

Spades

PLAYERS 4, in two teams

DECK 52 cards, no jokers

TYPE Trick-taking

LEVEL Medium

GAME First to 500

THE GOAL

Bid the number of tricks your team will win, then win at least that many. Spades are always trump.

SETUP

Four players in two partnerships, partners sitting opposite. One 52-card deck without jokers.

THE DEAL

Deal the whole deck one card at a time, starting on the dealer's left: 13 cards each.

A TURN

- Bidding: starting left of the dealer, each player bids once, from 0 to 13 tricks. No passing. Partners' bids add up to the team contract.
- The player left of the dealer leads the first trick with any card except a spade.
- Follow suit if you can. If you can't, play any card, a spade included.
- The highest spade wins the trick, or if there is none, the highest card of the suit led. The winner leads next.

SPECIAL CARDS

- Spades may not be led until a spade has been played on another suit, unless you hold nothing but spades.
- Nil: bid zero tricks. Take none and your team scores 100; take any and it loses 100.

SCORING

- Contract made: 10 points per trick bid, plus 1 per extra trick (a bag).
- Contract missed: minus 10 points per trick bid.
- Every 10 bags a team collects: minus 100.

WINNING

Pass the deal to the left; the first team to reach 500 points wins.

HOUSE RULES

- **Blind nil.** A nil bid made before you look at your cards. It wins 200 if you take no tricks, and loses 200 if you take any.
- **Jokers as top trumps.** Add the two jokers as the highest trumps and take out two 2s (often the 2 of clubs and 2 of hearts), so everyone still gets 13.
- **Minimum bid of 4.** Some tables require each team to bid at least 4 tricks between them.