

SKAT BASICS

GENERAL RULES OF PLAY IN SKAT

1. The play of one card by each player constitutes a trick.
Cards are played in succession, clockwise, for each trick.
The first play of the first trick is from the player to the left of the dealer.
For all subsequent tricks the trick is initiated by the winner of the previous trick.
2. The first card played for each trick indicates the suit for that trick.
You must play a card in the suit led, if you have one.
If you have more than one card in the suit then you can play whichever you wish.
If you do not have a card in the suit led then you can play any card from your hand.
3. The winner of the trick depends on whether trumps are involved in the trick.
 - a) If there are no trumps played on the trick, then the winner of the trick is the player who contributed the highest ranking card in the suit led.
 - b) If there is a trump played on the trick, then the winner of the trick is the player who contributed the highest ranking trump card.
4. At the conclusion of a trick the winner collects the cards played in the trick.
The winner places the card face down, to be counted later.
Generally you cannot look at a past trick. The one exception is that if you have not yet played a card, you can have the last trick displayed, even if others may have played a card.
5. There are ten tricks to a game. Once all tricks have been played the points are counted for each side.

VALUE AND RANK OF CARDS IN EACH SUIT (TRUMP GAMES)

Ace	Ten	King	Queen	Nine	Eight	Seven
11	10	4	3	0	0	0

MULTIPLIER RULE FOR EACH SUIT

Clubs	12
Spades	11
Hearts	10
Diamonds	9

JACK FACTS

1. In any trump game, all jacks are trumps and they are the highest trumps.
2. The order of jacks is the same as the order of the multiplier rule – club highest, diamond lowest. (For example, if hearts is trump then the jack of spades is the second highest trump.)
3. The value of each jack is 2 points.
4. The most common mistake in beginning skat is to not consider a jack as being a trump. Each jack is part of the trump list, and needs to be considered as such whenever a trump is led. Conversely, if a jack is led, then you must play a trump if you have one.
5. A useful device is to think of jacks as “floating cards” before the bidding starts, to be added to the top of the trump list once trump is declared. Think of them as having 5 possible trump affiliations (each colour + grand) until a game is declared.

TRUMP CARD SEQUENCE

In a colour game (clubs, spades, hearts or diamonds) trumps include the 4 jacks + the 7 colour cards, for a total of 11 trump. Example: if spades are trump then the order of cards, from strongest to weakest, is

Jack of clubs
Jack of spades
Jack of hearts
Jack of diamonds
Ace of spades
Ten of spaces
King of spades
Queen of spades
Nine of spades
Eight of spades
Seven of spades

OTHER KEY FACTS

1. The total value of all points is $120 = (11+10+4+3+2) \times 4$. To win a game, you need 61 or more points from the cards in your pile at the end of play.
2. Jacks are not worth many points (2 each), but are essential for establishing power in a game. They are usually trick winners, can capture points, and can control the sequence of play within a game. They are also used to determine the value of a game and therefore of central importance in the bidding stages.
3. The aces and tens also have special importance because of their point value. Winning 6 of them ensures victory; conversely, losing 6 ensures a loss. You can win or lose a game on two tricks!!