

# De Artibus Novis Spathiariis

## Illustrated Spades

### Introduction

Illustrated Spades was invented in the USA in 2006 and 2010. This document has the main description as the standard. After the main description, there is a collection of numerous variations.

Illustrated Spades is a plain-trick game in which spades are always trumps [or there are no trumps (but you may play that clubs or diamonds are trumps)]. It is most often played as a partnership game by four players, but there are also versions for three, two or six players.

### Illustrated Spades for Four Players

The four players are in fixed partnerships, with partners sitting opposite each other. Deal and play are clockwise.

### Rank of Cards

A standard pack of 52 cards is used. The cards in each suit rank from highest to lowest:

Tressette: 3, 2, A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4.

Briscola: A, 10, K, Q, J, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

Manille: 10, A, K, Q, J, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

### The Deal

The first dealer is chosen at random, and the turn to deal rotates clockwise. The cards are shuffled and then dealt singly, in clockwise order beginning with the player on dealer's left, until all 52 cards have been dealt and everyone has 13.

### The Bidding

In Illustrated Spades, all four players bid a number of tricks. Each team adds together the bids of the two partners, and the total is the number of tricks that team must try to win in order to get a positive score. The bidding begins with the player to dealer's left and continues clockwise around the table.

Everyone must bid a number, and in theory any number from 0 to 13 is allowed. Unlike other games with bidding, there is no requirement for each bid to be higher than the last one, and players are not allowed to pass. There is no second round of bidding - bids once made cannot be altered. Example: South

deals; West bids 3; North bids 1; East bids 4; South bids 4. The objective of North and South is to win at least 5 tricks (4+1), East and West try to win at least 7 (4+3).

A bid of 0 tricks is known as Nil. This is a declaration that the player who bid Nil will not win any tricks during the play. There is an extra bonus for this if it succeeds and a penalty if it fails.

The partnership also has the objective of winning the number of tricks bid by the Nil's partner. It is not possible to bid no tricks without bidding a Nil. If you don't want to go for the Nil bonus or penalty you must bid at least 1.

Some players allow a bid of Blind nil. This is a nil bid declared before a player looks at his cards. The bidder may exchange two cards with partner - the bidder discards two cards face down; partner picks them up and gives back two cards face-down in return. It is usually agreed that Blind Nil may only be bid by a player whose side is losing by at least 120 points.

### **The Play of the Hand**

The player to dealer's left leads any card except a spade to the first trick. Each player, in turn, clockwise, must follow suit if able; if unable to follow suit, the player may play any card. A trick containing a spade is won by the highest spade played; if no spade is played, the trick is won by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of each trick leads to the next. Spades may not be led until either

- \* some player has played a spade (on the lead of another suit, of course), or

- \* the leader has nothing but spades left in hand.

Playing the first spade is known as "breaking" spades.

### **Scoring**

A side that takes at least as many tricks as its bid calls for receives a score equal to 10 times its bid. Additional tricks (overtricks) are worth an extra one point each.

Sandbagging rule: Overtricks are colloquially known as bags.

A side which (over several deals) accumulates ten or more bags has 100 points deducted from its score. Any bags beyond ten are carried over to the next cycle of ten overtricks - that is if they reached twenty overtricks they would lose another 100

points and so on. (Note: it is not necessary to keep track of overtricks separately as the cumulative number of overtricks taken appears as the final digit of the team's score, if positive). If a side does not make its bid, they lose 10 points for each trick they bid.

If a bid of nil is successful, the nil bidder's side receives 100 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick). This is in addition to the score won (or lost) by the partner of the nil bidder for tricks made. If a bid of nil fails - that is, the bidder takes at least one trick - the bidder's side loses 100 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick), but still receives any amount scored for the partner's bid.

The usual rule is that when a nil fails, the tricks won by the nil bidder do not count towards making the partner's bid, but do count as bags for the team.

A bid of blind nil scores twice as much as an ordinary nil - it wins 200 points plus twice the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) if successful and loses 200 points plus twice the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) if it fails.

The top cards of each suit have a certain point value:

|           |      |    |   |   |         |        |          |
|-----------|------|----|---|---|---------|--------|----------|
| Tressette | 3, 2 |    |   | A | K, Q, J | (♥)#13 | 38       |
|           | 1    |    |   | 3 | 1       | 3      |          |
| Briscola  | A    | 10 | 7 | 3 | K       | Q      | J (#13)  |
|           | 11   | 10 | 7 | 3 | 4       | 3      | 2 (10)   |
| Manille   | 10   | A  |   |   | K       | Q      | J (each) |
|           | 5    | 4  |   |   | 3       | 2      | 1 (.5)   |

(they are penalties in spades and the half points alone are penalties in hearts). These bonuses (and penalties) are independent of the contract, therefore they are still counted if it fails

(if a player or team captures every penalty, the penalties are also bonuses).

The side which reaches nil times five points first wins the game. If both sides reach nil times five points in a single deal, the side with the higher score wins.

## Illustrated Spades for Four Players

This is the description of a sample variant. The rules are as in basic illustrated spades (above), but with the following differences:

1. Cards: The game is played with a standard pack with two distinct jokers; the twos or fours of clubs and hearts are removed from the pack leaving 52 cards. The two jokers are the highest trumps/diamonds. If one is colorful and the other is plain, the colourful one is higher. If your pack has identical jokers, write "BIG" on one of them, and that one is higher. The third highest trump/diamond is the two or four of spades/diamonds/clubs - so the trump/diamond suit ranks: big joker, small joker,

Tressette: 4, 3, 2, A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5.

Briscola/Manille: 2,

Briscola: A, 10, K, Q, J, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3.

Manille: 10, A, K, Q, J, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3.

For the purpose of following suit, the jokers count as spades/diamonds/clubs.

2. Partnership Bidding is used - see explanation under bidding variations below.

3. Leading: After the bidding, the dealer leads to the first trick and may lead any card of any suit.

Throughout the game, any card may be led to a trick. You do not have to wait for spades to be broken before leading them.

4. Bidding blind: There is no nil or blind nil bid, but a partnership may bid blind seven, provided neither of them has yet looked at their cards. This doubles the score to 140 if successful and -140 if not. If they make overtricks, these count one each as usual.

5. In theory it is also possible to bid higher numbers blind for double the score: blind 8 is worth 160, blind 9 is 180 and so on. However, such bids will not be worthwhile, except possibly when they give you just enough points to win the game if successful.

## **Other variations**

Here are some further variants.

### **Variation in the cards and their ranking**

In some versions of Illustrated Spades, some or all of the four twos or fours are elevated to the top of the spade/diamond suit, are ranked in some specified order, and are considered to be spades/diamonds/clubs. The rest of the cards rank as normal. Illustrated Spades can also be played with a 54-card pack - the standard pack of 52 plus 2 distinguishable jokers. In this case the two jokers are elevated to be the top two cards of the spade suit, with an order of the jokers specified.

If jokers are used, then there will be two cards left over at the end of the deal, and these are given to the dealer. Having looked at all 15 cards, the dealer discards any two cards face down.

You may play that the two extra cards are given to the holder of the four of clubs, rather than the dealer. You may play that the discard takes place after the bidding.

### **Variations in the bidding**

#### **Partnership Bidding**

You may play that instead of the players bidding strictly in turn, each partnership agrees on a bid, through a process of discussion. First the non-dealer's side agrees on a bid. Each partner on that side communicates the number of tricks they expect to take, based on their cards. A certain amount of unspecified bantering about "halves" and "maybes" is permitted, but not specific information about cards held. For example, you are allowed to say, "I know I can take 4 tricks, I might be able to take 6"; you are not allowed to say "I have a couple of high hearts and a singleton in clubs". The agreed upon bid is then written down. The other side then agrees on a bid in the same manner.

You may play that each team must bid a minimum of 4 tricks. If a player bids Nil, that player's partner must bid at least 4.

You may play that after each partnership has agreed its initial bid, each side, beginning with the side that made the first bid, is then given the opportunity to increase its bid.

You may play that the bids of the two sides must not add up to exactly 13 tricks. This makes it impossible for both teams to win their bid exactly.

### **Round-the-table bidding**

The type of bidding described in the main account of Illustrated Spades above is known as "round the table" bidding.

In this type of bidding table talk is usually not permitted. A player may only state a number. You may play that the dealer, rather than the player to dealer's left begins.

In round-the-table bidding, you may play that no one can bid 1 - so for example if the first player of a partnership says  $x$  tricks, the final contract must be either  $x$ , or else at least  $x + 2$ . There is also variation as to whether a bid of "zero" must necessarily be construed as bid of nil.

In round-the-table bidding, you may allow a second round of bidding, in which each side may increase its bid. In this second round, the bidding proceeds exactly as in partnership bidding, beginning with the same side as the player who began the round-the-clock bidding sequence.

### **Special actions / bids.**

There is wide variety in the special bids or actions a player may be allowed to make during his turn to bid. Some of the possibilities are listed below.

#### **Nil / Blind Nil.**

These have already been described; Nil is sometimes known as Naught. Nil and Blind Nil may be valued at 50 points plus half the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) and 100 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) rather than 100 plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) and 200 plus twice the total of the counting cards (and the last trick).

Sometimes the penalty for losing Blind Nil is only half the score for winning it (i.e. +100 and total of counting cards (and last trick)/-50 and half total of counting cards (and last trick) or +200 and twice total of counting cards (and last trick)/-100 and total of counting cards (and last trick)). If winning a Blind Nil is worth 100 and total of counting cards (and last trick) then you are only allowed to bid it when your side is at least

100 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) behind. You may play that when Nil is played the bidder must exchange one card with partner; others do not allow passing of cards even in a Blind Nil. Another possible variation is that if you bid Blind Nil you pass one card and to your partner and can specify one suit which you would like passed back; partner takes this into consideration when returning a card but is not forced to pass the suit you asked for.

You may play that if a Nil bid fails, the Nil bidder's tricks count towards making the partner's contract (or as sandbags). You may play that there is no penalty for sandbags when playing Blind Nil. You may play that if one member of a team loses a Nil the partner's bid is automatically lost as well.

### **Open/Super Open**

If you feel that your hand will win you a certain number of tricks unconditionally, you may bid to play with your hand open for a 30% bonus. And if you feel that the number is universally unconditional, you may bid to have your partner play your open hand for you for a 13% bonus. However, the bonus is cancelled if your hand ends up taking multiple tricks over your individual bid team on the deal and it still applies if the team bid fails.

### **Saboteur**

If you feel that your hand will suffer from the high rank of the Twos and Threes (Tressette) or Tens (Briscola/Manille), you may bid to play with them ranking below the Fours (Tressette) or Jacks (Briscola/Manille) for a 20-point bonus. However, the bonus is cancelled if your individual bid ends up incomplete and it applies to both teams if the team bid fails.

### **Blind 6**

This must be declared by a side before either partner looks at their cards. It scores 120 points if the side takes exactly 6 tricks. If they take some other number of tricks they lose 120. You may people play that to win blind 6 you just have to win at least 6 tricks. You may play that a lost blind 6 only loses 60, not 120. Higher blind bids may also be allowed - Blind 7 for 140, Blind 8 for 160 and so on. For you Blind 7 may be the minimum blind bid.

**10-for-200**

This scores 200 points if a side takes exactly 10 tricks, and loses 200 if they take any other number of tricks. You may play that to win 10-for-200 you just have to win at least 10 tricks. You may play that any bid of 10 is automatically a 10-for-200 bid. In some places the 10 for 200 bid is called 10 for 2 (which is written on the score sheet as 10-4-2). Another way of writing the 200 score is with the two zeros linked together at the top; this is called "wheels", as the zeroes are supposed to look like train wheels.

**Moon or Boston**

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks and is worth 200 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick). The side loses 200 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) if they fail to take all the tricks. If playing with 10-for-200 the Moon or Boston is worth nil times five points. Some people play that a successful Moon bid automatically wins the game (which is even better than scoring nil times five if you had a negative score).

**Blind moon**

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks, made before either partner has looked at their cards. It is worth 400 plus twice the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) if it succeeds, and the side loses 400 plus twice the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) if it fails.

**No trump bids**

These are not like no trump bids in Bridge, 500, etc. Spades are still trumps, but a player who bids some number of tricks with "no trump" promises not to win any tricks with spades, except when spades are led. You are only allowed to bid "No Trump" if you hold at least one spade in your hand. The value of the bid is double that of a normal bid for that number of tricks if won; the penalty is if you lose is double the penalty for a normal bid (You may people play with only a single penalty but this is not recommended).

A bid of "No Trump" requires agreement from partner. The person who wants to bid "No Trump" asks partner: "Can you cover a no trump?", and partner replies "yes" or "no".

A "No Trump" bid can be made blind, increasing its value to triple the basic amount. The minimum number of tricks which can be bid in "Blind No Trump" is usually set at one less than the required minimum number for a normal blind bid. A "Blind No Trump" bid is usually a desperation play and should be only be allowed when the team is a long way behind - for example more than nil times 4.8 behind in a nil times ten point game.

Failing in a Blind No Trump should cost the same as you win if you succeed - i.e. three times the basic value of the bid.

However, you may play with only a double or single penalty.

### **Double Nil**

This is a bid in which both partners play Nil at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is nil times five points (or for some people an automatic win). If either partner wins a trick the bid fails. The penalty is variously set at nil times  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , nil times five or automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100 points plus half the total of the counting cards (and the last trick).

A bid of Double Nil is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than nil times 4.8 behind in a nil times ten point game. In a few circles a "Blind Double Nil" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. You may play that when a team bids Double Nil, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Nil and Open/Super Open**

This is a bid in which one partner plays Nil and the other Open/Super Open. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is 100 plus the value of the positive bid and a bonus and a half (or an automatic win). The penalty is variously set at plus bonus and a half, plus triple bonus or automatic loss.

A bid of Nil and Open/Super Open is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than nil times 4.8 behind in a nil times ten point game. In a few circles a "Blind Nil and Open/Super Open" bid is allowed. If successful, the

bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Nil and Open/Super Open, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Double Open/Super Open**

This is a bid in which both partners play Open/Super Open at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is the value of the bid plus a double bonus (or an automatic win). The penalty for failing is variously set at plus single bonus, plus double bonus or automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100 points. A bid of Double Open/Super Open is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than nil times 4.8 behind in a nil times ten point game.

In a few circles a "Blind Double Open/Super Open" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Double Open/Super Open, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Bemo**

Bidding Little Bemo commits the team to win the first six tricks. It is additional to the normal bid; the team scores an extra bonus of 60 if successful and loses 60 if not. Big Bemo similarly commits the team that bids it to win the first nine tricks; they score a 90-point bonus if successful and lose 90 if not.

### **Variations in the play of the cards**

You may play that the dealer leads first, rather than the player to dealer's left, and may lead any card except a spade.

On the first trick, you may require that everyone must play their lowest club. A player who has no clubs must discard a diamond or a heart. No spades may be played to the trick.

In this variation, on this first trick it does not matter much in what order the four players play their cards - but if you want to be fussy then the holder of the 2 or 4 of clubs should lead, and the others play in clockwise order. The trick is won by the highest club played.

In the first trick, you may allow a player who has no clubs to play a spade on the trick. In this case the trick is won by the highest spade if a spade is played. As the order of play to the trick may now be important (if you are going to play a spade you would rather wait to see if someone else plays a higher spade first), the holder of the two of clubs should lead to the first trick (or the holder of the lowest club in play if you are playing with jokers and the four of clubs was discarded).

You may play that spades may be led at any time - it is not necessary that they be broken first.

**"Rake 'em and Shake 'em"** If using a 54 card deck (with two jokers), you may play that if the big joker is led (played as the first card in a trick), then all the other players must play their **highest** spade.

### **Variations in the scoring**

Tricks in excess of the contract (overtricks or sandbags) may be worth minus 1 point each rather than plus 1. In this case the penalty for accumulating 10 overtricks does not apply.

You may play that there is a special card which cancels one sandbag on that hand for the side that takes it in their tricks. If the side which wins the special card makes no overtricks, or loses their bid, the special card has no effect.

The special card may be either a fixed card - for example the three of spades - or may be determined afresh by cutting a card before each deal.

You may play that if a team takes at least twice as many tricks as they bid they lose their bid (for example if they bid 4 and win 8 or more tricks they score -40).

You may play that the penalty for taking fewer tricks than were bid is 10 points for each trick by which the team falls short of the bid, rather than 10 times the bid.

You may play that if a side's cumulative score is minus nil times five or worse, that side loses the game (and of course the other side wins).

You may set the target for winning the game at nil times ten points rather than nil times five or play with a target of only nil times three.

## **Solo**

This is a variation of Illustrated Spades for four players without partners. Bids are for the number of tricks the individual player will make, and in the play, it is compulsory to beat the highest card so far played to the trick if you can; this includes playing a spade if you have no card of the suit led.

## **Illustrated Spades for Six Players**

This is played between three teams of two, partners sitting opposite (so there are two opponents from different teams separating you from your partner in each direction).

A 102-card deck is used, consisting of two standard 52 card decks mixed together with both twos of clubs removed.

The bidding and scoring are the same as in the 4 player game, and similar variations are possible. In the play, if two identical cards are played to the same trick, the second beats the first.

## **Illustrated Spades for Three Players**

There are no partnerships - players play for themselves.

### **The Cards**

One standard 52 card pack is used. Deal 17 cards to each player. The remaining card is added to the trick where trumps are broken.

Variation: play with a 54-card pack including big and little jokers as the top two trumps. Deal 18 cards to each player.

### **The Betting**

Each player, starting with the player to dealer's left, names a number (called a bet). Each player's object is to win that number of tricks. You may play that the total of the three bets cannot be 17 tricks - so that not everyone can make their bet exactly.

### **The Play**

The player who has the 2 or 4 of clubs must lead to the first trick. In the rare occasion that the 2 or 4 of clubs is out of play, the player with the 3 or 5 of clubs must lead.

The other two players must play a club (not necessarily their lowest). A player who has no club may either:

- \* take it by playing any spade (or diamond) or
- \* refuse it by playing any non-spade (or non-diamond) of a different suit.

The player who wins a trick leads the next. The other two players must play a card of the suit led, or if either player has none of that suit, take with a spade or refuse with a non-spade. If neither of the other players has a card of the suit led and both play a spade, then the higher spade wins. A player may not lead a spade until a spade has been used to take another trick led by a non-spade. The exception is when a player has nothing left in hand but spades.

### **Scoring**

Remember each player's bet!

If you win as many or more tricks than you bet, you gain 10 points for each trick bet. If you win fewer tricks than you bet, you lose 10 times the amount of tricks you bet (losing like this is usually referred to as a cut).

Sandbags are overtricks: If you take too many tricks, for every extra trick over what you bet, the amount you win for the contract is reduced by 10 points. For example, if you bet 4 tricks and take 5, you win only 30 instead of 40; if you take 7 tricks having bet 3 you lose 10 points overall (30 minus 40).

Variation: You may count sandbags. Instead of losing 10 points from your contract score for each sandbag, when you accumulate 10 sandbags (over several deals), you drop 100 points. Therefore, sometimes you will refuse a trick, since taking it will give you too many tricks, and you lose points. The game is played to a set number, usually 360, 480, 600, or some other round number. When one (or more) pass that number, the player with the highest score wins.

### **Variation - bonus scores**

The following bonus scores may be used:

If you take the very last trick with a high spade (jack/10 (9) or above), and with that trick you make exactly what you bet, you gain an additional 10-point bonus. If you bag (get too many tricks), there is no bonus.

If you win an unbroken sequence of tricks at the end (2, 3, 4 or more tricks), all with high spades (10 or above), and get exactly what you bet, there is a similar bonus of 10 points per trick (for example if you took the last 5 tricks with high spades to make your bet the bonus would be 50).

There is no bonus for winning the last tricks with non-spades or low spades. A bonus is not awarded to a player who "gets lucky" at the end by winning the last trick with a 2 of diamonds, for instance. On the other hand, if a player has the 10 of Spades in his hand and waits until the end to play it, that is considered good play, and is rewarded.

For successful bids of seven or more, you get an extra 10 points for each trick bid above six. So, if you make a seven trick bid exactly, you gain 80 points. Eight tricks exactly gains 100, 9 gains 120, and so on. This rewards those who are more daring.

Making a bet of exactly 2, 1 or none is also very difficult, and is rewarded as follows:

- \* Anyone who bets 2 and gets 2 wins 40 points (instead of 20). If you get 3, you still get 20 points (one bag). Four tricks is worth nothing, and every additional bag is -10 each (per usual).

- \* Anyone who bets 1 and gets exactly 1 wins 60 pts. If you get 2, you also get nothing, and each additional bag is again -10 each.

- \* Anyone who bets none and gets it is entitled to 186 or 212 pts. Otherwise, subtract 10 for every trick taken (just like regular bags).

Blind: You may decide to not look at your cards and just bet. This will double all points. For example, if you bet and win 5 tricks, you gain 100 pts. However, if you miss, the penalty is also double (in the 5-trick case, 100 points).

### **Illustrated Spades for Two Players**

There is no deal. Instead, the deck is placed face-down between the two players, and they take turns to draw cards.

At your turn you draw the top card, look at it (without showing it to your opponent) and decide whether you want to keep it.

- \* If you want to keep it you put it in your hand, and draw the next card, which you look at and must then discard face down;

- \* If you decide not to keep the first card you discard it face down and then draw the next card, which you put in your hand.

It is then the other player's turn to draw. This continues until the stock is exhausted. You then each have a hand of 13 cards and have discarded 13 cards.

Now each player bids a number of tricks, and you play and score according to the same rules as for three or four players.

## **The One-Third Rule**

### **How to Synthesize Tarot and Spades**

#### **Introduction**

The game of Spades was invented in the USA in the 1930s. However, it bears an un rebuttable similarity to an obscure French tarot game called *La rigueur*, wherein the suit of Swords (*épées*) functioned as 14 extra trumps ranking below the 1 of trumps, which existed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. And closer to modern times, the World War II-era Austrian game of Reform-Tarock featured a bid called “Amerikaner” in which the soloist’s goal was to predict precisely how many tricks he was going to win, because of which fact it was playable by multiple players simultaneously. Even though this chronology may suggest the possibility that the game of Spades was already known in Austria during the war, which may no doubt be the case, this connection is only spurious and due to the choice of nomenclature.<sup>1</sup> This document has the main description as the standard. After the main description, there is a collection of numerous variations.

This synthesis of Tarot and Spades called Brixentalaise is a mixed plain/point-trick game in which spades are always

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<sup>1</sup> By that time, there had already been known in European card play contracts of *nullo* (i. e. nil) and *Piccolo* (exactly one trick to win) and *Piccolissimo* (exactly two tricks to win) for more than a century. The bid is an expansion of this principle to allow any logically possible number of tricks to be announced, Reform Tarock having 12 tricks between four players and six cards left aside as a talon

trumps. It is most often played as a partnership game by four players, but there are also versions for three, two, five, six or seven players.

### **Brixentalaise for Four Players**

The four players are in fixed partnerships, with partners sitting opposite each other. Deal and play are clockwise.

#### **Rank of Cards**

55 cards from a Tarot deck are used. The cards in each suit rank from highest to lowest:

Spades/Swords: M, A, K, Q/C, J, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Other suits: A, K, Q/C, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

#### **The Deal**

The first dealer is chosen at random, and the turn to deal rotates clockwise. The cards are shuffled and then dealt singly, in clockwise order beginning with the player on dealer's left, until 52 cards have been dealt and everyone has 13. The last three cards go to a *chien* to potentially be used by the winner of the first phase of the bidding.

#### **The Bidding**

In Brixentalaise, all four players bid first a condition under which to take at least two fifths of the points in the deck, then a number of tricks. Each team adds together the bids of the two partners, and the total is the number of tricks that team must try to win to get a positive score. The bidding begins with the player to dealer's left and continues clockwise around the table. In the first phase of the bidding, everyone may bid, in a free auction, one of the following conditions under which to take at least  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the points in the deck:

- Pass-drop out
- Garde à trois-Exchange three cards with the *chien* and keep it for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse à trois-Exchange three cards with the *chien* but add it to the last trick
- Garde à deux-Exchange two cards with the *chien* and keep it for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail

- Pousse à deux-Exchange two cards with the *chien* but add it to the last trick
- Garde à une-Exchange one card with the *chien* and keep the *chien* for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse à une-Exchange one card with the *chien* but add the *chien* to the last trick
- Garde sans-Keep the *chien* for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse sans-Add the *chien* to the last trick
- Garde contre-Give the *chien* to the opponents on the condition that your side does not manage to set them

In any bid below Garde sans, Declarer should not discard the *M*, 11 or 1 (or an ace or a spade). After the winning bid is resolved, everyone must bid a number, and in theory any number from 0 to 13 is allowed for any player, except in the event that there is a Declarer who cannot bid 0. Unlike other games with bidding, there is no requirement for each bid to be higher than the last one, and players are not allowed to pass. There is no second round of bidding - bids once made cannot be altered. Example: South deals; West bids 3; North bids 1; East bids 4; South bids 4. The objective of North and South is to win at least 5 tricks (4+1), East and West try to win at least 7 (4+3).

A bid of 0 tricks is known as Nil. This is a declaration that that the player who bid Nil will not win any tricks during the play. There is an extra bonus for this if it succeeds and a penalty if it fails.

The partnership also has the objective of winning the number of tricks bid by the Nil's partner. It is not possible to bid no tricks without bidding a Nil. If you don't want to go for the Nil bonus or penalty you must bid at least 1.

Some players allow a bid of Blind nil. This is a nil bid declared before a player looks at his cards. The bidder may exchange two cards with partner - the bidder discards two cards face down; partner picks them up and gives back two cards face-down in return. It is usually agreed that Blind Nil may only be bid by a player whose side is losing by at least 120 points.

### The Play of the Hand

The player to dealer's left leads any card except a spade to the first trick. Each player, in turn, clockwise, must follow suit if able; if unable to follow suit, the player may play any card. A trick containing a spade is won by the highest spade played; if no spade is played, the trick is won by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of each trick leads to the next. Spades may not be led until either

- \* some player has played a spade (on the lead of another suit, of course), or
- \* the leader has nothing but spades left in hand.

Playing the first spade is known as "breaking" spades.

### Scoring

For scoring, the points in the deck may be distributed in the following way:

- M, 11, 1:  $4+n/55$  each
  - Aces:  $4+n/55$  each
  - Kings:  $3+n/55$  each
  - Queens or Knights:  $2+n/55$  each
  - Jacks:  $1+n/55$  each
  - Numerals:  $n/55$  each
- Total: 52-107 points

In the event of a washout in the first phase of bidding, the tricks are stored normally and the card points are scored normally for all players, observing any fractions that may arise and adding the *chien* to the last trick.

On the other hand, in the event of a contract, Declarer's side keeps its tricks separate to facilitate a count of Declarer's card points. Declarer's individual score is then counted like this: First double Declarer's card points.

Next subtract from this number the largest possible count no greater than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total possible card points.

Finally add back to this the appropriate value from the following table (rounding fractions away from 0):

- Garde à trois: 16
- Pousse à trois: 24
- Garde à deux: 32
- Pousse à deux: 48
- Garde à une: 64
- Pousse à une: 96
- Garde sans: 128
- Pousse sans: 192
- Garde contre: 256

These points are counted separately from the points for the Spades contract and do not count towards winning.

A side that takes at least as many tricks as its bid calls for receives a score equal to 10 times its bid. Additional tricks (overtricks) are worth an extra one point each.

Sandbagging rule: Overtricks are colloquially known as bags.

A side which (over several deals) accumulates ten or more bags has 100 points deducted from its score. Any bags beyond ten are carried over to the next cycle of ten overtricks - that is if they reached twenty overtricks they would lose another 100 points and so on. (Note: it is not necessary to keep track of overtricks separately as the cumulative number of overtricks taken appears as the final digit of the team's score, if positive).

If a side does not make its bid, they lose 10 points for each trick they bid.

If a bid of nil is successful, the nil bidder's side receives 100 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick).

This is in addition to the score won (or lost) by the partner of the nil bidder for tricks made. If a bid of nil fails - that is, the bidder takes at least one trick - the bidder's side loses 100 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick), but still receives any amount scored for the partner's bid.

The usual rule is that when a nil fails, the tricks won by the nil bidder do not count towards making the partner's bid but do count as bags for the team.

A bid of blind nil scores twice as much as an ordinary nil - it wins 200 points if successful and loses 200 points if it fails.

The side which reaches 500 points first wins the game and wins double for also having the higher Tarot score. If both sides reach 500 points in a single deal, the side with the higher score wins.

### **Brixentalaise for Four Players**

This is the description of a sample variant. The rules are as in basic brixentalaise (above), but with the following differences:

1. Cards: The game is played with a pack with both queens and knights; the jacks are removed from the pack maintaining 55 cards. The queens beat the knights - so the suits rank: Spades/Swords: *M*, A, K, Q, C, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Other suits: A, K, Q, C, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

2. Partnership Bidding is used - see explanation under bidding variations below.

3. Leading: After the bidding, the dealer leads to the first trick and may lead any card of any suit.

Throughout the game, any card may be led to a trick. You do not have to wait for spades to be broken before leading them.

4. Bidding blind: There is no nil or blind nil bid, but a partnership may bid blind seven, provided neither of them has yet looked at their cards. This doubles the score to 140 if successful and -140 if not. If they make overtricks, these count one each as usual.

5. In theory it is also possible to bid higher numbers blind for double the score: blind 8 is worth 160, blind 9 is 180 and so on. However, such bids will not be worthwhile, except possibly when they give you just enough points to win the game if successful.

6. Card points: The knights count 2 points each.

### **Other variations**

Here are some further variants.

#### **Variation in the cards and their ranking**

In some versions of Brixentalaise, some or all of the four jacks or knights are elevated to the top of the spade suit, are ranked in some specified order, and are considered to be spades. The rest of the cards rank as normal.

Brixentalaise can also be played with a 60 card pack – using the full court and adding the X. In this case the cards rank:

Spades/Swords: *X*, *M*, *A*, *K*, *Q*, *C*, *J*, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Other suits: *A*, *K*, *Q*, *C*, *J*, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

Moreover, there are 14 card hands and a four card *chien*.

Because of the four card *chien*, the possible contracts are:

- Garde à quatre-Exchange four cards with the *chien* and keep it for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse à quatre-Exchange four cards with the *chien* but add it to the last trick
- Garde à trois-Exchange three cards with the *chien* and keep it for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse à trois-Exchange three cards with the *chien* but add it to the last trick
- Garde à deux-Exchange two cards with the *chien* and keep it for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse à deux-Exchange two cards with the *chien* but add it to the last trick
- Garde à une-Exchange one card with the *chien* and keep the *chien* for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse à une-Exchange one card with the *chien* but add the *chien* to the last trick
- Garde sans-Keep the *chien* for yourself on the condition that your team's bid does not fail
- Pousse sans-Add the *chien* to the last trick
- Garde contre-Give the *chien* to the opponents on the condition that your side does not manage to set them
- Grande pousse-Play 15 tricks

The *X* also should not be discarded to the *chien* by Declarer.

At solo, Declarer may also call the Ace of Spades/Swords.

The five new cards cause the points in the deck to be distributed in the following way:

- *X, M, 11, 1*:  $6+n/60$  each
  - Aces:  $5+n/60$  each
  - Kings:  $4+n/60$  each
  - Queens:  $3+n/60$  each
  - Knights:  $2+n/60$  each
  - Jacks:  $1+n/60$  each
  - Numerals:  $n/60$  each
- Total: 84-144 points

In the event of a contract, they also cause the scoring procedure to change in the following six ways:

First double Declarer's card points.

Next subtract from this number  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total possible card points.

Finally add back to this the appropriate value from the following table (rounding fractions away from 0):

- Garde à quatre: 16
- Pousse à quatre: 24
- Garde à trois: 32
- Pousse à trois: 48
- Garde à deux: 64
- Pousse à deux: 96
- Garde à une: 128
- Pousse à une: 192
- Garde sans: 256
- Pousse sans: 384
- Garde contre: 512
- Grande pousse: 768

## **Variations in the bidding**

### **Partnership Bidding**

You may play that instead of the players bidding strictly in turn, each partnership agrees on a bid, through a process of discussion. First the non-dealer's side agrees on a bid. Each partner on that side communicates the number of tricks they expect to take, based on their cards. A certain amount of unspecified bantering about "halves" and "maybes" is permitted, but not specific information about cards held. For

example you are allowed to say "I know I can take 4 tricks, I might be able to take 6"; you are not allowed to say "I have a couple of high hearts and a singleton in clubs". The agreed upon bid is then written down. The other side then agrees on a bid in the same manner.

You may play that each team must bid a minimum of 4 tricks. If a player bids Nil, that player's partner must bid at least 4.

You may play that after each partnership has agreed its initial bid, each side, beginning with the side that made the first bid, is then given the opportunity to increase its bid.

You may play that the bids of the two sides must not add up to exactly 13 tricks. This makes it impossible for both teams to win their bid exactly.

### **Round-the-table bidding**

The type of bidding described in the main account of Illustrated Spades above is known as "round the table" bidding.

In this type of bidding table talk is usually not permitted. A player may only state a number. You may play that the dealer, rather than the player to dealer's left begins.

In round-the-table bidding, you may play that no one can bid 1 - so for example if the first player of a partnership says  $x$  tricks, the final contract must be either  $x$ , or else at least  $x + 2$ . There is also variation as to whether a bid of "zero" must necessarily be construed as bid of nil.

In round-the-table bidding, you may allow a second round of bidding, in which each side may increase its bid. In this second round, the bidding proceeds exactly as in partnership bidding, beginning with the same side as the player who began the round-the-clock bidding sequence.

### **Special actions / bids.**

There is wide variety in the special bids or actions a player may be allowed to make during his turn to bid. Some of the possibilities are listed below.

#### **Nil / Blind Nil.**

These have already been described; Nil is sometimes known as Naught. Nil and Blind Nil may be valued at 50 points and 100 points rather than 100 and 200.

Sometimes the penalty for losing Blind Nil is only half the score for winning it (i.e. +100/-50 or +200/-100). If winning a Blind Nil is worth 100 then you are only allowed to bid it when your side is at least 100 points behind. You may play that when Nil is played the bidder must exchange one card with partner; others do not allow passing of cards even in a Blind Nil. Another possible variation is that if you bid Blind Nil you pass one card and to your partner and can specify one suit which you would like passed back; partner takes this into consideration when returning a card but is not forced to pass the suit you asked for.

You may play that if a Nil bid fails, the Nil bidder's tricks count towards making the partner's contract (or as sandbags). You may play that there is no penalty for sandbags when playing Blind Nil. You may play that if one member of a team loses a Nil the partner's bid is automatically lost as well.

### **Open/Super Open**

If you feel that your hand will win you a certain number of tricks unconditionally, you may bid to play with your hand open for a 30% bonus. And if you feel that the number is universally unconditional, you may bid to have your partner play your open hand for you for a 130% bonus. However, the bonus is cancelled if your hand ends up taking multiple tricks over your individual bid on the deal and it still applies if the team bid fails.

### **Blind 6**

This must be declared by a side before either partner looks at their cards. It scores 120 points if the side takes exactly 6 tricks. If they take some other number of tricks they lose 120. You may people play that to win blind 6 you just have to win at least 6 tricks. You may play that a lost blind 6 only loses 60, not 120. Higher blind bids may also be allowed - Blind 7 for 140, Blind 8 for 160 and so on. For you Blind 7 may be the minimum blind bid.

### **10-for-200**

This scores 200 points if a side takes exactly 10 tricks, and loses 200 if they take any other number of tricks. You may play that to win 10-for-200 you just have to win at least 10 tricks. You may play that any bid of 10 is automatically a 10-

for-200 bid. In some places the 10 for 200 bid is called 10 for 2 (which is written on the score sheet as 10-4-2). Another way of writing the 200 score is with the two zeros linked together at the top; this is called "wheels", as the zeroes are supposed to look like train wheels.

### **Moon or Boston**

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks and is worth 200 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick). The side loses 200 points plus the total of the counting cards (and the last trick) if they fail to take all the tricks. If playing with 10-for-200 the Moon or Boston is worth nil times five points. Some people play that a successful Moon bid automatically wins the game (which is even better than scoring nil times five if you had a negative score).

### **Blind moon**

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks, made before either partner has looked at their cards. It is worth 400 if it succeeds, and the side loses 400 if it fails.

### **No trump bids**

These are not like no trump bids in Bridge, 500, etc. Spades are still trumps, but a player who bids some number of tricks with "no trump" promises not to win any tricks with spades, except when spades are led. You are only allowed to bid "No Trump" if you hold at least one spade in your hand. The value of the bid is double that of a normal bid for that number of tricks if won; the penalty is if you lose is double the penalty for a normal bid (You may play with only a single penalty but this is not recommended).

A bid of "No Trump" requires agreement from partner. The person who wants to bid "No Trump" asks partner: "Can you cover a no trump?", and partner replies "yes" or "no".

A "No Trump" bid can be made blind, increasing its value to triple the basic amount. The minimum number of tricks which can be bid in "Blind No Trump" is usually set at one less than the required minimum number for a normal blind bid. A "Blind No Trump" bid is usually a desperation play and should be only be allowed when the team is a long way behind - for example more than 480 behind in a 1000-point game.

Failing in a Blind No Trump should cost the same as you win if you succeed - i.e. three times the basic value of the bid. However, you may play with only a double or single penalty.

### **Double Nil**

This is a bid in which both partners play Nil at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is 500 points (or for some people an automatic win). If either partner wins a trick the bid fails. The penalty is variously set at 250, 500 or automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100.

A bid of Double Nil is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 480 behind in a 1000-point game. In a few circles a "Blind Double Nil" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. You may play that when a team bids Double Nil, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Nil and Open/Super Open**

This is a bid in which one partner plays Nil and the other Open/Super Open. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is 100 plus the value of the positive bid and a bonus and a half (or an automatic win). The penalty is variously set at plus bonus and a half, plus triple bonus or automatic loss.

A bid of Nil and Open/Super Open is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 480 behind in 1000-point game. In a few circles a "Blind Nil and Open/Super Open" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Nil and Open/Super Open, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Double Open/Super Open**

This is a bid in which both partners play Open/Super Open at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is the value of the bid plus a double bonus (or an automatic win). The penalty for failing is variously set at plus single bonus, plus double bonus or

automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100 points. A bid of Double Open/Super Open is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 480 behind in a 1000-point game.

In a few circles a "Blind Double Open/Super Open" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Double Open/Super Open, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Bemo**

Bidding Little Bemo commits the team to win the first six tricks. It is additional to the normal bid; the team scores an extra bonus of 60 if successful and loses 60 if not. Big Bemo similarly commits the team that bids it to win the first nine tricks; they score a 90-point bonus if successful and lose 90 if not.

### **Variations in the play of the cards**

You may play that the dealer leads first, rather than the player to dealer's left, and may lead any card except a spade.

On the first trick, you may require that everyone must play their lowest club. A player who has no clubs must discard a diamond or a heart. No spades may be played to the trick.

In this variation, on this first trick it does not matter much in what order the four players play their cards - but if you want to be fussy then the holder of the 2 of clubs should lead, and the others play in clockwise order. The trick is won by the highest club played.

In the first trick, you may allow a player who has no clubs to play a spade on the trick. In this case the trick is won by the highest spade if a spade is played. As the order of play to the trick may now be important (if you are going to play a spade you would rather wait to see if someone else plays a higher spade first), the holder of the lowest club in play should lead to the first trick.

You may play that spades may be led at any time - it is not necessary that they be broken first.

**"Rake 'em and Shake 'em"** You may play that if the *M* (or the *X* when playing with this card) is led (played as the first card in a trick), then all the other players must play their **highest** spade.

### **Variations in the scoring**

Tricks over the contract (overtricks or sandbags) may be worth minus 1 point each rather than plus 1. In this case the penalty for accumulating 10 overtricks does not apply.

You may play that there is a special card which cancels one sandbag on that hand for the side that takes it in their tricks. If the side which wins the special card makes no overtricks, or loses their bid, the special card has no effect.

The special card may be either a fixed card - for example the three of spades - or may be determined afresh by cutting a card before each deal.

You may play that if a team takes at least twice as many tricks as they bid they lose their bid (for example if they bid 4 and win 8 or more tricks they score -40).

You may play that the penalty for taking fewer tricks than were bid is 10 points for each trick by which the team falls short of the bid, rather than 10 times the bid.

You may reduce the base values for higher contracts or abolish certain exchange contracts or raise the standard for success if you feel that the Tarot scores can run away too quickly with the given base values

You may play that if a side's cumulative Spades score is minus 500 or worse, that side loses the game (and of course the other side wins).

You may set the target for winning the game at 1000 points rather than 500 or play with a target of only 300.

### **Solo**

This is a variation of Modern La rigueur for four players without partners. Bids are for the number of tricks the individual player will make. However, a declarer emerging from the first phase of the auction may call any card from a side king up to the King of Spades/Swords, and finding this card in the *chien*, may propose to "marry" the first other player to win a trick provided that this trick is one of the first three. As players may be partnered, a bidder who makes the

game solo plays for double score if playing silent and triple score if playing open (even the value of bags and the bag penalty are multiplied). Since solo play incurs a multiplier, the target score should be multiplied by about two in order to keep a match at a length equivalent to the partnership game. In the play, it is compulsory to beat the highest card so far played to the trick if you can; this includes playing a spade if you have no card of the suit led.

### **Brixentalaise for Five or Seven Players**

This is played between individuals.

A 69-card deck is used by five players, consisting of a 78 card Tarot with Tarots #2-10 removed; or a 137-card deck is used by seven, consisting of two 78 card Tarots with both copies of Tarots #3-10 and the two of spades and one copy of Tarot #2 removed.

The bidding and scoring are the same as in the 4-player game with 60 cards except Grande pousse does not exist and cards can have fractional value in 69ths or 137ths of a point. In the play, A, K, Q, C, J of Spades rank in between *M* and 20. Because hands tend to be weak, a Tarot bid played with a called partner, especially in the seven-player game, is understood to be played as an alliance bid so Declarer's team's tricks are stored together.

### **Brixentalaise for Six Players**

This is played between three teams of two, partners sitting opposite (so there are two opponents from different teams separating you from your partner in each direction).

A 106 or 118 card deck is used, consisting of two 55 card decks mixed together with the twos of any two plain suits removed or of two 60 card decks mixed together with the twos of any plain suit removed.

The bidding and scoring are the same as in the 4-player game with 60 cards except Grande pousse does not exist and cards can have fractional value in 106ths or 118ths of a point. In the play, if two identical cards are played to the same trick, the second beats the first. Because hands tend to be weak, a Tarot bid is understood to be played as a partnership bid so Declarer's team's tricks are stored together.

## **Brixentalaise for Three Players**

There are no partnerships - players play for themselves.

### **The Cards**

One 55 card pack is used. Deal 17 cards to each player. The four remaining cards form a *chien* to potentially be used by the winner of the first phase of the bidding.

Variation: play with a 60-card pack including the full court and the X. Deal 19 cards to each player and leave a *chien* of three cards.

### **The Betting**

Each player, starting with the player to dealer's left, names a number (called a bet). Each player's object is to win that number of tricks. You may play that the total of the three bets cannot be 17 tricks - so that not everyone can make their bet exactly.

### **The Play**

The player who has the lowest club above the 2 must lead to the first trick.

The other two players must play a club (not necessarily their lowest). A player who has no club may either:

- \* take it by playing any spade or
- \* refuse it by playing any non-spade of a different suit.

The player who wins a trick leads the next. The other two players must play a card of the suit led, or if either player has none of that suit, take with a spade or refuse with a non-spade. If neither of the other players has a card of the suit led and both play a spade, then the higher spade wins. A player may not lead a spade until a spade has been used to take another trick led by a non-spade. The exception is when a player has nothing left in hand but spades.

### **Scoring**

Remember each player's bet!

If you win as many or more tricks than you bet, you gain 10 points for each trick bet. If you win fewer tricks than you bet, you lose 10 times the number of tricks you bet (losing like this is usually referred to as a cut).

Sandbags are overtricks: If you take too many tricks, for every extra trick over what you bet, the amount you win for the contract is reduced by 10 points. For example, if you bet 4

tricks and take 5, you win only 30 instead of 40; if you take 7 tricks having bet 3 you lose 10 points overall (30 minus 40).

Variation: You may count sandbags. Instead of losing 10 points from your contract score for each sandbag, when you accumulate 10 sandbags (over several deals), you drop 100 points. Therefore, sometimes you will refuse a trick, since taking it will give you too many tricks, and you lose points. Being divided between only three players, the cards form more groups, influencing two ways of scoring:

The game is played to a set number, usually 360, 480, 600, or some other round number. When one (or more) pass that number, the player with the highest score wins.

### **Variation - bonus scores**

The following bonus scores may be used:

If you take the very last trick with a high or low spade (11 or above, 5 or below), and with that trick you make exactly what you bet, you gain an additional 10 point bonus. If you bag (get too many tricks), there is no bonus.

If you win an unbroken sequence of tricks at the end (2, 3, 4 or more tricks), all with high or low spades (11 or above, 5 or below), and get exactly what you bet, there is a similar bonus of 10 points per trick (for example if you took the last 5 tricks with high or low spades to make your bet the bonus would be 50).

If you take the very last trick with a low spade (5 or below), you gain an additional 10 points with no extra condition.

If you win an unbroken sequence of tricks at the end (2, 3, 4 or more tricks), all with low spades (5 or below), there is a similar bonus of 10 points per trick (for example if you took the last 5 tricks with low spades the bonus would be 50).

Conversely, if you capture an opposing low spade (5 or below) on the very last trick, the opponents lose 10 points unless you or your side would accumulate too many bags by taking the trick.

If you capture an unbroken sequence of opposing low spades (5 or below) at the end (2, 3, 4 or more), all with low spades, there is a similar penalty of 10 points per trick up to that which you or your side would accumulate too many bags by taking (for example if you captured all 5 low spades from your

opponents in the last tricks without accumulating too many bags the the overall penalty to them would be 50).

There is no bonus for winning the last tricks with non-spades or medium spades. A bonus is not awarded to a player who "gets lucky" at the end by winning the last trick with a 2 of diamonds, for instance. On the other hand, if a player has the 10 of Spades in his hand and waits until the end to play it, that is considered good play, and is rewarded.

For successful bids of seven or more, you get an extra 10 points for each trick bid above six. So, if you make a seven-trick bid exactly, you gain 80 points. Eight tricks exactly gains 100, 9 gains 120, and so on. This rewards those who are more daring.

Making a bet of exactly 2, 1 or none is also very difficult, and is rewarded as follows:

- \* Anyone who bets 2 and gets 2 wins 40 points (instead of 20). If you get 3, you still get 20 points (one bag). Four tricks is worth nothing, and every additional bag is -10 each (per usual).

- \* Anyone who bets 1 and gets exactly 1 wins 60 pts. If you get 2, you also get nothing, and each additional bag is again -10 each.

- \* Anyone who bets none and gets it is entitled to 100 or 200 pts. Otherwise, subtract 10 for every trick taken (just like regular bags).

Blind: You may decide to not look at your cards and just bet. This will double all points. For example, if you bet and win 5 tricks, you gain 100 pts. However, if you miss, the penalty is also double (in the 5-trick case, 100 points).

### **Brixentalaise for Two Players**

There is no deal. Instead, the deck is placed face-down between the two players, and they take turns to draw cards.

At your turn you draw the top card, look at it (without showing it to your opponent) and decide whether you want to keep it.

- \* If you want to keep it you put it in your hand, and draw the next card, which you look at and must then discard face down;

\* If you decide not to keep the first card you discard it face down and then draw the next card, which you put in your hand.

It is then the other player's turn to draw. This continues until the stock is exhausted. You then each have a hand of 13 cards and have discarded 13 cards.

Now each player bids first a condition under which to take at least half of the points left in the deck, then a number of tricks, and you play and score according to the same rules as for four players.

## **One Hundred and Thirty<sup>2</sup>**

### **Introduction**

One Hundred and Thirty was invented in the USA in 2013. This document has the main description as the standard. After the main description, there is a collection of numerous variations

One Hundred and Twelve is a plain-trick game in which spades are the default trumps. It is most often played as a partnership game by four players, but there are also versions for three, two or six players.

### **One Hundred and Thirty for Four Players**

The four players are in fixed partnerships, with partners sitting opposite each other. Deal and play are clockwise.

### **Rank of Cards**

A standard pack of 52 cards is used.

The cards, in each suit, rank from highest to lowest: **A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.**

### **The Deal**

The first dealer is chosen at random, and the turn to deal rotates clockwise. The cards are shuffled and then dealt singly, in clockwise order beginning with the player on dealer's left, until all 52 cards have been dealt and everyone has 13.

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<sup>2</sup> 10 trick points times 13 tricks

## The Bidding

In One Hundred and Thirty, all four players bid a number of tricks. Each team adds together the bids of the two partners, and the total is the number of tricks that team must try to win in order to get a positive score. The bidding begins with the player to dealer's left and continues clockwise around the table. Everyone may bid a number to set the trump or pass, but the dealer must set it on the second round even if not confident that there is a trump suit where their team has no worse than a toss-up bid of at least 6 tricks<sup>3</sup>, and in theory any number from 0 to 13 is allowed.

Unlike other games with bidding, there is no requirement for each bid to be higher than the last one. There is no second round of bidding - bids once made cannot be altered.

**Example 1:** South deals; West bids 3; North bids 1; East bids 4; South bids 4. The objective of North and South is to win at least 5 tricks with spades as trumps (4+1), East and West try to win at least 7 (4+3).

**Example 2:** South deals; there are five passes; North bids 2 diamonds; East bids 4; South bids 4; West bids 3. The objective of North and South is to win at least 6 tricks with diamonds as trumps (4+2), East and West try to win at least 7 (4+3).

A bid of 0 tricks is known as **Nil**. This is a declaration that that the player who bid Nil will not win any tricks during the play. There is an extra bonus for this if it succeeds and a penalty if it fails. The partnership also has the objective of winning the number of tricks bid by the Nil's partner. It is not possible to bid no tricks without bidding a Nil. If you don't want to go for the Nil bonus or penalty you must bid at least 1.

Some players allow a bid of **Blind nil**. This is a nil bid declared before a player looks at his cards. After everyone has bid and before the first lead, the bidder may exchange two cards with partner - the bidder discards two cards face down; partner picks them up and gives back two cards face-down in

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<sup>3</sup>A majority of the common 11-trick total

return. It is usually agreed that Blind Nil may only be bid by a player whose side is losing by at least 100 points.

Nil is insufficient to make trumps, and thus a Nil bid declared before either side makes trumps is said to be "near/farsighted" for one has looked at one's hand but no trump suit is established yet. Such a Nil is valued as a double Nil. If Blind Nil is also admitted, it is then valued as a triple Nil.

### **The Play of the Hand**

The player to dealer's left leads any card except a spade to the first trick. Each player, in turn, clockwise, must follow suit if able; if unable to follow suit, the player may play any card.

A trick containing a trump is won by the highest trump played; if no trump is played, the trick is won by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of each trick leads to the next. Trumps may not be led until either

- some player has played a trump (on the lead of another suit, of course), or
- the leader has nothing but trumps left in hand.

Playing the first trump is known as "breaking" trumps.

### **Scoring**

A side that takes at least as many tricks as its bid calls for receives a score equal to 10 times its bid.

Additional tricks (overtricks) are worth an extra one point each.

**Sandbagging rule:** Overtricks are colloquially known as **bags**. A side which (over several deals) accumulates ten or more bags has 100 points deducted from its score. Any bags beyond ten are carried over to the next cycle of ten overtricks - that is if they reached twenty overtricks they would lose another 100 points and so on.

**Example:** Suppose a team whose score is 337 bids 5 tricks. If they win 7 tricks they score 52, taking their score to 389. If they win 8 tricks they score 53, but lose 100 because they now have 10 bags, and their score becomes 290 ( $337 + 53 - 100$ ). If they win 9 tricks they score 54 and lose 100, bringing their score to 291.

If a side does not make its bid, they lose 10 points for each trick they bid.

If a bid of **nil** is successful, the nil bidder's side receives 100 points. This is in addition to the score won (or lost) by the partner of the nil bidder for tricks made. If a bid of nil fails - that is, the bidder takes at least one trick - the bidder's side loses 100 points, but still receives any amount scored for the partner's bid.

The usual rule is that when a nil fails, the tricks won by the nil bidder **do not count** towards making the partner's bid, but do count as bags for the team.

A bid of **blind nil** scores twice as much as an ordinary nil - it wins 200 points if successful and loses 200 points if it fails.

The side which reaches 500 points first wins the game and wins double for also having the higher score for point cards and tricks. If both sides reach 500 points in a single deal, the side with the higher score wins.

### **Variations of One Hundred and Thirty for Four Players**

This is the description of a sample variant. The rules are as in basic One Hundred and Thirty (above), but with the following differences:

1. **Cards:** The game is played with a standard pack with two distinct jokers; the twos of any two suits are removed from the pack leaving 52 cards. The two jokers are the highest trumps. If one is colourful and the other is plain, the colourful one is higher. If your pack has identical jokers, write "BIG" on one of them, and that one is higher. The third highest trump is the two when it is one which was not removed - so the trump suit ranks:

**big joker, small joker, (2), A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3.**

For the purpose of following suit, the jokers count as trumps.

2. **Partnership Bidding** is used - see explanation under bidding variations below.
3. **Leading:** After the bidding, the **dealer** leads to the first trick and may lead **any card of any suit**. Throughout the game, any card may be led to a trick.

You do not have to wait for spades to be broken before leading them.

4. **Bidding blind:** There is no *nil* or *blind nil* bid, but a partnership may bid **blind seven**, provided neither of them has yet looked at their cards. This doubles the score to 140 if successful and -140 if not. If they make overtricks, these count one each as usual.
5. In theory it is also possible to bid higher numbers blind for double the score: **blind 8** is worth 160, **blind 9** is 180 and so on. However, such bids will not be worthwhile, except possibly when they give you just enough points to win the game if successful.

### Other variations

Here are some further variants, mostly after contributions by Theodore Hwa. Ben Miller provided the information on No Trump and Double Nil.

### Variation in the cards and their ranking

In some versions of One Hundred and Thirty, some or all of the four twos are elevated to the position above the ace, are ranked in some specified order, and are considered to be trumps. The rest of the cards rank as in normal One Hundred and Twelve.

In some versions of One Hundred and Thirty, some or all of the suits are ranked differently from the standard **A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2** (usually one of these suits is also trumps), and then there is an optional Saboteur special action which unpromotes them<sup>4</sup> and if there are permanent trumps;

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<sup>4</sup>It is worth 20 bonus points, but only if you complete your individual bid and your team's total bid succeeds. If your team's total bid succeeds without your individual bid being completed, this bonus is cancelled, and if your team's total bid fails; this bonus becomes a penalty to both teams. If any card(s) naturally of a side suit migrate(s) into the trump suit, it/they will technically remain there, and if any trumps carry

also an optional special action to restore them to the side suits they migrate from adding a bonus of 10 points per reverted permanent trump<sup>5</sup> for the team which bids it which reverses into a penalty when that team fails its bid.

One Hundred and Thirty can also be played with a 54 card pack - the standard pack of 52 plus 2 distinguishable jokers. In this case the two jokers are elevated to be the top two cards of the trump suit, with an order of the jokers specified. If jokers are used, then there will be two cards left over at the end of the deal, and these are given to the dealer. Having looked at all 15 cards, the dealer discards any two cards face down. Some play that the two extra cards are given to the holder of the two of clubs, rather than the dealer. Some play that the discard takes place after the bidding.

### **Variations in the bidding**

Some play that instead of the players bidding strictly in turn, each partnership agrees on a bid, through a process of discussion. First the non-dealer's side agrees on a bid. Each partner on that side communicates the number of tricks they expect to take and a trump suit, based on their cards. A certain amount of unspecified bantering about "halves" and "maybes" is permitted, but not specific information about cards held. For example you are allowed to say "In spades, I know I can take 4 tricks, I might be able to take 6"; you are not allowed to say "I have a couple of high hearts and a singleton in clubs".

The agreed upon bid is then written down. The other side then agrees on a bid in the same manner.

Some play that each team must bid a minimum of 4 tricks. If a player bids Nil, that player's partner must bid at least 4.

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(special) card points, they retain these in their unpromoted state.

<sup>5</sup>These cards do not necessarily revert to their normal positions.

Some play that after each partnership has agreed its initial bid, each side, beginning with the side that made the first bid, is then given the opportunity to increase its bid.

Some play that the bids of the two sides must not add up to exactly 13 tricks. This makes it impossible for both teams to win their bid exactly.

### **Round-the-table bidding**

The type of bidding described in the main account of One Hundred and Twelve above is known as "round the table" bidding. In this type of bidding table talk is usually not permitted. A player may only state a number. Some play that the dealer, rather than the player to dealer's left begins.

In round-the-table bidding, some people play that no one can bid 1 - so for example if the first player of a partnership says  $x$  tricks, the final contract must be either  $x$ , or else at least  $x + 2$ . There is also variation as to whether a bid of "zero" must necessarily be construed as bid of nil.

In round-the-table bidding, some people allow a second round of bidding, in which each side may increase its bid. In this second round, the bidding proceeds exactly as in partnership bidding, beginning with the same side as the player who began the round-the-clock bidding sequence.

### **Special actions / bids.**

There is wide variety in the special bids or actions a player may be allowed to make during his turn to bid. Some of the possibilities are listed below.

#### **Nil / Blind Nil.**

These have already been described; Nil is sometimes known as Naught.

Nil and Blind Nil are sometimes valued at 50 and 100 (and 150) points rather than 100 and 200 (and 300). Sometimes the penalty for losing Blind Nil is only two thirds the score for winning it (i.e. +150/-100 or +300/-200). If winning a Blind Nil is worth 100 then you are only allowed to bid it when your side is at least 100 points behind.

Some play that when Nil is played the bidder must exchange one card with partner; others do not allow passing of cards even in a Blind Nil. Another possible variation is that if you bid Blind Nil you pass one card and to your partner and can

specify one suit which you would like passed back; partner takes this into consideration when returning a card but is not forced to pass the suit you asked for.

Some play that if a Nil bid fails, the Nil bidder's tricks count towards making the partner's contract (or as sandbags). Some play that there is no penalty for sandbags when playing Blind Nil. Some play that if one member of a team loses a Nil the partner's bid is automatically lost as well.

### **Schmeiss<sup>6</sup>**

This is a proposal to throw in the cards and have the same dealer redeal. It is made only to the opposite team. If the opposite team refuses, the *schmeissing* team takes up a game as if the *schmeisser* had made a regular bid between Nil and 13.

### **Not-so-screwed Dealer**

Because the dealer is obliged to speak after seven passes, they may be forced to make on a hand which has no reasonable play for 5 tricks<sup>7</sup> with any trump. To make it up to the dealer's team for the game having gotten dumped on them, the dealer's opponents may therefore be made to bid that hand at a probability disadvantage.

### **Open/Super Open**

If you feel that your hand will win you a certain number of tricks unconditionally, you may bid to play with your hand open for a 30% bonus. And if you feel that the number is universally unconditional, you may bid to have your partner play your open hand for you for a 130% bonus. However, the bonus is cancelled if your hand ends up taking multiple tricks over your individual bid on the deal and it still applies if the team bid fails.

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<sup>6</sup>Borrowed from Klabberjass, accounts of which game disagreeing on whether it is allowed as a second-round bid

<sup>7</sup>Given three other average bids, a 5 bid automatically yields a table total of 11

**Blind 6**

This must be declared by a side before either partner looks at their cards. It scores 120 points if the side takes exactly 6 tricks. If they take some other number of tricks they lose 120. Some people play that to win blind 6 you just have to win *at least* 6 tricks. Some play that a lost blind 6 only loses 60, not 120. Higher blind bids may also be allowed - Blind 7 for 140, Blind 8 for 160 and so on. For some people Blind 7 is the minimum blind bid.

**Near/Farsighted numbers**

On the second round, players may not be required to name a trump suit with a numerical bid (if the auction is limited to a single round, a number alone is insufficient to make trumps). These are valued at 20 points per trick. If numbers are also allowed to be bid blind, the blind bids are then valued at 30 points per trick.

**10-for-200**

This scores 200 points if a side takes exactly 10 tricks but loses 200 if they take any other number of tricks. Some people play that to win 10-for-200 you just have to win *at least* 10 tricks. Some play that any bid of 10 is automatically a 10-for-200 bid. In some places the 10 for 200 bid is called **10 for 2** (which is written on the score sheet as **10-4-2**). Another way of writing the 200 score is with the two zeros linked together at the top; this is called "wheels", as the zeroes are supposed to look like train wheels.

**Moon or Boston**

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks and is worth 200 points. The side loses 200 points if they fail to take all the tricks. If playing with 10-for-200 the Moon or Boston is worth 500 points. Some people play that a successful Moon bid automatically wins the game (which is even better than scoring 500 if you had a negative score).

**Blind moon**

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks, made before either partner has looked at their cards. It is worth 400 points if it succeeds, and the side loses 400 points if it fails. If near/farsighted moon is also admitted, it is then worth 600 points if it succeeds, and the side loses 600 points if it fails.

### **No trump bids**

These are not like no trump bids in Bridge, 500, etc. There are still trumps, but a player who bids some number of tricks with "no trump" promises not to win any tricks with trumps, except when trumps are led. You are only allowed to bid "No Trump" if you hold at least one of the specified suit in your hand. The value of the bid is double that of a normal bid for that number of tricks if won; the penalty if you lose is double the penalty for a normal bid (some people play with only a single penalty, but this is not recommended).

A bid of "No Trump" requires agreement from partner. The person who wants to bid "No Trump" asks partner: "Can you cover a no trump?", and partner replies "yes" or "no". A "No Trump" bid can be made blind, increasing its value to triple the basic amount.

The minimum number of tricks which can be bid in "Blind No Trump" is usually set at one less than the required minimum number for a normal blind bid. A "Blind No Trump" bid is usually a desperation play and should be only be allowed when the team is a long way behind - for example more than 400 behind in a 1000-point game. Failing in a Blind No Trump should cost the same as you win if you succeed - i.e. three times the basic value of the bid. However, some people play with only a double or single penalty.

As a second-round bid, "No Trump" is insufficient to make trumps and it is valued triple if bid without a named trump suit. Making trumps by a second-round-opening "No Trump" bid requires trumps to be named explicitly in the bid.

### **Double Nil**

This is a bid in which both partners play Nil at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is 500 points (or for some people an automatic win). If either partner wins a trick the bid fails. The penalty is variously set at 250, 500 or automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100 points. A bid of Double Nil is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 400 behind in a 1000-point game.

In a few circles a "Blind Double Nil" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Double Nil, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Nil and Open/Super Open**

This is a bid in which one partner plays Nil and the other Open/Super Open. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is 100 plus the value of the positive bid and a bonus and a half (or an automatic win). The penalty is variously set at plus bonus and a half, plus triple bonus or automatic loss.

A bid of Nil and Open/Super Open is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 400 behind in a 1000-point game. In a few circles a "Blind Nil and Open/Super Open" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Nil and Open/Super Open, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Double Open/Super Open**

This is a bid in which both partners play Open/Super Open at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is the value of the bid plus a double bonus (or an automatic win). The penalty for failing is variously set at plus single bonus, plus double bonus or automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100 points.

A bid of Double Open/Super Open is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 400 behind in a 1000-point game.

In a few circles a "Blind Double Open/Super Open" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Double Open/Super Open, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

### **Bemo**

Bidding **Little Bemo** commits the team to win the first six tricks. It is additional to the normal bid; the team scores an extra bonus of 60 if successful and loses 60 if not. **Big Bemo** similarly commits the team that bids it to win the first nine tricks; they score a 90-point bonus if successful and lose 90 if not.

### **Variations in the play of the cards**

Some play that the dealer leads first, rather than the player to dealer's left, and may lead any card except a trump.

On the first trick, some require that everyone must play their lowest card of some suit other than trumps. A player who has none of the suit must discard. No trumps may be played to the trick. In this variation, on this first trick it does not matter much in what order the four players play their cards - but if you want to be fussy then the holder of the 2 should lead, and the others play in clockwise order. The trick is won by the highest card of the suit played.

In the first trick, some allow a player who has none of the suit to play a trump on the trick. In this case the trick is won by the highest trump if a trump is played. As the order of play to the trick may now be important (if you are going to play a trump you would rather wait to see if someone else plays a higher trump first), the holder of the two should lead to the first trick (or the holder of the lowest in play if you are playing with jokers and the two was discarded).

Some play that trumps may be led at any time - it is not necessary that they be broken first.

**"Rake 'em and Shake 'em"** If using a 54-card deck (with two jokers), some play that if the **big joker** is led (played as the first card in a trick), then all the other players must play their **highest** trump.

### **Variations in the scoring**

Success of individual or team bids of a gamut of levels up to 13 may attract a bonus. If a Moon or Boston bid is admitted, the bonus for a bid of 13 tricks applies to the elevated value of this bid, and if a 13 bid has a different elevated value depending on whether it is by an individual or a team, the bonus applies to the elevated value of the 13 bid played.

Tricks in excess of the contract (overtricks or sandbags) may be worth minus 1 point each rather than plus 1. In this case the penalty for accumulating 10 overtricks does not apply.

Some people play that there is a special card which cancels one sandbag on that hand for the side that takes it in their tricks. If the side which wins the special card makes no overtricks, or loses their bid, the special card has no effect. The special card may be either a fixed card - for example the three of spades - or may be determined afresh by cutting a card before each deal.

Certain cards may also attract card points for being captured in tricks. When playing with card points, the card points count separately from the contract so that a simple win is always determined solely by successful contracts, and a double win is thus awarded to the team which is more past the target score and has more card points. If certain cards carry (special) card points as trumps, there is an All Trump special action which confers on the same side-suit cards the (special) card points, but does not necessarily promote them if these specially-valued trumps happen to also be promoted<sup>8</sup>.

Certain combinations of cards held in a player's hand, played to tricks or even stored in a side's trick pile may also be declared for a side bonus.

Some play that if a team takes at least twice as many tricks as they bid they lose their bid (for example if they bid 4 and win 8 or more tricks they score -40).

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<sup>8</sup>If left un-promoted, they do not necessarily gain the same (special) value. Because of this, it is effectively a bid to catch the (special) point cards of the plain suits in the process of making the contract. Each of these cards earns a bonus of 10 contract points when it is captured in a trick regardless of the success of the bid, but the bonus does apply to a contract which cannot be made despite capturing none of them or a twin nil.

Some play that the penalty for taking fewer tricks than were bid is 10 points for each trick by which the team falls short of the bid, rather than 10 times the bid.

Some play that if a side's cumulative score is minus 500 or worse, that side loses the game (double for also having fewer side bonuses).

Some players set the target for winning the game at 1000 points rather than 500. Others play with a target of only 300.

### **Solo One Hundred and Thirty**

Bids are for the number of tricks the individual player will make. However, the trump maker may form a temporary alliance with the holder of a specified ace or king and a trump maker who holds ace-king of any suit may propose to “marry” the first other player to win a trick provided that this trick is one of the first three<sup>9</sup>. As players may be partnered, a bidder who makes the game solo plays for double score if playing silent and triple score if playing open (even the value of bags and the bag penalty are multiplied). Since solo play incurs a multiplier, the target score should be multiplied by about two in order to keep a match at a length equivalent to the partnership game.

In the play, it is compulsory to beat the highest card so far played to the trick if you can; this includes playing a trump if you have no card of the suit led.

### **One Hundred and Thirty for Six Players**

This is played between three teams of two, partners sitting opposite (so there are two opponents from different teams separating you from your partner in each direction).

A 104-card deck is used, consisting of two standard 52 card decks mixed together. Deal 17 cards to each player. The remaining two cards are added to the trick where trumps are broken.

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<sup>9</sup>This may apply to cards other than aces and kings or the holders of a specific pair of cards whether or not the trump maker holds one of them.

The bidding and scoring are the same as in the 4 player game except for the bonus categories, and similar variations are possible.

**Variation:** play with a doubled 54-card pack including big and little jokers as the top two trumps. Deal 18 cards to each player.

In the play, if two identical cards are played to the same trick, the second beats the first.

### **One Hundred and Thirty for Three Players**

There are no partnerships - players play for themselves.

#### **The Cards**

One standard 52 card pack is used. Deal 17 cards to each player. The remaining card is added to the trick where trumps are broken.

**Variation:** play with a 54-card pack including big and little jokers as the top two trumps. Deal 18 cards to each player.

#### **The Betting**

Each player, starting with the player to dealer's left, names and then names a number (called a *bet*), along with a suit if the spades round is passed out, the dealer being forced to bet after five passes. Each player's object is to win that number of tricks. Some people play that the total of the three bets cannot be 17 tricks - so that not everyone can make their bet exactly.

#### **The Play**

The player who has the other 2 of the same color as trumps must lead it to the first trick. In the rare occasion that this 2 is out of play, the player with the 3 leads it. The other two players must follow this suit (not necessarily their lowest). A player who does not have this suit may either:

- take it by playing any trump or
- refuse it by playing any non-trump of a different suit.

The player who wins a trick leads the next. The other two players must play a card of the suit led, or if either player has none of that suit, take with a trump or refuse with a non-trump. If neither of the other players has a card of the suit led and both play a trump then the higher trump wins.

A player may not lead a trump until a trump has been used to take another trick led by a non-trump. The exception is when a player has nothing left in hand but trumps.

## Scoring

Remember each player's bet!

If you win as many or more tricks than you bet, you gain 10 points for each trick.

If you win fewer tricks than you bet, you lose 10 times the number of tricks you bet (losing like this is usually referred to as a *cut*).

**Sandbags** are overtricks: If you take too many tricks, for every extra trick over what you bet, the amount you win for the contract is reduced by 10 points. For example, if you bet 4 tricks and take 5, you win only 30 instead of 40; if you take 7 tricks having bet 3 you lose 10 points overall (30 minus 40).

**Variation:** Some players count sandbags. Instead of losing 10 points from your contract score for each sandbag, when you accumulate 10 sandbags (over several deals), you drop 100 points. This is why sometimes you will refuse a trick, since taking it will give you too many tricks, and you lose points. The game is played to a set number, usually 300, 400, 500, or some other round number. When one (or more) pass that number, the player with the highest score wins.

## Variation - bonus scores

Szu Kay Wong recommends playing with the following bonus scores:

If you take the very last trick with a **high trump** (nine or above), and with that trick you make exactly what you bet, you gain an additional 10-point bonus. If you *bag* (get too many tricks), there is no bonus.

If you win an unbroken sequence of tricks at the end (2, 3, 4 or more tricks), all with high spades (9 or above), and get exactly what you bet, there is a similar bonus of 10 points per trick (for example if you took the last 5 tricks with high spades to make your bet the bonus would be 50).

There is no bonus for winning the last tricks with non-trumps or low trumps. A bonus is not awarded to a player who "gets lucky" at the end by winning the last trick with a 4 of diamonds, for instance. On the other hand, if a player has the

Ace of Trumps in his hand and waits until the end to play it, that is considered good play, and is rewarded.

For successful bids of seven or more, you get an extra 10 points for each trick bid above six. So if you make a seven trick bid exactly, you gain 80 points. Eight tricks exactly gains 100, 9 gains 120, and so on. This rewards those who are more daring.

Making a bet of exactly 2, 1 or none is also very difficult, and is rewarded as follows:

- Anyone who bets 2 and gets 2 wins 40 points (instead of 20). If you get 3, you still get 20 points (one bag). Four tricks is worth nothing, and every additional bag is -10 each (per usual).
- Anyone who bets 1 and gets exactly 1 wins 60 pts. If you get 2, you also get nothing, and each additional bag is again -10 each.
- Anyone who bets none and gets it is entitled to 100 pts. Otherwise, subtract 10 for every trick taken (just like regular bags).

**Blind:** You may decide to not look at your cards and just bet. This will double all points. For example, if you bet and win 5 tricks, you gain 100 pts. However, if you miss, the penalty is also double (in the 5-trick case, 100 points).

### **One Hundred and Thirty for Two Players**

There is no deal. Instead, the deck is placed face-down between the two players, and they take turns to draw cards.

At your turn you draw the top card, look at it (without showing it to your opponent) and decide whether you want to keep it.

- If you want to keep it you put it in your hand, and draw the next card, which you look at and must then discard face down;
- If you decide not to keep the first card you discard it face down and then draw the next card, which you put in your hand.

It is then the other player's turn to draw. This continues until the stock is exhausted. You then each have a hand of 13 cards and have discarded 13 cards.

Now each player bids a number of tricks possibly followed by a suit and you play and score according to the same rules as for three or four players.