

Schwarz oder Weiß (Black or White)

A trick-taking game for 2 (to 3) players

Cards

A deck of 20 playing cards is used, consisting of A, K, Q, J, 10 in each suit, ranking from high to low as normal. You can substitute 9 for 10 if ranks are confusing.

Deal

Rules for 2 players will be explained below.

- 1) Cut the cards and who ranks higher deals first. The dealer shuffles all 20 cards and deals cards to the non-dealer, a dummy player, and the dealer, one by one. Cards are to be dealt slowly enough to let each player look at their hand. Cards are dealt face down for players and face up for the dummy.
- 2) Once the second card for each player is dealt, they can bid *in real time* either of: **Schwarz** (Black) to win all tricks; or **Weiß** (White) to win no tricks. Once a bid is declared it becomes valid immediately. (So the non-dealer can always make a bid faster than the dealer.)
- 3) The bidder then declares bid points. They can bid from the number of cards the bidder has been dealt (as minimum) to 5 (as maximum). The dealer deals remaining cards to players and dummy so that they all have as many cards as the bidder declared. Undealt cards are not used. *The hand of the dummy is placed to the bidder's right if Schwarz is bid, or to the bidder's left if Weiß is bid.*
- 4) (Optional) Here, the opponent can call **Doppelt** (Double) to make the bid point doubled. The bidder can take this call, or call back **Re-Doppelt** (Redouble) to make the bid point quadrupled, or call **Aufgeben** (Surrender) to give up the deal. If Aufgeben is called, the bidder loses half the points they bid (rounded up) so their score might go minus, the deal ends and the turn to deal switches.
- 5) If 5 cards are dealt to all players and nobody bids, the dealer collects all cards and the deal starts again from step 1), without changing the dealer.

Play

The bidder leads to the first trick. The suit of the first card led is the trump suit. Each player (including dummy) in clockwise order must play a card following the suit led if possible. If they do not have a card of the suit led, they can play any card. The trick is won by the highest card of the trump suit if any trump is played, otherwise by the highest card of the leading suit.

Cards of the dummy are always played by the bidder. All tricks won by the dummy belong to the bidder when Schwarz is bid, or to the opponent when Weiß is bid.

Play continues until the bid is made or has failed.

Scoring

If the bid has been made, the bidder scores the bid points; if failed, the opponent scores the bid points. The bid points are doubled or quadrupled according to the Doppelt or Re-Doppelt call. Switch the turn to deal and begin a new deal, until either player scores 11 points.

3-player Variant

The dealer deals cards clockwise. Cards of the dummy are dealt before the dealer. When the bid is declared, the dummy's hand is placed between two opponents facing the dealer. The number of hands is up to 5, so when the bid point is declared 5, all cards are dealt. Opponent players can talk about the Doppelt call. If opponents win, they each score half of the bid points, rounded up.

All other rules are unchanged. So, for example, the dummy's tricks belong to the bidder when Schwarz is bid, or to the opponents when Weiß is bid.

From the author

When playing games such as Skat, I'm always looking for an opportunity to bid Schwarz and make it successfully. It's quite a tough challenge as you know, for unexperienced players like me, so it's my dream to make the Schwarz bid.

This game makes my dream come true, for we are just allowed to bid only All or Null! But this is still hard, so you can challenge it with your best friend, the dummy, with very limited hand, minimum of 2. You can change the call as you like - for example, countercalls can be made unlimited, and the score goal can be higher. You can add *Schwarz Solo* call for the bidder to double the bid points, without including dummy's tricks as bidder's tricks.

The game is best for 2 players, I'd be happy if you enjoy this game as an exercise for bidding. Good luck!

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