it would be fun to make diagrams that look like dice. Thinking about writing clues for all six faces was too much for me to bear, so I’m presenting only one kind of seven here, the three-four combination. You may see the two-five and/or the one-six in future puzzles, I don’t know. The percentage of black squares, or blocks, in a regular crossword is usually around 15%, and the way I’ve designed things, a two-pip die would come in at 4% and a one-pip die at 2%. Can anyone make a reasonable 7 × 7 word square with only one block in the center? Stay tuned. If

I don’t roll a seven before the next two issues, I’ll give it a try.

The clues are arranged by rows and columns, but the diagram for each clue is left for the solver to determine. The hints provide the correspondence. There is one unusual word and two proper nouns. One of the proper nouns refers to a college sports star from a few decades ago. Everything except the proper nouns is playable in Scrabble. Ignore punctuation, because I do.

Thanks to Eric Klis, Bob Fink, and Jerry Miccolis for test-solving and editorial suggestions.



1	2	3	4	5		6
7						
8					9	
10				11		
12						
		14				
15						

1		2	3	4		5
		6				
7	8				9	
10						
11						
		12				
13						

Across

First row

- Lousy actor interrupts as Ed is mortified
- A couple of presidents, it’s said, to wed per Samurai code

Second row

- Ether administered and—Voila!
- A flower for the old lady in England

Third row

- Left before lunatic niece’s presumptuousness
- Insidious about harmonica with a piercing sound

Fourth row

- Look around both shuttles for some empties

Down	First column: 3, 4	Second row: 3, 4	Third row: 3, 4	Fourth column: 3, 4, 3	Fifth row: 4, 3	Sixth row: 3, 4	Seventh row: 4, 3
Across	First row: 3, 4	Second row: 3, 4	Third row: 3, 4	Fourth row: 4, 3, 3	Fifth column: 3, 4	Sixth column: 4, 3	Seventh column: 3, 4

HINTS

SHUTTERSTOCK

- Old Queen, many would say, is quite the worker
- Went for it, at first—do I dare?

Fifth row

- Acquires weird potions
- Group of teachers tinkle close by

Sixth row

- Infielder's versatility is unusual from third base

TOM TOCE is a senior manager for actuarial services with Ernst & Young in New York and is a member of the Jeopardy Hall of Fame. Solutions may be emailed to him at Thomas.Toce@ey.com. In order to make the solver list, your solutions must be received by March 31, 2019.

- Have an inclination to start late—at the conclusion

Seventh row

- An operation with swell respectability at the borders
- Hey, No-Good Ed got even

Down

First column

- Hawks' home in the vicinity of sprawling metropolis starts to nettle tenants assoc.
- Outer voices bearing sustains on staff

Second column

- Chop shop established by one of Skip's partners
- Dazzle with Hines' mix

Third column

- Sumpin' wrong with superficiality?

- Arranging the care of a square with a perimeter of four hundred meters

Fourth column

- Kurosawa movie took up a lot of time
- In a tight spot, Arthur tingles on the inside
- Inhabit a retro era

Fifth column

- Making reparations for most #MeToo offenders, Nick
- Rogue strike causes collapse

Sixth column

- Bias in one part of the eye?
- Torch singer ended abruptly

Seventh column

- The medic cut and cleaned
- Pay no attention to the odds, Monday is a seedy adventure

Previous Issue's Puzzle—Apt Combinations

1. ACCUSAL—ACC (from “mishap contracted”) + USA (“our country”) + L (“lake”). Also a merger of the ACLU (“Non-profit founded by Helen Keller”) and the CAS.
2. PARSON—PAR (“normal”) + SON (“little boy”). Also a merger of NPR (“Radio/TV”) and the SOA.
3. CABOBS—CA (“California”) + BOBS (“buffets”). (“Cabobs” is an alternate spelling.) Also a merger of the BBC (“Radio/TV”) and the SOA.
4. FRACAS—Anagram of “A scarf.” (A fracas and a donnybrook are both words for brawls.) Also a merger of the RAF (“Military organization”) and the CAS.
5. ACCESS—Outside “actor’s process.” Also a merger of the SEC (“Regulatory body”) and the CAS.
6. CANONS—Homophone of CANNONS (“big guns”). (In music, a canon is an imitation.) Also a merger of CNN with the SOA.
7. SEAFOAM—Anagram of “same oaf.” Also a merger of FEMA (“Part of a cabinet department”) and the SOA.
8. SALONS—Outside SALOONS (“Speakeasies”). Also a merger of SNL (“Radio/TV”) and the SOA.

9. CASHEW—CASH (“money”) + EW (“how gross”). Also HEW (“Cabinet department.” This should have been “Former cabinet department.” I’m a little out of touch with contemporary politics, mercifully.)
10. DECALS—DEALS around C (“100”). Also a merger of DEL (“US state”—it still is, right?) and the CAS.

Solvers

It’s difficult to solve cryptic clues with no crossings. Sometimes people send me individual clues, and I can’t always solve them. A tightly-constructed diagram allows the puzzler to do all kinds of tricks. For example, triple- or even quadruple-definition can be fun to throw into a puzzle now and then, but as one-off clues, they’re just frustrating. Many solvers solved all ten clues with no hints. A greater percentage than usual used the hints (which added context if not crossings). And a number of good solvers missed an answer or two (or more). So no ranking this time. I’m just listing everyone who submitted an answer.

Steve Alpert, Anthony Amodeo, Dean Apps, Todd Dashoff, Dave Dougherty, Bob Fink, Phil Gollance, Ruth Johnson, Pete Hepokoski, Eric Klis, Ken Kudrak, Ben Lynch, Michael Manos, Dave McGarry, Jerry Miccolis, Jim Muza, David and Corinne Promislow, Jay Rippes, Bill Scott, Zig Swistunowicz, Doug Szper, T. O. C. E. (Sean Donohoe, Josh DenHartog, and Rio Chen), Betsy and James Uzzell