

Rulebook

The card game for 2 to 6 players – every rule in one document.

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Rules

What is it about?

Hit your call and you score; misjudge it and you lose points. The number of cards in hand changes over 19 rounds: first everyone gets more and more cards, then fewer again. Some rounds also change the rules for trump or bidding.

That is what makes the game exciting: sometimes winning a trick is the clever move. At other times you want to avoid it at all costs, because it would take you past your own call.

The goal

After 19 rounds, whoever has the most points wins. Points are not awarded for many tricks but for accurate calls. If several players share the highest score, they win together.

What you need

Two complete 32-card decks without jokers – 64 cards in all –, a score sheet and a pen. Every card exists twice, so two identical cards can end up in the same trick.

Card ranking, high to low



The 19 rounds

Round	Cards each	Special
1	1	Standard round
2	2	Standard round
3	3	Standard round
4	4	Standard round
5	5	Trump choice
6	6	Standard round
7	7	No trump
8	8	Standard round
9	9	Standard round
10	10	Blind bid
11	9	Standard round
12	8	Standard round
13	7	No trump
14	6	Standard round
15	5	Trump choice
16	4	Standard round
17	3	Standard round
18	2	Standard round

Round	Cards each	Special
19	1	Forehead round

With six players, exactly 60 cards are dealt in round 10; the trump card is then turned up from the rest.

How a round is played

1. Shuffle and deal

Before every round all 64 cards are shuffled anew. The dealer deals each player as many cards as the round calls for.

2. Turn up trump

After dealing, one more card is turned face up from the rest of the deck. Its suit is trump for this round. The card stays visible and is not played. In the special rounds trump is chosen differently or there is none.

Example: If the nine of hearts is turned up, all hearts are trump – not just the nine.

3. Call your tricks

The player to the dealer's left starts and calls how many tricks they will take this round. The others follow clockwise; the dealer calls last. Any number from 0 up to the number of cards in hand is allowed. The calls go on the score sheet.

A call stands as soon as it is spoken – nobody may change it afterwards.

The dealer rule

The dealer may not call a number that makes all calls add up to exactly the number of tricks. That way, never everyone can be right at once. The rule applies in every round, including the special rounds.

Example with 5 cards: the first three call 1, 2 and 0, three in all. The dealer may not call 2, or the total would be exactly 5.

4. Play the cards

The player to the dealer's left leads the first trick with any card. Then each player plays exactly one card, clockwise.

- If you have the suit that was led, you must follow suit. Which card of that suit is up to you.
- If you don't have it, you may play any card – trump too, but you don't have to.
- There is no obligation to trump and no obligation to win the trick.
- If you can follow suit, you may not trump instead.

Talking about your own cards at the table is allowed (“I'm out of hearts”). Only in the forehead round are hints forbidden.

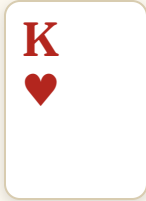
5. Who wins the trick?

- If there is trump in the trick, the highest trump wins.
- Without trump, the highest card of the suit led wins. Other suits cannot win without trump.
- If two cards that could win are equal, the one played first wins.

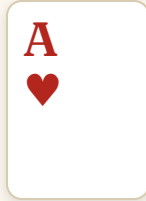
Whoever wins the trick leads the next one – until all cards are played.

Each player keeps the tricks they win in front of them. Every played trick may be looked at at any time.

Hearts are led, spades are trump, nobody trumps.



leads



wins



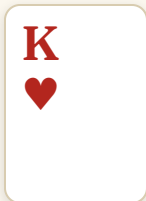
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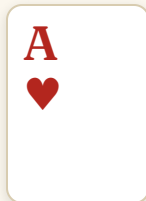
follows suit

The ace of hearts wins.

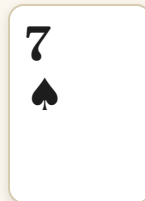
Hearts are led, spades are trump.



leads



follows suit



wins



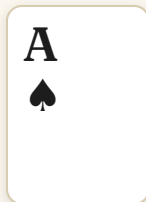
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The seven of spades wins: even the lowest trump beats the ace of hearts. This assumes the players of the seven of spades and the nine of clubs had no hearts left.

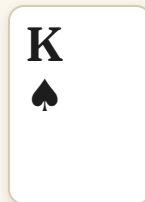
Two identical cards, spades are trump.



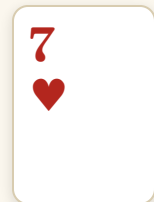
leads · wins



played later



follows suit



discarded

The ace of spades played first beats the one played later.

Who deals?

Choose the first dealer however you like. After that the deal passes clockwise every round – across games, too: in round 1 of the next game, the player to the left of the last dealer deals.

When something goes wrong

- A misdeal – too many or too few cards, or a card falls face up: all cards go back, are shuffled again, and the same dealer deals once more.
 - Someone fails to follow suit although they could, and it is noticed during the trick: the card is taken back and suit is followed properly. Then the trick stands.
 - If it is only noticed after the trick has been collected: the round is cancelled and does not count. The same dealer deals again and everyone calls again.
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Joining and leaving

Whoever arrives during a game joins with the next game.

Whoever has to stop mid-game plays no further; their total is frozen and counts at the end. The others play on, and the deal passes among them. If only one player is left, the game ends with the current totals.

The end of the game

After the forehead round the totals are compared. The highest score wins; if several share the top, they win together. There is no tiebreak.

Willi Stich is a house variant of the “Oh Hell!” family of games. These rules describe the variant as it is played in the family – they are not a publisher's rulebook.

Special rounds

ROUNDS 5 AND 15

Trump choice

Here no random card sets trump – a player does. No trump card is turned up in these rounds.

1. Each player first gets one card, turned face up.
2. The highest card wins the right to choose trump. Only the rank counts, not the suit – an ace of hearts and an ace of spades are equally high.
3. If several share the highest card, only they each draw one more card from the deck – without shuffling the drawn cards back. If they tie again, those still tied draw again.
4. Then all 64 cards are shuffled anew and each player gets five cards.
5. Only after everyone has looked at their cards does that player pick one of the four suits as trump. “No trump” is not allowed.
6. Bidding and play are as usual.

Example: Four players draw ace, king, ace and ten. The two with an ace each draw one more card; whoever draws the higher one chooses trump.

ROUNDS 7 AND 13

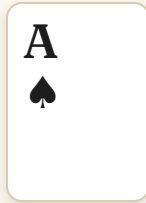
No trump

No trump card is turned up; no suit is trump. The highest card of the suit led always wins the trick; on a tie, the one played first. You must follow suit as always.

Diamonds are led.



leads



discarded



wins



follows suit

The king of diamonds wins although an ace of spades is in the trick – there is no trump.

ROUND 10

Blind bid

In the middle of the game, calls are made before the cards are dealt. Nobody knows their cards or trump.

1. All 64 cards are shuffled.
2. Starting left of the dealer, everyone calls – any number from 0 to 10; the dealer calls last and may not bring the total to ten.
3. Only then does each player get ten cards.
4. Then the trump card is turned up from the rest.
5. Now everyone may look at their cards. The calls stand; play and scoring are as usual.

ROUND 19

Forehead round

The last round is a one-card game again – with a twist: everyone sees the others' cards, but not their own.

1. Each player gets one card and immediately holds it, unseen, to their own forehead.
2. One more card is turned up and sets trump as usual.

3. Starting left of the dealer, everyone calls 0 or 1. The dealer may not make the total exactly 1.
4. Hints about the visible cards are forbidden.
5. The player to the dealer's left leads; everyone plays their card without looking at it first.

Scoring

The scoring

Called 0, took 0 +5	Exact call, 1 trick or more +10 per trick called	Missed -10 per trick of difference
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Too many or too few tricks: you lose points for every trick of difference either way. Your total can go negative.

Examples

Called	Taken	Points
0	0	+5
1	1	+10
3	3	+30
2	1	-10
2	4	-20
0	1	-10
3	0	-30

Example: You are on 25 points, call 3 and take 2: -10 for the round, which leaves you on 15.

In the forehead round only one trick is possible: calling 0 and taking 0 scores +5, calling 1 and taking 1 scores +10, a miss -10.

Help

Frequently asked questions

Must I trump if I can't follow suit?

No. Without the suit led you may play any card, including a suit other than trump.

Must I play higher if I can?

No. There is no obligation to win the trick. You only have to follow suit if you can.

May I lead with trump?

Yes. Whoever leads a trick may play any card.

What happens if two identical cards are in the trick?

If both could win, the one played first wins.

Can I call zero tricks?

Yes. If you really take no trick you score +5; if you take some after all, -10 per trick.

Does the dealer rule apply in the special rounds too?

Yes, in every round: the calls must never add up to the number of tricks.

Can you end up below zero?

Yes. Your total can go negative.

Who deals in the first round?

Choose freely. After that the deal passes clockwise every round, into the next game as well.

May I change my call?

No. A call stands as soon as it is spoken.

May I look at played tricks?

Yes, all of them, at any time.

What if someone fails to follow suit?

If it is noticed during the trick, the card is taken back and suit is followed properly. If the trick has already been collected, the round is cancelled and dealt again by the same dealer; it does not count.

Can someone join mid-game?

No. Whoever arrives plays from the next game on.

What if someone stops early?

Their total is frozen and counts at the end; the others finish the game.

May we talk about our cards at the table?

Yes, in every round except the forehead round. There, hints about the visible cards are forbidden.

Glossary

Dealer

The player who deals the cards in the current round. The role passes clockwise after every round.

Trump

The especially strong suit of a round. Every trump card beats every card of another suit.

Following suit

Playing a card of the suit that was led. If you can, you must.

Trick

One card played by each player; one player wins all cards of the trick.

Call

The number of tricks you predict you will take in a round.

Dealer rule

The calls must never add up to the number of tricks in a round. The dealer calls last and has to make sure of it.

Obligation to trump

Does not exist in Willi Stich: if you can't follow suit, you don't have to trump.

Obligation to win

Does not exist in Willi Stich: nobody has to play higher to win the trick.

Special round

One of the six rounds with a rule of its own: trump choice (5, 15), no trump (7, 13), blind bid (10), forehead round (19).

Cheat sheet

Flow: Shuffle all 64 cards → deal → turn up trump → call from left of the dealer, dealer last → lead from left of the dealer → write down points → the deal passes clockwise.

Dealer rule: The calls may never add up to the number of tricks in the round – in every round.

Following suit: Follow the led suit if you can; otherwise play any card. No obligation to trump, none to win the trick.

Trick: Highest trump wins; without trump the highest card of the led suit; equal cards: the first played. The winner leads the next trick.

Points: Called 0 and took 0: +5 · exact call: +10 per trick · otherwise: –10 per trick off.

Special rounds: 5 and 15 trump choice (highest rank chooses a suit after the deal) · 7 and 13 no trump · 10 blind call (call first, then deal, then trump) · 19 forehead round (card unseen to your forehead, no hints).

Mistakes: Misdeal: the same dealer deals again · failure to follow noticed during the trick: card goes back · noticed after collecting: round dealt again, does not count.

Players: Joining only with the next game · whoever stops keeps their frozen total.

End: After round 19 the highest total wins; a tie means a shared win.
