

4 PLAYER EUCHRE RULES

Dealing

Conventional euchre is a four-player trump game, wherein the players are paired to form two partnerships. Partners face each other from across the table so that the play of the cards in conventional clockwise order alternates between the two partnerships.

Euchre uses a deck of 25 standard playing cards consisting of **A, K, Q, J, 10**, and **9** of each of the four suits plus the **2 of Spades**.

The dealer is chosen by each player cutting the cards. High card takes it. See Euchre card rank below. All Jacks are equal in this case. The dealer shuffles the cards and the player on his/her right cuts the deck.

In a clockwise order each player is dealt five cards in the following manner: 3 cards are dealt at a time to each player at the first pass, 2 cards are dealt to each player on the second pass.

The remaining five cards are called the *kitty* and are placed face down in front of the dealer toward the centre on the table.

Before the dealer picks up his/her cards, the top card of the kitty is turned face up to offer the proposed trump suit. If the 2 of spades is shown then the dealer must nominate the trump suit and then pick up his/her cards. Bidding then begins. The dealer asks each of the other players in turn if they would like the suit of the top card to be trump, which they indicate by saying "pick it up" or "pass".

If the choice comes around to the dealer, the dealer can either pick the card up or flip it over.

If the dealer acquires the top card (either by being ordered up or choosing to pick it up), the top card becomes part of the dealer's hand, who then discards a card to the kitty face down to return their hand to five cards. If no one orders up the top card and the dealer also chooses not to pick it up, each player is then given the opportunity, in turn, to call a different suit as trump. If no trump is selected, it is a misdeal, and the deal is passed clockwise.

When a suit is named trump, the jack in the suit of the same colour as this trump suit becomes a powerful member of this trump suit. Then any card of that (expanded) suit outranks any card of a non-trump suit. The highest-ranking card in euchre is the 2 of Spades (Bennie), Jack of the trump suit (called 'The Right Bower' or 'Right') then the other Jack of the same colour, (called 'The Left Bower' or 'Left'). The cards are ranked, in descending order, 2 of spades (Bennie), **J** (of trump suit) **J** (same colour as trump suit) **A, K, Q, 10**, and **9** of the trump suit.

The remaining cards rank in the usual order (the off-colour jacks are not special) and the cards of those suits rank from high to low as **A, K, Q, J, 10**, and **9**.

Example

Assume a hand is dealt and that **spades** are named as trump. In this event, the trump cards are as follows, from highest-ranking to lowest:

1. 2 of Spades (Bennie)
2. Jack of spades (*right bower*)
3. Jack of clubs (*left bower*)
4. Ace of spades
5. King of spades
6. Queen of spades
7. 10 of spades
8. 9 of spades

Here, the jack of clubs becomes a spade during the playing of this hand. This expands the trump suit to the eight cards named above and reduces the suit of the same colour by one card (the jack is loaned to the trump suit). The same principles are observed for whatever suit is named trump. Remembering this temporary transfer of the next suit's jack is one of the principal difficulties newcomers have with the game of euchre.

Once the above hand is finished, the jack of clubs ceases to be a spade and becomes a club again unless spades are again named as trump during the playing of the subsequent hand.

Play

Overview, objective and scoring

In euchre, naming trump is sometimes referred to as making, calling, or declaring trump. When naming a suit, a player asserts that his or her partnership intends to win the majority of tricks in the hand. A single point is scored when the bid succeeds, and two points are scored if the team that declared trump takes all five tricks. A failure of the calling partnership to win three tricks is referred to as being **euchred**, and is penalized by giving the opposing partnership two points.

A caller with exceptionally good cards can **go alone** in which case he or she seeks to win all five tricks without a partner. The partner of a caller in a loner hand does not play, and if all five tricks are won by the caller the winning team scores 4 points. If only three or four of the tricks are taken while going alone, then only one point is scored. If **euchred** while playing alone, the opposing team receives 2 points.

The primary rule to remember when playing euchre is that one is never required to play the trump suit (unless that is the one that is led), but one is **required to follow suit if possible** to do so: if diamonds are led, a player with diamonds is required to play a diamond.

Calling round (Naming trump)

Once the cards are dealt and the top card on the kitty is turned over, the upturned card's suit or, if the 2 of spades, the named suit, is offered as trump to the players in clockwise order beginning with the player to the left of the dealer.

If a player wishes the proposed suit to be accepted, he **orders up** the card and the dealer adds that card to his hand. It is more advantageous to the dealer's team to select trump in this way, as the dealer necessarily gains one trump card.

The dealer must then also discard a card face down from their hand in order to return his hand to a total of five cards. This discard is an important tactical decision, as the dealer can potentially create a "void" in their hand, where they lack any cards of a particular suit. Having a hand with a choice of just 2 suits to choose from, '**two suited**', has a distinct advantage. That would allow them to play a trump card instead of being forced to follow that voided suit when it is led (see the later section on winning tricks). If the player instead opts to pass, the option proceeds to the player to the left until either a player orders the card up or all players have passed.

If all players pass, the top card is turned face down and that suit may no longer be chosen as trump. Trump selection proceeds clockwise beginning with the player to the left of the dealer where the player may name a suit different from that of the previous up-card as trump, or they may pass. No card is ordered up in this round. If all players pass again, it is declared a misdeal. The deal passes to the player on the previous dealer's left who reshuffles and deals a new hand.

The team that selects trump is known as the makers for the remainder of the hand, and the opposing team is known as the defenders. The makers must take at least three of the five tricks in the hand in order to avoid being euchred.

Winning tricks

The player to the dealer's left begins play by leading any card of any suit. The player may lead with trump. Play continues in clockwise order; each player must follow suit if they have a card of the suit led. The left bower is considered a member of the trump suit and not a member of its native suit.

The player who played the highest card of the suit led wins the trick, unless trump is played, then the highest trump card wins the trick. Players who play neither the suit led nor trump cannot win the trick. The player that won the trick collects the played cards from the table and then leads the next trick.

After all five tricks have been played, the hand is scored. The player to the left of the previous dealer then deals the next hand, and the deal moves clockwise around the table until one partnership scores 15 points and wins the game.

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Going alone

If the player bidding (making trump) has an exceptionally good hand, the player making trump has the option of playing without his or her partner. If the bidder playing alone wins all five tricks in the hand, the team scores four points.

"**Going alone**" is initiated at the time the bidder orders the upturned card on the kitty to the dealer (first bidding round) or names a sui (second bidding round). The bidder signifies his or her desire to play alone by saying so after bidding. The bidder must make this call before play begins. During a **loner**, the bidder's partner discards his or her cards, and does not participate in play of the hand.

The odds of success of a loner bid depend on the lay of the cards and the inactive cards held by the bidder's partner. Ten cards out of twenty-five do not participate in play, making the hand less predictable than otherwise. A hand consisting of the top five cards of the trump suit is mathematically unbeatable from any position; this is sometimes referred to as a **lay-down**, as a player with such a hand may often simply lay all five cards on the table at once.

Scoring

Scoring in Euchre	Points
Bidding partnership (<i>makers</i>) wins 3 or 4 tricks	1
Bidding partnership (<i>makers</i>) wins 5 tricks	2
Then Bidder goes alone and wins 3 or 4 tricks	1
Bidder goes alone and wins 5 tricks	4
Defenders win 3 or more tricks	2
Defender goes alone and wins 3 or more tricks	4

The first team to score 15 points with at least 2 points more than the other team wins the game. So if the score gets to 15:15 the next winning teams points are taken OFF the oppositions score, and so on, until 15 points is achieved with a clear 2 point lead.

Score keeping

Scores are kept by using the seven and eight card of any suit. Scoring begins using the eight card (face up), covered by the seven card (face down). Upon winning points, the seven card is moved to reveal the appropriate number of suit symbols on the eight card. At eight points, the seven card is flipped (face up) and covered by the eight card (face up). Scoring then continues.

Table talking

Communicating with one's partner to influence their play, called **table talking** is considered cheating. This can include code words, secret gestures, or other forms of cooperative play in which one player can inform his partner what he holds in his hand or what the partner should play in a trick or call when choosing trump. Table talk can result in replaying of the hand.

Minor non-verbal communication is allowed. In that a player may hesitate before passing on trump selection to signal to his partner that his cards are helpful to the offered trump, but are not sufficient to guarantee a win. Conversely, the player may pass quickly or blatantly to indicate their cards are very poor for the available trump choice (possibly indicating their partner should go alone if they select that trump). This adds an additional element of strategy in that players may bluff a quick pass or hesitation to trick their opponents into calling or declining the offered trump; however, this can naturally backfire by confusing the player's own teammate. Depending on the play group, couples or good friends may be purposely split on to opposing teams because of the perceived advantage they may have reading one another if teammates.

Reneging

If a player does not follow suit when he is able to (usually by playing a trump card instead), it is considered a renege and cheating, and the opposing team is rewarded two points if it is caught in later tricks of the same hand. However renegees can also be unintentional, where a player misreads some of his/her cards, most commonly by misinterpreting the left bower as being of its native suit, but are still callable by opponents as reneging. Reneging when a player or his opponent is going alone, results in a penalty of four points in order to equalize the potential values of a hand. The four point penalty for reneging should apply equally for the maker of trump and the opposing team.

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Additional Rules for 2 or 3 players

2 PLAYER EUCHRE RULES

Following the general rules for 4 player Euchre but with addition rules, see below:

- A normal hand is dealt out to each player along with a **3-card dummy hand** to each player.
- Each person picks up their dummy hand **after** trump has been called.
- Each player must make their best five card hand out of the eight cards available.
- Going alone is still an option and occurs when the calling player opts not to pick up the dummy hand.

3 PLAYER EUCHRE RULES

Following the general rules for 4 player Euchre but with addition rules, see below:

- The dealer deals out four hands, but with the fourth hand acting as a dummy hand.
- The player who calls trump on the current hand, picks up 3 random cards from the dummy hand in their attempt to make the best 5 card hand for themselves.
- The caller will now play solo against the other two players, who will play as partners for this hand.
- The two non-calling players will always play as partners which means that partners will switch from hand to hand depending on who calls trump.
- The calling player will score one point for winning the hand and two points for taking all five tricks.
- The calling player can still elect to **go alone** by choosing not to pick up the dummy hand. Taking all five tricks here results in four points.
- If the non-calling partners **Euchre** the caller it results in one point each for the partners.
- If the a non-calling player elects to **go alone** and takes three or more tricks it results in four points for each of the non- calling players.
- Each player keeps their own score.