

*Your Guide to
Eighteenth Century Card
Games*



COMMERCE

Deck: 52 card deck with Aces high

Players: 3 to 12

Object: To finish with the best hand

Highest: 3 of a kind, called a Tricon

Next: 3 Cards of a suit and sequence

Last: The greatest pip-value of 2 or 3 cards of the same suit, counting Aces as 11, Court Cards as 10 and others at numerical value. If equal, a 3 card flush beats a 2 card one. If still equal, the tied player nearest in turn after the dealer wins.

Preliminaries: Each player contributes to the pot. The dealer deals 3 cards to each player.

Play: The player to the left of the dealer bids to buy or trade. To buy, she gives a chip to the dealer for a card from the deck and discards a card which is placed at the bottom of the deck. To trade, she offers to pass a card to the player on her left in exchange for one given to her. If the player agrees to trade, the exchange is made without looking at the cards being received. No chip is paid. If a player does not buy or trade on the first opportunity, she cannot do it during the remaining play of the hand. If she buys or trades, she may buy or trade on a later turn. Trading can only occur to the left. Play continues with each in turn having the opportunity

to buy or trade until a player "knocks." A player knocks when she is content with her hand. All hands must then be shown and the winner determined.

LOO

Deck: 52 card deck with Aces High

Players: 5-8 best, up to 17 possible

Object: To take tricks and earn a share of the pot.

Preliminaries: Dealer places three chips in the pot. She deals three cards to each player, face down.

The first round differs from other rounds. This round is called Simple Pool. Every player must play the hand she is dealt, which is called a "bold stand." The player to the dealer's left leads a card. The other players must play the suit led and must play a card of a higher denomination, if possible. If she has no card of the suit led, she discards any card she chooses. The trick is taken by the player who plays the highest card in the suit led. However, if one player has been unable to follow suit, the dealer turns up the top card on the deck to determine trump. If one or more cards in the trump suit has been played, the highest trump takes the trick. The person who takes the trick leads the next play. When the three tricks have been played, any player who has won a trick takes a share of the pot, one third for each trick taken. Any player who has not taken a trick in the round is "loosed" and must place three chips in the pot.

Play: The following rounds are called Double Pool. The deal passes to the left. The new dealer places three chips in the pot. She deals three cards to each player and to an extra hand, which is called a "miss"

or a "widow." Then she turns up the top card in the remaining deck to determine the trump. Each player, starting at the dealer's left, must declare whether she will play the hand dealt, withdraw from playing the round, or trade her cards for the miss. Once a player has taken the miss, it is no longer available, so subsequent players can only play or pass. If all but one player have passed and the player has not taken the miss, the dealer may choose to play her own hand and have a chance to win part of the pot, or she may choose to defend the miss. If she defends the miss, she does not take any winnings from the pot. The amount won by the miss remains in the pot for the next round. Play during rounds of Double Pool must begin with the player the left of the dealer leading her highest trump, if she has a trump. The person who takes a trick must lead the trick with a trump or the highest card she holds in another suit, if she has no trump cards. The winners of the tricks in Double Pool divide the pot according to the percentage of tricks taken.

SPECULATION

Preliminaries.

Everyone starts with the same number of chips and at the start of each deal antes one to a pot. Deal three cards face down on the table in front of each player in a stack, then turn the next card of the pack to establish a trump suit. (Not that there is any trick-play. Trump, in this game, means the only suit that counts for winning.)

Object.

To be in possession of the highest trump when all cards in play have been exposed. For this purpose cards rank from Two low to Ace high.

Play.

The trump turn-up belongs by right to the dealer, so if it is an Ace the dealer wins without further play. If it is not an Ace, but is high enough to interest anyone else, they may offer to buy it from the dealer, and the dealer may haggle about it, or auction it, or keep it, as preferred.

Each in turn, starting with the player to the dealer's left - or, if the turn-up was sold, to the purchaser's left - turns up the top card of his or her own stack. This continues in rotation, but omitting the player who currently possesses the highest trump. If and when a trump is turned that is higher than

the one previously showing, the player who turned it may offer it for sale at any mutually agreeable price, or refuse to sell it. Either way, play continues from the left of, and subsequently omitting, the possessor of the highest trump.

Furthermore, anyone at any time may offer to buy not necessarily the best visible trump, but any face-down card or cards belonging to another player. The purchaser may not look at their faces, but must place them face down at the bottom of his or her stack and turn them up in the normal course of play. (The time to indulge in this piece of speculation is when you currently own the highest trump and want to prevent someone else from turning a higher.)

End.

The game ends when all cards have been revealed, or when somebody turns the Ace, and whoever has the highest trump wins the pot.

WHIST

The classic game of whist is a plain-trick game without bidding for 4 players in fixed partnerships. Although the rules are extremely simple there is enormous scope for scientific play, and in its heyday a large amount of literature about how to play whist was written.

Players

There are four players in two fixed partnerships. Partners sit facing each other. The game is played clockwise.

Cards

A standard 52 card pack 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**.

Deal

The cards are shuffled by the player to dealer's left and cut by the player to dealer's right. The dealer deals out all the cards one at a time so that each player has 13. The final card, which will belong to the dealer, is turned face up to indicate which suit is trumps. The turned trump remains face up on the table until it is dealer's turn to play to the first trick.

It is traditional to use two packs of cards. During each deal, the dealer's partner shuffles the other pack and places it to the right. The dealer for the next hand then simply needs to pick up the cards from the left and pass them across to the right to be cut. Provided all the players understand and operate it, this procedure saves time and helps to remember whose turn it is to deal, as the spare pack of cards is always to the left of the next dealer.

Play

The player to the dealer's left leads to the first trick. Any card may be led. The other players, in clockwise order, each play a card to the trick. Players must follow suit by playing a card of the same suit as the card led if they can; a player with no card of the suit led may play any card. The trick is won by the highest trump in it - or if it contains no trump, by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads to the next.

Scoring

When all 13 tricks have been played, the side which won more tricks scores 1 point for each trick they won in excess of 6.

The partnership which first reaches 5 points wins the game. This will normally take several deals.