

Players' leaflets for Spades

Don't print this - the leaflet starts on next page 😊



Spades

*20-45 minutes
4 players*



Printing

They're created at A5 size, which is half of A4.

More little rules leaflets here ►

FunGames4CasualPlayers.com



Sandbags

Winning extra tricks may at times be 'a good thing'.

But the gathering of sandbags needs to be approached with caution.

It's not at all not nice: being hit around the head with a sandbag !

The number of sandbags accumulated is as important as points scored, and must not be overlooked.

A separate set of beans (different colour, perhaps) needs to be available so that partnerships can have their bag-count on display.



When to score bags

Partnership's points from tricks they've taken are dealt with first – then sandbags.

▶ When a partnership reaches ten sandbags, their score is reduced by 100 points.

The ten sandbags are knocked off their accumulated display of bags-beans, but any above ten are left ~ counting towards their next ten!

Some spades tips

You are in partnership - perhaps best not to be a lone-star.

Count how many tricks have been bid when it gets to your turn: it may matter.

"Neither an under-bidder nor an over-bidder be" (was that Shakespeare? *Hamlet*). Be realistic.

If you hold a lot of cards in a suit, ask yourself how many the others may hold: and who.

Non-Spade Aces stand a good chance ~ Kings may too, but Queens - oooh, I wonder!

If your partner bids a zero before it's your turn to bid, remember that it may be in the partnership's interests to try to take more than you otherwise would. After all, the opposition will try to make the zero-player take a trick even with a small card, and you may end up having to win it with a card that you'd never expect to win, just to save their zero.


Consider whether you want to play Aces early if your opposition has gone a zero.


May it useful to deliberately fail in your bid, if by doing so you can force opponents to get bags, and move towards being lumbered with a 100 point penalty?




John & Jennie

60 Bid 6, and got 6

150 + 2  John got his zero, Jennie bid 50 and got 7

210 + 2 

-50 Bid 5, and got 3


160 + 2 


Bill & Ben

Bid 8 and got 7 -80

Bid 6 and got 6 60

-20

Bid 8 and got 10 80 + 2 

60 + 2 

◀ The running totals are ▶

◀ The running totals are ▶



Spades

FunGames4CasualPlayers.com



The basics of this trick taking game

Four players in two partnerships. Team play is crucial. One person acts as scorekeeper.

Being a trick taking game, ranked cards are used to win tricks. Aces are the highest ranking card in all suits. Players must always follow the suit that was led if they can.

There are trumps, and the trump suit is always **spades**.

Thirteen cards are dealt to each player, so each hand is thirteen tricks long. Once all thirteen tricks have been played, that hand is scored, and dealing passes leftwards for the next hand of thirteen tricks.

So far, so good - easy, isn't it?

Before play begins, the bidding

The lead player (N,S,E,W) begins the bidding by saying how many of the thirteen tricks they think they will win ~ just themselves, not their partnership.

Bidding thus passes around the table.

Every player **must** indicate how many they think they alone will win: without conferring.

Each bids once only. Bids may range up to 13 (extremely rare).

Rather than the minimum bid being 1, it's **zero**.

The total of bids may exceed thirteen - somebody then is bound to not get their bid.

The bid made by one's partner may influence one's own, since it is a partnership game.

Play – how does it proceed?

Player left of dealer start, opening with any card except a spade.

Spades may not be **led** by anybody until after they have been used for the first time as a trump: that is, played **after** a lead of another suit (until spades have 'broken' that is).

If a player has only spades in their hand, then of course they may play a spade, even if they've not been used as trumps yet.

Players must follow suit if they have cards in the suit led. A Spade can be played even on the first trick, if the player has none of the suit that was led.

The highest card that's played wins the trick, and the cards are collected up by the person that won it – **not** by their partner.

The cards are set aside, face-down, so that the winner's won-tricks can be clearly seen and counted by everybody. After all, this is a trick taking game, and everybody must be able to see exactly what's going on as the hand proceeds.

Once thus placed, they must never be looked at again.

Trumping

If someone cannot follow suit, they may play spades, as a trump. If they do 'trump in', and their spade is the highest card played (beating any other spades played), they win the trick.

But they may discard a card of another suit, rather than a spade.

Keeping track

It could help if players have a pot of beans or counters so that they can display to all and sundry what they have bid.

Then, each time a player wins a trick and places it face down in front of themselves, they can place one of their beans atop so that all (themselves included) can see how many they bid, and how many they have won so far.

If they win tricks they did not bid for (**sandbags**) there will be no beans on their extras. The counters are clear indicators of the current state of affairs.

► it is essential to be able to keep a count of what's going on

Players need to know how many they have scored as individuals, how they as members of the partnership are faring, and how their partner's doing.

They need to know because they need to be aware of how both they and their opponents may score, which will be determined by the tricks everyone's won and lost.

Scoring – one partnership at a time

When all thirteen tricks have been played, look at zero bids first.

Bidding and getting a zero boosts the partnership's points substantially, but the costs of failing (by zero-bidder's winning any tricks) can be deeply saddening.

- If a person bids and **gets zero**, the partnership gains 100 points.
- If a zero-bidder wins a single trick, they have **failed** (*they have 'gone down'*), and there's a penalty of 100 points against the partnership.
- The pair also gets one sandbag for every trick that the zero bidder wins (*more about bags later*).
- The tricks won by the zero-bidder do **not** contribute to their partner's gained tricks.

Zero bidder's partner

- If the zero-bidder's partner gets their bid, they will get 10 points for each bid trick, and 1 point for each extra, unbid trick.
- They also get a sandbag for each extra, unbid trick.
 - Partner of a zero bidder needs to consider the costs and benefits of allowing the zero to fail.
 - How extensively and cleverly will they give cover to their partner, who's trying hard to not be caught taking a trick? Sacrifices may be called for.

Non-zero bidding

If **neither** player bids zero, their individual bids and tricks combine into a 'partnership' bid. But the beans stay where they are, in front of the individuals.

So, if one bid three and the other bid two, they are jointly seeking five tricks. It doesn't matter whether each gets what they bid. It's their joint bid that matters: that's the number of tricks they are jointly aiming to get.

- If they make their joint bid, they get 10 points for each trick that they jointly bid. So if they bid 5 and won 5, they'd score 50.
- They get 1 point for each trick over their bid, **and** they'll get one sandbag ('bags'). If they bid five and won seven, they'd score 50+2 points and 2 sandbags.
- If a pair are jointly short of their combined bid (or if the partner of a zero-bidder is short of theirs), they lose 10 points times the **number of tricks** that they bid. So if a pair bid 3 and 2 (5), and they only get 4, they lose 50 points (10 times 5).
- If the partner of a zero bidder said they'd get seven, but only gets six, the partnership loses 70 points (7 x 10) no matter whether the zero bidder gets their zero or not.

It doesn't matter by how many tricks an underbid fails.

The penalty is 10 times the bid. It has nothing to do with the size of the failure.