

Diminishing Contract Whist

Players: 3+ but 4-7 is optimal

Type: Trick-Taking

Card rank: A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Objective

Become the player who has accumulated the most points by the end of the final round.

The Deal

The initial dealer is first determined by using the "first Jack" approach. This is done by giving each player a face-up card in turn until someone gets a J. They become the first dealer. After regathering and shuffling the cards the dealer may deal the first hand. Starting with the player to his left, in a clockwise direction, each player is dealt cards one at a time until as many cards have been dealt as possible whilst keeping the number each player receives equal.

At the end of each hand, deal passes to the player to the left. Each player should receive one less card with every subsequent hand. The final round consists of one card each. Trumps are predefined for each hand in a sequence e.g. with 10 rounds:

1.♠, 2.♥, 3.♣, 4.♦,
5.♠, 6.♥, 7.♣, 8.♦,
9.♠, 10.♥

Rounds with no trumps and "lose all" rounds (where you lose 10 points per trick taken) can also be included in the sequence.

The Play

Players compete individually, and after each hand has been dealt must name the number of tricks that they think they can take, bearing in mind the Trump for the current hand. Players will score one point per trick taken and an additional 10 points if they match their contract.

The "**Screw the Dealer**" rule dictates that the total number of tricks bid each round cannot match the number of tricks available, so the dealer each hand must bid with this constraint in mind - sometimes this constraint is waived for the final round if players agree in advance. As an example, if four players were dealt 7 cards each, 7 tricks would be available. If player one bids 2 tricks, player two bids 3 tricks and player three bids 0 tricks then the dealer (player 4) cannot bid 2 tricks as this will cause the total number of bids to equal the tricks available. Hence they are forced to either bid above or below their desired target.

The winner is the player who has accumulated the most points by the end of the final round.

Scoring Variations

There are numerous alternative scoring methods many of which can be found here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oh_Hell#Scoring

The most popular modification concern bids of zero.

- **Reduced 0 bid:** Similar to basic (or exact) scoring, with the modification that making a zero contract scores only five points. (Zero bids are often the easiest to make.)
- **Adjusted 0 bid:** Similar to basic scoring, with the change that a zero bid is worth five plus the number of cards dealt out to a player. For example, in the first round, a successful zero bid is worth 6 points, while a successful one bid is worth 11 points. (Zero bids are harder to make in larger hands.)