

The Complete? Indiscretion Rules Compendium

Introduction

In 1987 Piatnik published a set of cards under the title Indiscretion. This was a normal modern 52-card deck in most respects, but each suit had a different color and, more importantly, the back of each card said which suit it was. Parker Brothers published the same set of cards as Scan in two editions in 1988, with different back designs from each other and the Piatnik edition.

The Official Games

The Piatnik edition included rules for two games by Alex Randolph in both German and English: Bonus-Malus and Misthaufen/Dump.

Piatnik also ran a competition for other games to be played with the set. In 1988 they published a booklet containing the contest winner (Belle Epoque), seven of the other contest entries, and for some reason the original two games again (changing Misthaufen to Abfallhaufen). These were never officially published in English, although unofficial rules for two of them were published in *Games International* (Belle Epoque in #2 and Trickster in #7).

The two editions of Scan included just one game, which was the same as Bonus-Malus except for one rule (and added some minor variants).

The Other Games

In addition to the English rules for Trickster, *Games International* #7 included four other games by David Parlett (one co-designed with Edward Parlett), and #11 included High Low by Alan R. Moon.

At least three other games for the set appeared in German magazines. Weniger ist Mehr was published in *Win* #61 (this was the earlier publication of this name – this issue was dated July 3rd, 1988). Klaus Tebuer's Kaiserwahl appeared in *Die Pöppel-Revue* 5/88, and Sotheby's appeared in *Fairplay* 5/88.

Rules Text

With one exception the rules given here for all the official games I translated from the German (most of the actual translation being done by Google Translate); where English rules existed I used them to check the translations for correctness. I also translated the rules for Weniger ist Mehr, Kaiserwahl, and Sotheby's.

The one exception is Trickster; the rules given here are those from *Games International* with minor editing (I did check the German to make sure it matched). The other games from *Games International* are also copied from there with minor editing; permission was given for this by both David Parlett and Alan R. Moon.

A few games have notes from me in square brackets where a rule was unclear or apparently missing.

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Bonus-Malus aka Scan

Alexander Randolph

A quick trick-taking game for 2-6 players

The goal of this game is to collect positive cards and get as few negative cards as possible. That sounds easier than it is. The best way to play “Bonus-Malus” is with four players in partnerships (opposing players are partners). This version will now be described.

Cards

Use all 52 cards and shuffle well. The value of the cards is in the usual order - Ace is the highest and 2 the lowest card of each suit. Each player receives seven cards that are dealt individually. The remaining cards are placed face down in the middle of the table as a supply.

Goal

Each player tries to take as many tricks as possible that contain spades (black cards - worth 10 points) and hearts (red cards - worth 5 points). You try to get rid of diamonds (blue cards – worth -5 points) and clubs (green cards – worth -10 points) or pass them to your opponents.

Tricks

During the game, the color of the top card of the supply is the trump color for the trick. Since four cards will be drawn from the supply after the trick, another color may be on top, which is then used as the trump color for the next trick. When the supply is used up the last seven tricks are played without a trump suit.

Playing the Game

The player sitting to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick. The player who wins that trick leads to the next trick, etc. You must follow suit if possible. If you cannot, you must play a trump card. If you have neither the lead suit nor the trump suit you may play any card. The highest card of the lead suit, if any trumps were played, the highest trump, wins the trick. Before the next trick the winner draws the top card from the supply and puts it in his hand so that he has seven cards again. The other players likewise each draw a card from the supply in order. Then the next trick is played, and so on until all cards have been played.

Scoring

Each partnership counts the value of the cards in their tricks. It is easiest to count the cards face down, since the point value depends only on the back: black always counts +10, red counts +5, blue -5 and green -10. Only positive totals are scored; the side with a negative total scores zero. As a check, the positive points on one side and the negative points on the other side must always add up to zero. If both sides score the same number of points, both score zero. (This only applies to the game for 2 or 4 players!)

Important: The scoring for each hand increases as the game continues. The first hand is counted normally, but in the second hand the score is doubled before it is added to the running total, it is tripled in the third, quadrupled in the fourth, etc. Note that this rule exists in Bonus-Malus but *not* in Scan; it is the only difference.

Winning the Game

The player to the left of the first dealer deals the next hand. A partnership wins by being the first to score at least 155 points. The difference between the scores of the two partnerships gives the margin of victory.

Other Player Counts

No version of the Bonus-Malus rules explains anything other than the four-player partnership game. The Scan rules suggest:

- Playing with three two-player partnerships using five-card hands.
- Playing without partnerships with any number of players from two to six, using seven-card hands with up to four players and five otherwise. In this case as in the six-player partnership game, once it is impossible for all players to replenish their hands, no one does.
- For players new to trick-taking games, playing without trump suits and with two-card hands.

Abfallhaufen aka Misthaufen aka Dump

Alexander Randolph

A trick-taking game for 2 or 4 players in which “bad” cards should be discarded. This is a game in which there are tricks but no trump color. The goal is to collect “valuable” cards and get rid of “worthless” cards. In the four-player version, which is now described, opposing players are partners.

Cards

Use only 40 cards; remove all 4s, 5s, and 6s. The value of the cards is in the normal order - Ace is the highest and 2 the lowest. Each player receives 10 cards.

Goal

You try to make tricks that are worth points and give worthless tricks to your opponents. The cards are worth their printed value (a 7 is 7 points, etc.), except for the face cards which are worth nothing. The total value of all the cards is 160. The side scoring 81 or more wins the hand.

Playing the Game

The player sitting to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick. The player who wins that trick leads to the next trick, etc. You must follow suit if possible; if impossible you may play any card. There is no trump.

Scoring

Each side counts the points they took. The winning side is only credited with their points in excess of 80 (example: 85 points taken = 5 points scored).

The player to the left of the dealer deals the next hand. The game is won by the side which first reaches at least 100 points.

Belle Epoque

Marco Fantini

An “indiscreet” trick-taking game for 4 players

The goal of the game is to correctly predict how many tricks you will take. The peculiarity of this is the following additional rule: each trick should contain a card of every color!

Cards

All 52 cards are required. The cards are ranked in the usual order: the Ace is the highest and the 2 is the lowest. 13 cards are dealt to each player.

Goal

Each player has to predict how many tricks they will take in the game. This is done secretly via each player recording their predicted number on a piece of paper, which is then turned over.

Playing the Game

The player to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick. Each other player must play one card to the trick, following the rule that no color can be played twice to the same trick! In other words, each trick will generally contain one card of each suit. The winner of a trick leads to the next.

Tricks

There is no trump suit. The player who plays the highest card regardless of suit wins the trick. If two or more players play a card of the same value, the last card played wins. (Example: 4, 10, 8, 10 - the 4th player wins the trick.) Each player places their tricks in a step-like manner in front of them so that they can be counted more easily at the end of the game.

If you cannot follow the basic rule (no duplicated suit), you can play any card, but you cannot win the trick. (There is an exception here: see below.)

If you fail to follow the basic rule when not forced to do so (which all players can of course see - the suits of all cards can be seen from the back), you must increase your original bid by one trick and immediately write this down. (Increasing the bid can be beneficial and is a legitimate tactic.)

In either case the card that was not played according to the basic rule is removed from the trick and placed face-up in front of the player who won the trick. This makes it easier to count these cards at the end of the game.

The exception mentioned above is an “oral trump card”: each player is allowed once per game to simply declare they win the trick regardless of the card they play. This is even possible with a card that repeats a suit.

Scoring

At the end of the hand the players’ bids are revealed. Only players who win exactly their bid number of tricks will score. Remember the additional tricks required for not observing the basic rule! Players making their bids score:

- 5 points per trick won
- 10 points for every 2 or 3 in the won tricks
- 10 points for each face-up card in the won tricks

Winning the Game

Play as many hands in total as there were correctly-bid tricks in the first hand. Whoever has the most points after that wins. If no one makes their bid in the first hand, play four more hands.

Schadenfreude

Roland Siegers

A card placement game for 3-6 players in which the one who harms the neighbor the most wins.

This is a card discarding game, not a trick-taking game. In the course of the game four open rows of cards are created, one row in each suit. Look at the ends of the rows and plan to collect as many points as possible.

Score can be kept with paper and pencil, but it is better if you play with chips or coins and pay points to the other players.

Cards

In this game the two blank cards also get to play! The number and types of cards used depends on the number of players and can be seen in the table below. Each player receives a starting capital of points or chips. If the game is played with paper and pencil the points must be recorded immediately so that the current status is known to every player.

The king is the highest card, the Ace (as 1) is the lowest.

Players	Cards Used	# of Cards	Starting Points
3	7-K in all suits and the 2 blanks	30	10
4	All but replace Aces in spades and clubs w/blanks	52	13
5	2-K in all suits and the 2 blanks	50	10
6	All and the 2 blanks	54	9

The dealer shuffles the required cards and deals as many cards to each player as their starting points.

Explanation of Terms

- **Free card:** The two end cards of each row, except for blank cards
- **Value:** Number cards count their printed values, A=1, J=11, Q=12, and K=13

Playing the Game

Each player in turn plays one card. The player to the left of the dealer begins by placing one of their number cards (not a face card or a blank card) face up; this card must be in a suit that their left-hand neighbor has.

From now on each player must choose one of these four options each turn:

1. Play a card with the same value as a free card, with a suit not yet on the table. This move is free. (Example: if the 10 of hearts is the first card played, any other 10 could be played next.)
2. Play a card with a higher value on a free card of the same suit. This move is free. (Example: place the jack, queen or king of hearts on the 10 of hearts.)
3. Place a card with a lower value on a free card of the same suit. This move costs the player the difference between the values of the cards. This value is credited to the player to their right. (Example: if the 7 of hearts is played on the jack of hearts the player loses 4 points and their right-hand neighbor gains 4 points).
4. Place a blank card on a free card. The first blank card may only be placed when at least two cards of all four suits are on the table. No other card can be played on a blank card. (The blank card thus acts as a barrier.)

Note that each row will only contain cards of one suit (and possibly one blank card).

Scoring

The game ends when the dealer plays their last card. Whoever has the most points wins the round. The points are carried forward into the next round. There will be as many rounds as there are players. [It's not clear what the importance of winning the round is.]

88

Winfried Hormann

A strategic-tactical trick-taking game for 3-6 players.

This (like many card games from the Anglosphere) is a game in which the points won in the tricks are not important but the number of tricks won is decisive (among other things).

General rules and basic version for 4 players

Cards

With four players all 52 cards are in play. The ordering is standard (2 low and Ace high). Each player receives 13 cards.

Goal

Everyone tries to be the first player to reach 88 points or to have the most points after a predetermined number of rounds. Each player receives points for their tricks won and, as a bonus, for suits not included in all of their tricks. (So, for example, if you only have hearts in all your tricks at the end of a hand you get a bonus for three missing suits!)

Tricks

In each hand 9 of the 13 tricks are played with trumps; the last 4 tricks are played without trumps.

You must follow the suit lead if possible; if impossible you may play a trump or any other card.

Before leading to a trick, the lead player determines a trump suit for that trick by placing one of their cards in front of them with the back side up. In turn order each other player also places a card face down. After that the lead player leads to the trick. These actions are repeated before each trick.

Playing the Game

The player to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick and therefore determines the first trump. Won tricks must be placed so that all players can easily count them. The winner of a trick leads to the next trick.

After the sixth trick each player has six cards in front of them and one in hand. The players each take their six cards back into their hands and the game continues as above; the trump suit is determined by the lead player for the next three tricks.

After those three tricks players take the three cards in front of them and play the remaining four tricks with no trump suit.

Scoring

- For tricks: for the first 6 tricks won a player receives 1 point each. The 7th trick is worth 2 points. Therefore the maximum a player can score from won tricks is 8 points.
- For colors missing from won tricks, bonus points are awarded:
 - If you only have cards in 3 colors in your tricks, you get 1 bonus point
 - If you only have 2 colors, you get 2 bonus points
 - If you only have 1 color, you get 3 bonus points
 - If you didn't win any tricks you are missing 4 colors and get 4 bonus points

The points for tricks and the bonus points are added together.

Winning the Game

The winner is the player who is the first to reach 88 points or the player with the most points after a pre-determined number of hands.

The Game for Three Players

Only 36 cards are used: 6-Ace in each suit. Of the 12 tricks, the first 9 are played as above, the last 3 without trumps. The point values remain unchanged.

The Game for Five Players

40 cards are used: 5-Ace in each suit. Play 4 tricks, pick up cards, 2 more tricks, pick up cards, and the last 2 without trumps.

The scoring changes to account for the greater difficulty in winning tricks:

- 1st to 3rd trick: 1 point each (3 tricks = 3 points)
- 4th trick: 2 points (4 tricks = 5 points)
- 5th trick: 3 points (5 tricks = 8 points)
- Missing colors: 1 point each (unchanged)

The Game for Six Players

48 cards are used: 3-Ace in each suit. 8 tricks are played using the same rules as for 5 players.

The scoring changes further to account for the greater difficulty in winning tricks:

- 1st and 2nd Trick: 1 point each (2 tricks = 2 points)
- 3rd trick: 2 points (3 tricks = 4 points)
- 4th trick: 3 points (4 tricks = 7 points)
- 5th trick: 3 points (5 tricks = 10 points)

With 6 players there are also two different team variants to play instead of everyone for themselves:

- 3 against 3: Here, partners and opponents take turns sitting around the table.
- 3 teams of 2: the partners sit opposite each other.

When scoring each player counts their points separately. Add these together to get the team score. You can divide the total by the number of team members if you want to keep individual scores, e.g. if 6 players want to play all the 6-player versions over 3 rounds and want to have an overall winner.

Die Verbotene Farbe (The Forbidden Color)

Wolfram Janich

A fast discarding game for 2-6 players

Cards

Use all 52 cards. Each player receives six cards. The remaining cards form a deck in the middle of the table. The top card of the deck is placed face down next to it. This is the “forbidden color.”

Goal

Be the first player to get rid of all your cards.

Playing the Game

A forbidden color must never be played. The player to the left of the dealer begins by placing one of their cards of a different color across the first card so that the forbidden color is still visible. They loudly state the value of this card: number cards count their face value, Aces and Kings are 1, Jacks and Queens are 0.

The next player likewise plays a card of any non-forbidden color and adds its value to the running total. This continues, but the total value of the cards played cannot exceed 20. If a card is played which makes the total exactly 20, this card is played across the previous cards so it covers the first forbidden color; this card's color is now forbidden. The forbidden color also changes if a Jack is played, which is also placed across the other cards.

Queens likewise have a special function; when one is played the next player is skipped. In order to avoid giving an advantage to a player with many face cards, one face card cannot be played on another.

If a player cannot play because they would make the total greater than 20, they only have the forbidden color, or they only have face cards and the last card was a face card, they must draw a card from the deck instead of playing. A player can also choose to draw a card instead of playing one [this is not stated but is implied later].

Usually a hand ends when a player plays their last card. However, if the deck is exhausted before anyone runs out of cards, a different rule applies. Once the last card is drawn from the deck, playing a card is compulsory: a player must play if they can. As soon as one player cannot play a card the hand ends. This player must prove they cannot play by showing their cards. If they have a legal play the next player decides whether the card is played or not. In either case the hand continues without the player who incorrectly announced the end.

Scoring

At the end of the hand each player scores one point for each card remaining. If the last card played made the total exactly 20 each card scores two points. A player who incorrectly announces the end of the hand scores an additional five points. Once a player has reached at least 30 points, the player with the fewest points wins.

Spekulation

Christian Thielscher and Michael Heissing

A “stock market” card game for 3-5 players

The players try to buy shares of one color, collect higher-value sets, and finally turn them in for victory points at the right time. The winner is whoever reaches a fixed number of victory points first.

The cards have two different functions in this game:

- If they are face-down on the table in front of a player, they are shares of a certain type (the color matters)
- If they are in a players hand they are cash (the value matters)

Cards

All 52 cards are used. The cards are shuffled well. After that, each player receives a hand of six cards (starting capital) and one face-down card on the table (an initial share).

The rest of the cards form a face-down deck: the “market.” In addition to the market, during the course of the game a face-up discard pile will be created: the “bank.” If the market is exhausted the bank is shuffled and placed face-down to make a new market.

Goal

When a player reaches at least 13 victory points the game immediately ends and they win.

General Rules

Cards face-down on the table in front of players are shares. Cards in players’ hands are cash: number cards have their printed value, face cards are worth 10, Aces are worth 11.

Players can only have a certain number of cards in total (table plus hand), depending on the player count:

- 3 players – 12 cards
- 4 players – 10 cards
- 5 players – 8 cards

A player may never have more cards than this. If a player has more and another player notices, they immediately lose two victory points, discard all their cards, and receive a new hand of six cards.

Playing the Game

The dealer plays first. On their turn a player may do exactly one of the following:

- a) Collect income
- b) Auction a share from the market
- c) Auction a personal share
- d) Invest
- e) Collect dividends (victory points)
- f) Pass

a) Collect income

The player draws the top card of the market and adds it to their hand (= cash).

b) Auction a share from the market

The top card of the market is auctioned. All players can bid. Payment is made in cash (from one’s hand). The highest bid wins. Bids are binding. The cards used to pay are placed face-up next to the market (in the bank). The bank does not give change! Overpaying is allowed.

A card bought in this way is a share – the winner places it face-down on the table.

If the winning player realizes that they do not have enough cash they must “cash in” their shares (i.e., pick them up and put them in their hand) until they have enough. If they still don’t have enough after cashing in all their shares, the auction is repeated without this player. They must keep all their cards in hand.

c) Auction a personal share

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The player auctions one of the shares they own. The rules are the same as for a market share auction except that the payment does not go to the bank but to the player. The player can set a minimum bid at the start of the auction; if this results in no one bidding, the player keeps the share and ends their turn.

d) Invest

The player exchanges three cards of the same color from their hand for a share by discarding two of them to the bank and placing the third face-down in front of them.

e) Collect dividends

The player discards shares to the bank and receives victory points. The shares must all be the same color! If this color matches that of the top card in the market the player receives a bonus.

# of shares	Points w/o bonus	Points w/bonus
1	0	0
2	0	1
3	1	2
4 or more	2	3

Actions that can be carried out at any time (whether it is your turn or not):

- bidding in auctions
- look at the values of your shares
- turn shares into cash by putting them in your hand; the reverse (hand to table) does not apply!

Winning the Game

The game ends immediately when a player has 13 or more victory points.

Schatzsuche (Treasure Hunt)

Wolfram Janich

A card placement and memory game for 3-5 players.

Cards

All 52 cards are required. After shuffling each player receives a hand of five cards. The remaining cards form a face-down deck.

Goal

Collect treasures (= three-card sequences).

Playing the Game

The player to the left of the dealer begins by placing a card face-down in the middle of the table. This begins the display, which can contain at most four rows, one for each suit. After playing the player draws a card from the deck. The next player then plays a card to the display. If it is the same suit as the first card, it is placed face-up next to it, otherwise it is placed face-down in a new row. This continues: if the last card in a row is face-down the next is face-up and vice-versa. A player always draws a card after playing.

As soon as there are three cards of a suit in the display the treasure hunt can begin. Instead of playing a card, the player whose turn it is can reveal a card from their hand in the suit in which they want to find a treasure. They then turn all the cards of that suit in the display face-up, and if they can form a three-card sequence with two of those cards and the card from their hand (e.g. 7-8-9 of hearts or K-A-2 of spades), they have found a treasure. In this case they place the three treasure cards face-down next to them. Since a treasure always includes the card played from hand only one treasure can be found. As implied, Aces can be both high and low, even in the same sequence.

All cards from the display not used for the treasure remain face-up, and the next card played in this suit will be face-down. This is the case even if the player did not find a treasure; in this case the card played from hand is added to the display. The player draws a card whether or not they found a treasure.

When the last card has been drawn from the deck the final phase of the treasure hunt begins. Players can now choose from three possible actions:

- Play a card to the display as usual.
- Pass; the player does nothing else until scoring. Their remaining cards will be deducted from their score.
- Go on a treasure hunt. However, the unused cards of the relevant suit are not put back in the display. Instead the player must place them face up next to their treasure cards. At the end of the game these cards are treated like the remaining cards in hand.

When all players have either passed or are out of cards the game is over.

Scoring

First, the number of treasures that each player has collected is counted. The treasures score according to the triangular series: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 treasures are worth 1-3-6-10-15-21-28 points, etc.

There are also bonus points available:

- At least one treasure in each suit: 10 points
- At least three treasures in one suit: 5 points
- The highest-ranking treasure (highest possible is J-Q-K): 10 points (if several players tie for this they each get 5 points)

A treasure can be used for multiple bonus categories.

One point is deducted for each non-treasure card a player has: these are cards in hand and extra cards collected during the final phase.

Trickster

David Parlett

An indiscreet card game for 2-4 players.

Players are dealt thirteen cards each, discard three face-down, and play the other ten to tricks. Each player's aim is to win exactly the number of tricks indicated in code by the suits of his three discards. For this purpose:

- each club discarded counts 3 tricks
- each heart discarded counts 2 tricks
- each spade discarded counts 1 trick
- each diamond discarded counts zero tricks

Example – you can bid three by discarding three spades (1+1+1), or heart, spade, and diamond (2+1+0), or a club and two diamonds (3+0+0).

Play

Eldest hand leads to the first trick, and the winner of each trick leads to the next. Cards rank in their natural order from Ace high to 2 low.

Players must follow suit to the card led if possible, otherwise they may play any card. There is no trump. A trick is won by the highest card played to it regardless of suit. Of equally high cards the first played counts highest.

Score

Each player scores one point per trick taken. In addition, anyone who succeeded in taking exactly the number of tricks they bid scores a bonus of 10, plus 10 points per player who failed to do so.

Example – of four players, A bid three and took three, B bid two and took two, C bid five and took two, D bid two and took three. A scores 33, B scores 32, C scores two, D scores three.

Play up to 100 points.

Two Players

If both succeed a bonus of 10 goes to the player who reached his total first. For the second hand deal out all cards unused in the first.

Three Players

The game is more skilful, and more fun, if the 13 cards left over after the deal are spread face up in a row so that everyone can see which ones are out of play.

Four Players

Four may play in partnerships if preferred. Partners will naturally try to help each other to take the right number of tricks. The game ends when both members of either partnership have made 100 or more points each.

Halbe-Halbe (Half-Half)

Tom Schoeps

A simple trick and bluff game for 3-5 players

Preparation

Each player receives three whole matches and a half match for bidding. The deck size depends on the number of players: with three remove 2-8, with four remove 2-6, and with five remove 2-4 in each suit.

The cards are shuffled and dealt, but not put in hand immediately. They are dealt in two sets of four in front of each player. Each player picks up one of the sets normally, but the other set reversed so that they see only the backs of the cards. Each player can now see half their cards and half of each other player's cards. Everyone must keep their hands visible; it helps if the players sit back in their chairs.

The cards have their usual ordering with Ace high.

Bidding

After the players have carefully studied the card distribution, they bid. Each player takes zero to three of their matches and may also take their half match. Then the players put their matches in their fists and open them at the same time. Everyone can now see all the bids. The bids remain in front of the players until the end of the hand.

A player is chosen to lead to the first trick. Suit must be followed if possible. Since the cards you cannot see show their suits on their backs, they can still be played correctly. If you do not have the suit lead you can play any card. The highest card of the lead suit wins the trick. The winner of a trick leads to the next trick.

Scoring

Two players can score points in each hand: the one who gets the most tricks and the one who gets the fewest. However, to score you must bid accordingly: if the half-match is included in your bid it means you intend to take the most tricks, and if it is not you are bidding to get the fewest.

Another requirement for scoring is that you have at least one more trick than anyone else if you bid high and at least one trick less if you bid low. If you tie with another player you cannot score.

If a player scores, the amount they score depends on all players' bids. All the other players' bids are added up and multiplied by the scoring player's bid (in both cases just the whole matches count). If there are two scoring players this procedure is carried out separately for each.

Examples of bidding:

A bids high and gets 3 tricks.	A bids high and gets 2 tricks.
B bids high and gets 3 tricks.	B bids low and gets 5 tricks.
C bids high and gets 1 trick.	C bids high and gets 1 trick.
D offers low and gets 1 trick.	D bids low and does not get a trick.
Nobody scores because both positions are tied.	D scores since he bid low and has the least number of tricks. B doesn't score because he bid low.

Example of scoring:

A makes a high bid and B makes a low bid. The players made the following bids:

A bid just the half match
 B bid 3 matches
 C bid 2 and a half matches
 D bid 1 match

A can score but gets no points because he bid no whole matches. B gets 9 points ($2+1=3$; $3 \times 3=9$).

The points are added up over an agreed-upon number of rounds. Of course, the player with the highest score wins.

Weniger ist Mehr (Less is More)

Eleanore Zuzak

2-4 players

Cards

This game is usually played with 36 cards but can also be played with 42, 48, or all 52 cards. [Presumably remove ranks starting at 2 if not using 52 cards.] Cards from 2-9 count nothing for scoring, but all cards from 10-A are worth 10 bad points.

Deal cards according to the number of players: seven each for two players, six for three, and five for four. The peculiarity of this game is that some players get their hands face-up. With two or three players the first player (left of the dealer) gets the face-up hand. With four players, if playing individually the first and third players get face-up hands, but when playing with opposite players as partners, the first and second players get them.

The remaining cards form a face-down deck.

Playing the Game

The top card of the deck shows the trump suit for the next trick. The first player leads to the first trick, with a low card if possible, or one with a high score if players will be forced to trump [this all seems to be recommendations rather than actual rules].

Players must follow suit if possible, and if not are required to trump if possible. Otherwise any card can be played. After the trick the winner takes a card from the deck followed by the other players clockwise, and then leads to the next trick. However, a different suit may have become trump!

When the deck is exhausted the remaining tricks are played with no trump suit. After that players score their won cards. In order to balance the disadvantages of the open hands, play a number of hands evenly divisible by the number of players (e.g. three, six, or nine hands with three players).

Another scoring method can also be interesting. As usual the cards increase in value from 3-A. The cards from 3-10 are face value, but Jacks are 2, Queens 3, Kings 4, and Aces 11. [Why it doesn't mention 2s is not clear.] It may be beneficial to take an inevitable trick with a face card.

Regardless of scoring method, whoever gets the most points loses: LESS IS MORE.

Kaiserwahl (Imperial Election)

Klaus Teuber

A tactical card game for 2-4 players.

The emperor is dead, long live the new emperor! But who? Four kings compete for the imperial throne. The players are the real powers in the background. Everyone tries to help their king to become emperor.

Preparation

The 7s and 9s are removed from the deck; they are not needed for the game. The Kings are placed face-up in a row on one side of the playing area. The remaining 40 cards are shuffled and five are dealt to each player. The remaining cards form a face-down deck.

Now players secretly determine who gets which King. Either write the suits on four pieces of paper or use the four Kings from a conventional deck; in either case shuffle and deal one face-down to each player. Randomly determine a start player.

Cards

“Number” cards are all cards from 2 to 10. “Power” cards are Jacks, Queens and Aces.

Game Phases

The game has two phases: in the power market phase you play number cards or try to conquer number cards with your power cards. When all the cards have been played, the intrigue phase begins: now you assign your power cards and number cards to the Kings. In doing so, of course, you try to strengthen your own King and weaken the opposing Kings. The strongest King is made emperor in the end.

Power Market Phase

On your turn you play a card and draw a new one from the deck. If there are no cards in the market (as at the start of the phase), then a number card must be played to open it. Otherwise players are free to play power or number cards.

Number cards are always placed face-down. After the first play cards must be placed vertically or horizontally adjacent to existing cards, and the market cannot be made larger than 3x3.

When all nine spaces of the market are occupied the game is interrupted and the market is closed. Cards of the same suit are placed in face-down stacks next to the matching Kings to form their entourages. The market is re-opened by the next player with a number card.

You can only play power cards in this phase if you can place them next to at least one number card of the same suit. A power card is always played face-up and captures all number cards of the same suit which are either directly adjacent to it or adjacent to one of the directly-adjacent same-suit cards. (Adjacency is never diagonal.)

The captured cards are removed from the market. The player may look at them and then place them as a face-down stack in front of them with the capturing power card face-up on top.

When the last card has been drawn from the deck play continues until all players are out of cards. At that point the phase ends and any cards left in the market are removed from the game.

If a player has only power cards in hand and cannot play one (because there is no open space adjacent to cards of the same suit), they must discard a card face-up. Such cards are out of the game.

Intrigue Phase

The player after the one who ended the power market phase starts. On a turn a player places one of the stacks in front of them (a power card with its associated number cards) next to a King according to these rules:

- Jacks can only be placed next to Kings of the same suit.
- Queens may be placed next to any King.
- Aces are used to try to remove a Jack or Queen already assigned to a King. The suit does not matter.

When using an Ace a player announces which ace they are using to remove which specific Jack or Queen. Then the number cards under the Ace and the target card are revealed. The removal succeeds if the total of the number cards under the Ace is at least as high as the total under the target card. The Ace and its number cards are removed from the game regardless.

The intrigue phase lasts until all players have used all their stacks. A player who no longer has a stack is skipped. A player who has at least one stack must play one. However, an Ace stack can be discarded without trying to remove a Jack or Queen.

Imperial Coronation

When the intrigue phase ends the players reveal their assigned Kings. Then the number cards next to each King are revealed and assessed. These number cards give positive points:

- the entourage (cards placed because the market filled up)
- cards under a Jack
- cards under a Queen of the same suit as the King

The number cards under a Queen of a different suit give **negative** points.

The King with the highest score is crowned emperor and wins the game.

The game can also be played over several rounds. The points are noted after each round and the winner is the player with the highest total after three or five rounds. Of course the Kings must be randomized at the beginning of each round.

Variant for Four Players

The game is even more exciting for four players when played this way. The game lasts three rounds or a multiple thereof. Players are always partnered; each player partners in turn with their left-hand neighbor, right-hand neighbor, and directly opposite player. At the beginning of each round each partnership is assigned a single King. Both players receive the points for this King. Otherwise all the usual rules apply. The special feature of this variant is that you don't know which of the three other Kings the opposing players have.

Tactical Tips

In the power market phase you should try to capture as many and as high number cards as possible with your Queens and Aces. Since Jacks are always assigned to Kings of the same suit you should only capture a low number card with a Jack not in your suit. If a player has the Jack of their own suit it makes sense to use it to capture high cards, but there is a risk of exposing their suit. The possibility of filling the market should be recognized at an early stage and it should be ensured that one or two high number cards of your own suit have been placed before this.

How the players use their Queens and Aces in the intrigue phase depends on their observations during the power market phase and on the associated number cards. Usually the Jacks are assigned first as there is no choice involved. The intrigue phase also offers the opportunity to bluff, to distract the other players from one's suit. If, for example, a player assigns a Queen to a King of the same suit, the suspicion arises that they want to give their King points. Or else they were just bluffing and the number card under the queen is a 2. You can of course also bluff when using Aces.

It may seem unfair if a player only gets a few power cards in hand and thus cannot achieve much in the intrigue phase. One consolation: over several rounds of the game, everyone will be hit by this stroke of fate. Furthermore, a little luck belongs in every card game!

Sotheby's

Peter Neugebauer

Cards

The deck is divided into 16 painting cards, which are the Jacks, Queens, Kings, and Aces, and four sets of nine money cards, each of which is the 2-10 in a suit.

Goal

The players try to acquire as many painting cards as possible, preferably in sets. When all painting cards have been sold they are scored. Whoever has the highest score after four rounds is the winner.

Preparation

Before the first round each player chooses a suit and takes the corresponding money cards. Before each round the painting cards are shuffled to form a face-down deck. Each player then chooses one of their money cards to put aside face-down as their "check" card. This may end up being scored at the end of the round.

Auctioning the Cards

The painting cards are auctioned off one by one. Each time the top card is auctioned without revealing it, so players only know which suit it is. Each player chooses one of their money cards to bid and places it face-down. All the bid cards are revealed simultaneously. The highest bid wins the painting. However, if there is a tie for the highest bid, the next highest wins. If all bids are tied players take back their bid cards and the auction is run again. Some examples:

- If the bids are 9, 8, 8, 5 the 9 wins.
- If the bids are 10, 10, 3, 2 the 3 wins.
- If the bids are 6, 6, 6, 5 the 5 wins.
- If the bids are 10, 10, 7, 7 no one wins and the auction is run again.

Won painting cards are placed face-up in front of the owning player. The bid money cards are also placed face-up (win or lose). Then the next painting card is auctioned. After eight paintings have been auctioned the players will have no money cards; at this time they pick up all their money and re-use on the second set of eight paintings. After that the round is over.

Unusual situation: If on the 8th or 16th card of a round (i.e. when players have only one card in hand) all bids are tied, the painting is put aside with no one owning it.

Suit Advantage

When bidding one player always has an advantage, namely the player whose money cards match the suit of the card being auctioned. The player with the advantage can win the painting with the *lowest* bid. When comparing bids first check to see if the advantage can be used. If not the usual rule (highest bid wins) is applied. Some examples (the card with the advantage is underlined):

- If the bids are 8, 7, 5, 3 the 3 wins.
- If the bids are 8, 7, 3, 3 the 8 wins (tied cards never win).
- If the bids are 8, 8, 5, 3 the 5 wins.
- If the bids are 8, 7, 5, 3 the 8 wins.

After all 16 cards have been auctioned the players build sets of the cards they won. A set consists of 1-4 cards of the same suit or the same rank and scores points equal to the square of its size (1=1, 2=4, 3=9, 4=16). Example: JC, QC, AC, AS could be split into a set of two clubs and a set of two Aces for 8 points, but could also be split into a set of three clubs and a set of one Ace for 10 points.

After the points for sets have been awarded, the player who got the lowest total in this round adds the value of their check card. If there is a tie for lowest total all tied players score their check cards.

After this the other players reveal their check cards. Whoever has the lowest check card value gets to score it, which means a check card may be scored twice. However, the auction rule applies here too: if there is a tie for lowest check card the tied players do not score and the player with the next-lowest value does.

Ending the Game

Play four rounds in the same way. Whoever has the highest total score after that wins the game.

Faculty

David Parlett

An indiscreet card game for two or more players (three is best).

Deal six cards face-down to each player and one face-up to the table. If it is an Ace or a King, bury it and turn the next one up instead. Stack the rest face down on one side.

The aim is to go out first by playing all one's cards to a sequence following the turn-up.

Each player in turn passes or adds a card to the sequence. The card played must be either higher in rank and different in suit from the previous card, or lower in rank and of the same suit as the previous one.

Ace counts low or high. (If it matches the previous suit it is low and must be followed by any card of a different suit. If different, it is high and must be followed by any card of its own suit.)

Play ceases when somebody wins the hand by playing their last card. The winner scores the total value of cards remaining in the others' hands, counting each Ace 11, picture 10, others at face value. It is permissible to pass when able to play, but if everyone passes then the next person able to add to the sequence must do so. If no-one can continue the sequence, the player of the last card is the loser and scores nothing. Everyone else then scores the value of the loser's hand.

Play up to 100 points.

Showdown

David and Edward Parlett

An indiscreet card game for two.

Deal eight cards each and stack the rest face down.

A "trick" consists of three cards from each player. Non-dealer leads to the first trick and the loser of each one leads to the next.

The leader selects three cards from his hand and plays them face-down to the table. They will naturally form one of three suit patterns: 1) all different, 2) two alike, or 3) three alike (flush).

The follower must then play, face-down, three cards of the same suit pattern as the leader's (but not necessarily of exactly the same suits). If unable to match the leader's pattern he may play any three cards, but cannot win the trick.

The cards are then turned up. Whoever shows the best three-card combination wins the trick and stores all six cards face-down in a pile. From highest to lowest, the combinations are:

- Triplet (A-A-A, 9-9-9)
- Sequence (A-K-Q, 9-8-7, 3-2-A)
- Pair (A-A-x, 9-9-x)
- None of the above.

Of like combinations, the one with the highest card wins. Ace counts high, except in a 3-2-A sequence. If equal, decide by the second highest card, or the third if necessary. If still equal, decide by the suit of the highest card: club beats heart beats spade beats diamond.

Each player in turn then draws cards from stock until his hand is restored to eight. The loser of a trick always draws first and leads to the next. When no cards remain in stock, two more hands are played without drawing. Each player adds his last two unplayed cards to his face-down pile of won cards.

Open Hand

A player who is confident of winning the trick may play his cards immediately face-up instead of down. Cards won face-up are stored face-up in a separate pile.

Lowdown

The leader to a trick may announce "Lowdown!" before the other plays. In this case, the trick is lost by the person playing the highest hand. Lowdown may be played face-up as described above.

At end of play, cards won face-down by each player score three per club, two per heart, one per spade, zero per diamond. Cards won face-up score face value from Ace = 1 to Ten = 10, but Kings, Queens and Jacks count zero.

Jack the Ripper

David Parlett

An indiscreet game for two or four players.

Two Players

Deal ten cards each and stack the rest face-down. Starting with the non-dealer, each in turn plays a card face-up to the table (following suit, if possible) and announces the combined total of the cards so far played. These cards form a “trick.” Its total value may not exceed 21. If a player can follow suit but cannot play without exceeding 21, he must pass, and his opponent wins the trick. The winner may then bring it up to exactly 21 if he can do so by adding just one more card of the same suit. A trick worth 21 is stored face-up, any other face-down.

Numerals count at face value from Ace 1 to Ten 10. A Queen always counts 0, and so does a Jack or King if led to a trick. In other positions a King adds the value of the last numeral played, and a Jack subtracts the value of the last numeral played.

The player in turn must play if the trick is worth less than 12, but may pass if it counts 12 or more. A player who has no cards left of the suit required may play any card, thus changing the suit to be followed. (It is therefore possible for one trick to undergo several suit changes.)

The winner of a trick leads to the next after both players have restored their hands to ten cards by drawing from stock.

When no cards remain in stock, play continues until one person plays their last card. This wins the trick if it is worth 12 or more. If not, the opponent may win it by adding one more card and making it 12 or more.

Each player scores 5 per trick worth 21 (face-up), plus 2 per trick worth 20 or less (face-down), plus 1 per King, Queen, Jack taken in tricks.

The score is not affected by unplayed cards or an incomplete trick.

Four Players

Players sitting opposite each other are partners and count their scores together. Deal 13 cards each. A trick is only won after three successive passes, and the player of the last card may (if possible) make it exactly 21 with one more card of the same suit.

Top Secret

David Parlett

For three to six players (four is best).

Deal all the cards out. Those with more cards than others play first. The aim is to meld cards in groups or sequences and to end the game by going out.

Play

Each in turn plays a card to a trick. Cards are played face-up so long as they are of different suits. As soon as a card is played which matches the suit of another card in the trick, it is played face-down and wins the trick. The trick-winner must take all the face-up cards into hand and may then make one meld if possible. A meld must be made face-down, with the color of the topmost card showing what type of meld it is. The types of meld are:

1. Four cards in sequence, one of each suit (for example sA-hK-cQ-dJ; Ace counts high or low). It goes face-down with a black card on top and is worth 10 points.
2. Two pairs, with one card of each suit (for example sA-hA-d7-c7). This goes face-down with a red card on top and is worth 20.
3. Three of a kind, which must include a club (for example sJ-hJ-cJ). This goes face-down with a green card on top and is worth 30.
4. Four of a kind (for example K-K-K-K). This goes face-down with a blue card on top and is worth 50.

A meld may only be made upon winning a trick, and only one meld may be made at a time. The capturing card must be left on the table. No meld may be turned up, added to, changed, or scored before the end of play.

After melding (or not), the trick-winner ends his turn by turning the capturing card face up as the start of a new trick.

This continues until one person plays his last card to a trick without matching suit, or, having captured and melded, has no cards left in hand.

Scoring

Each player scores for melds according to the suits of their top cards: spades 10, hearts 20, clubs 30, diamonds 50. Melds must be shown on request to prove they were properly made. The player who went out adds to his score the total value of the card or cards left untaken in the final trick. For melding and going out in the same turn he adds a bonus of 100. Everyone else deducts from his score the total value of cards remaining in his own hand. For this purpose Ace count 11 each, pictures 10, 2-10 face value.

Play up to 500 points.

Three Players

With three players, start with 13 cards each and leave the rest face down. After melding, draw as many cards from stock as in the meld just made. Repeat until no cards remain in stock.

High Low

Alan R Moon

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For 3-6 players.

Prepare for Play

Decide who will deal the first hand. The dealer should then shuffle and deal four cards to each player if there are three players, three cards to each player if there are four or five players, and two cards to each player if there are six players.

The dealer places the deck in the middle of the table. He takes the top six cards from the deck and lays them out in a row face-down. These six cards are called the Draw Cards. He takes one additional card from the deck and places it face up. This card is called the Up Card.

The Take

Beginning with the player to the left of the dealer, and proceeding clockwise around the table, each player takes one turn at a time. Each turn, a player must do one of the following:

1. Take the Up Card.
2. Take one of the Draw Cards.
3. Call a suit. To call a suit, a player announces which suit he is calling, then turns over all of the face-down Draw Cards of the corresponding suit. A player may not call a suit if there are no face-down cards of this suit. After turning all the cards of the called suit, the player must take one of the cards he has just turned. The other cards are discarded and replaced (face-down) from the deck. [This last sentence is not in the rules, but there is no way for the deck to empty otherwise, and Alan Moon agrees it makes sense.]

After taking a card, the player must replace it with the top card from the deck, unless there are no cards left. The Up Card is always replaced face-up. A Draw Card is always replaced face-down. A player may not take the Up Card if there are no cards left in the deck.

If there are three players, the take ends when each player has 12 cards. If there are four or five players, the take ends when each player has eight cards. If there are six players, the take ends when each player has seven cards. [This sentence is also not in the rules – they do not state the number for six players.] Any Draw Cards and/or cards left in the deck are removed from play.

The Up Card designates trump. If it is a 7, 8, or 9, there is no trump. If it is any other value card that suit is trump.

The Play

The player to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick (he may lead trump). Play then proceeds clockwise around the table, each player playing one card in turn. A player must play a card of the same suit that was led. If a player does not have a card of the same suit, he may play any card.

After each player has played one card, the player who played the highest-ranking card in the suit that was lead takes the trick, unless there is a trump suit and one or more players plays a trump card, in which case the player who plays the highest trump card takes the trick, regardless of which suit was led. Ace is always high.

When a player takes a trick, he places the cards face down in a pile in front of him. He then leads the next trick. Play continues in this manner until all the cards have been played.

Scoring

At the end of a hand each player counts up the number of points in his pile. Number cards are worth their face value. Jacks, Queens, Kings and Aces are all worth 10 points each.

If one player has the highest number of points, he scores 3 match points. If two or more players are tied for highest points, each scores 1 match point. If one player has the lowest number of points, he scores 3 match points. If two or more players are tied for lowest points, each scores 1 match point. In this manner, it can be seen that at least two players will always gain match points each hand: one for high and one for low.

Subsequent Hands

The deal passes to the left after each hand.

The first player to score 10 match points is the winner. If two or more players score 10 match points on the same hand, the player with the highest score wins.

Scoring Variation

The three other cards of the same value as the Up Card are worth 20 points each instead of their normal value.