

MINI BRIDGE - WINTER 2020 - WEEK 1
LEARN HOW TO PLAY MINI-BRIDGE

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLAYERS

MiniBridge is a game for four players divided into two partnerships. The partners sit opposite each other at the table. It is often useful to refer to the seats at the table using the directions of the compass. For example, if you are sitting in the South seat, your partner is in the North seat and your partnership is referred to as the North-South partnership and your left and right hand opponents are referred to as the East-West partnership.

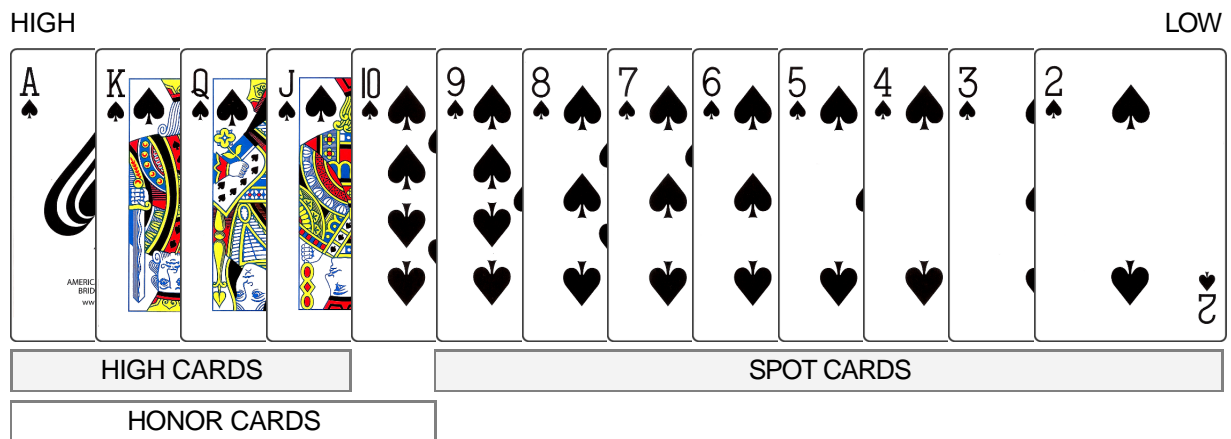


THE CARDS

A hand of *MiniBridge* is played with a standard deck of 52 cards divided into four suits:

(♣) Clubs, (♦) Diamonds, (♥) Hearts, and (♠) Spades.

Each suit has 13 cards starting with the (A) Ace as the highest ranked card followed in order by the (K) King, the (Q) Queen, the (J) Jack, the (T) Ten and so on down to the (2) Two which is the lowest ranked card in the suit. For example, the spade suit contains:



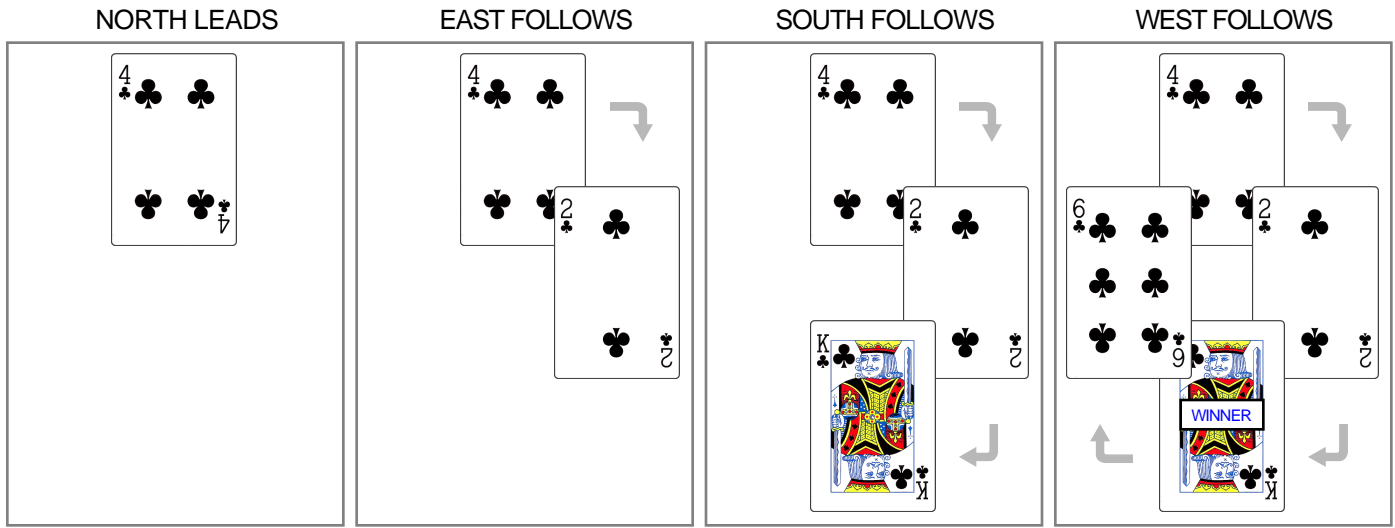
The **AKQJ** in a suit are called the *high cards* and the **98765432** a suit are called the *spot cards*. The **T** (10) is the dividing line between the high cards and the spot cards.

In the game of Contract Bridge, the AKQJT are also called the honor cards.

THE TRICKS

During the play of the hand, each partnership tries to take as many *tricks* as possible. A trick is started when one player leads a card by placing it face up on the table. Going clockwise, each player *follows suit* by placing any card from the same suit face up on the table. The four cards played makeup the trick. The player that played the highest ranking card wins the trick for the player's partnership.

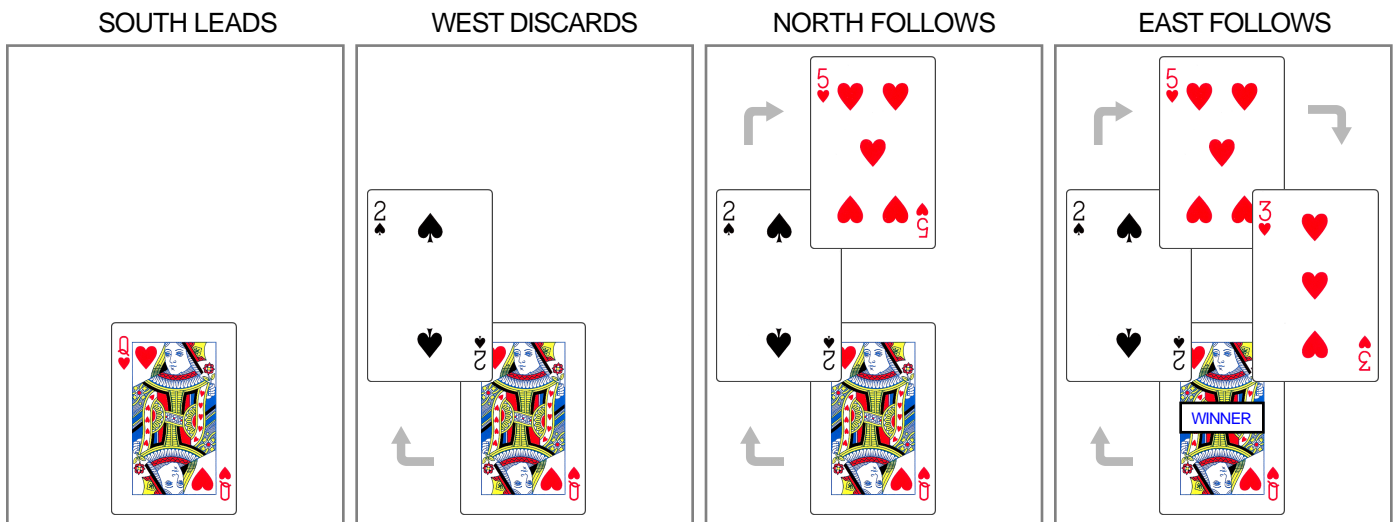
Consider the following trick. North leads a club and East, South, and West follow suit. South's King wins the trick for the North-South partnership.



*Note that East played a lower club than North. Unlike some other card games, when you play **MiniBridge** you do not have to **beat the trick** when you follow suit.*

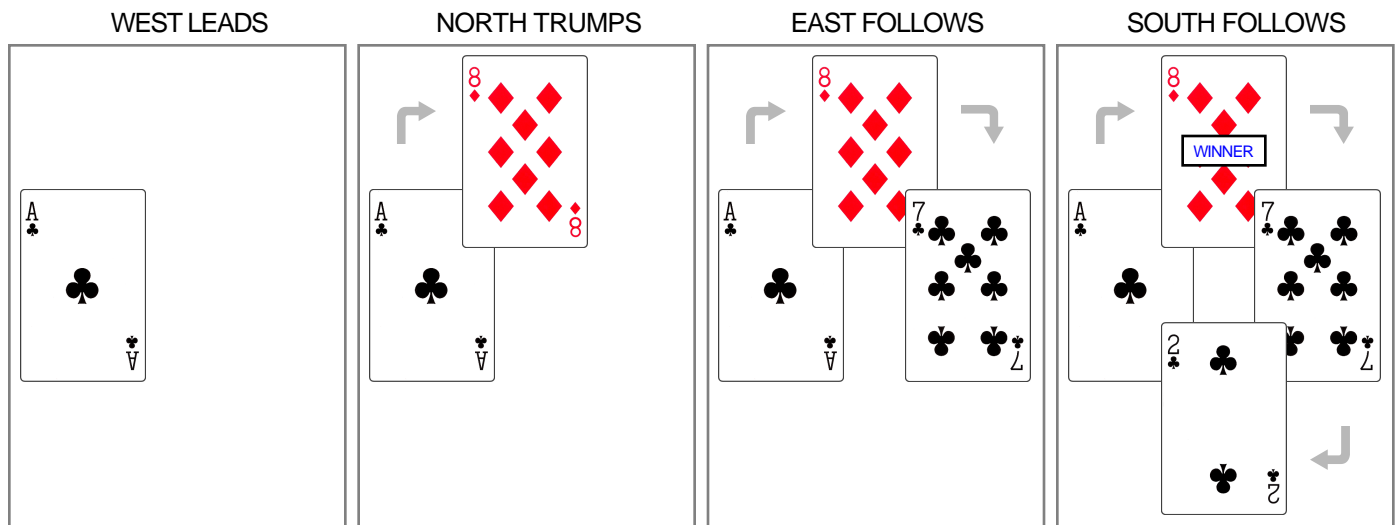
When you play *MiniBridge*, you must follow suit if you can. If you can not follow suit, you can *discard* any card from any other suit. But it is the highest ranking card from the lead suit that wins the trick.

Consider this trick. South leads a heart, West has no more hearts and discards a spade, North and East follow suit. South's Queen wins the trick for the North-South partnership.



MiniBridge has a bidding process that determines which player will decide if the tricks will be played with a designated **trump suit** or played without a trump suit (no trump). When there is a trump suit, a card from the trump suit acts like a "wild" card and beats any card from any other suit. If you can not follow suit you may play a card from the trump suit to try to take the trick. This is called **ruffing** the trick.

For example, suppose diamonds are trump. In the following trick, West leads a club, North has no more clubs and plays a diamond to trump the trick, East and South follow suit. North's trump card wins the trick for the North-South partnership.



*Unlike some other card games, when you play **MiniBridge** you do not have to trump when you can not follow suit. You may discard a card from one of the other two suits in order to save your trump to use on a later trick.*

THE GAME

There are four stages to play a hand of Mini-Bridge:

- **Dealing the Cards**
- **Bidding the Hand**
- **Playing the Tricks**
- **Scoring the Hand**

The *MiniBridge* rules for each of these stages are described in the following sections. These rules must be followed without exception or modification.

The sections also include a number of guidelines for the play of the hand. Guidelines do not have to be followed but experience has shown that following the guidelines improves the play in most situations.

DEALING THE CARDS

The goal for the dealing stage is to distribute all of the cards in a standard 52 card deck so that each player has 13 cards.

- *Guideline:* To select the first dealer, fan the deck face down on the table. Each player should select a card from the fanned deck. The player with the highest ranking card wins the first deal.

✓ Rule: The dealer deals the cards face down one at a time starting with the player to the left of the dealer and going clockwise around the table until all of the cards are dealt.

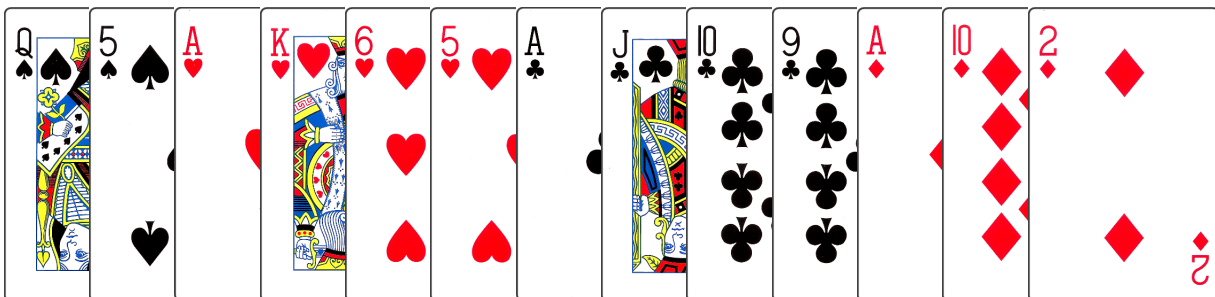
- *Guideline:* The players should wait until after all of the cards are dealt to pick up their cards.

- *Guideline:* A session of *MiniBridge* is usually played with two decks that have different back colors or designs. While the dealer is dealing the cards from one deck, the dealer's partner should shuffle the second deck to prepare it for the next hand. The shuffled deck should be placed on the right side of the shuffler.

✓ Rule: The dealer for the next hand is the player to the left of the dealer for the last hand.

- *Guideline:* The dealer for the next hand should take the shuffled deck that is on the left and move it to the right so that the player on the right can cut the deck before the cards are dealt.

Most players find it helpful to arrange their cards by alternating their black and red suits and sorting the cards within each suit from highest rank to lowest rank. For example:



When a hand is shown in the handouts, it will use suit symbols followed by letters and numbers to represent the cards in a suit. The suits will be displayed under each other starting with spades followed by hearts, diamonds and clubs. Note that the letter **T** will be used to represent the ten. The hand on the right is the text version of the hand shown at the bottom of the previous page.

SOUTH
♠ Q 5
♥ A K 6 5
♦ A T 2
♣ A J T 9

A complete deal will include all four hands, one for each seat at the table. The following is the text version for a complete deal that includes the hand shown above.

EXAMPLE		NORTH	
		♠ K J T 6 ♥ 8 2 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ K Q 5 2	
WEST		EAST	
♠ A 8 2 ♥ J T 7 4 3 ♦ K 9 7 ♣ 6 4		♠ 9 7 4 3 ♥ Q 9 ♦ Q J 5 3 ♣ 8 7 3	
		SOUTH	
		♠ Q 5 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ A T 2 ♣ A J T 9	

BIDDING THE HAND

The goal of the bidding stage is to select a player, the *declarer*, who will decide and declare:

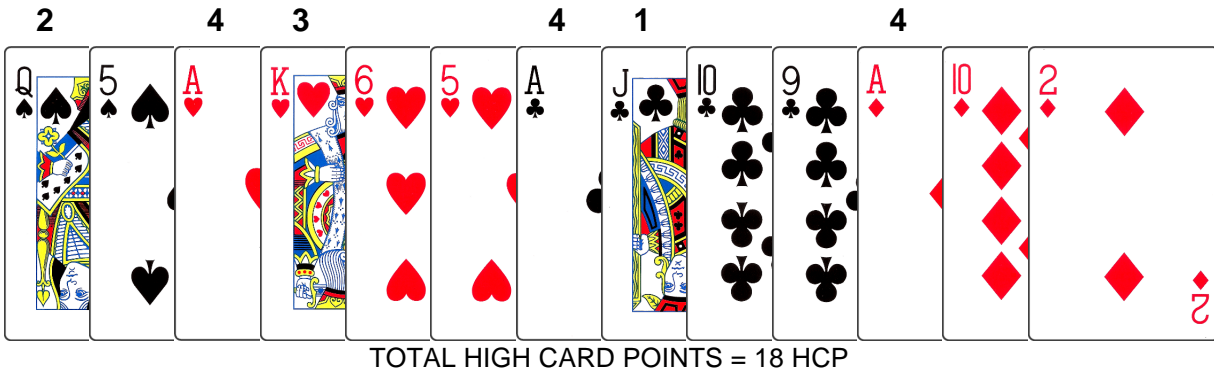
- if the hand should be played with a trump suit or without a trump suit.
- if the declarer will try to take enough tricks to earn a *game bonus* of 300 score points or will only try to take a smaller number of tricks to settle for a *part score bonus* of only 50 score points.

✓ **Rule:** Starting with the dealer and going clockwise around the table, each player:

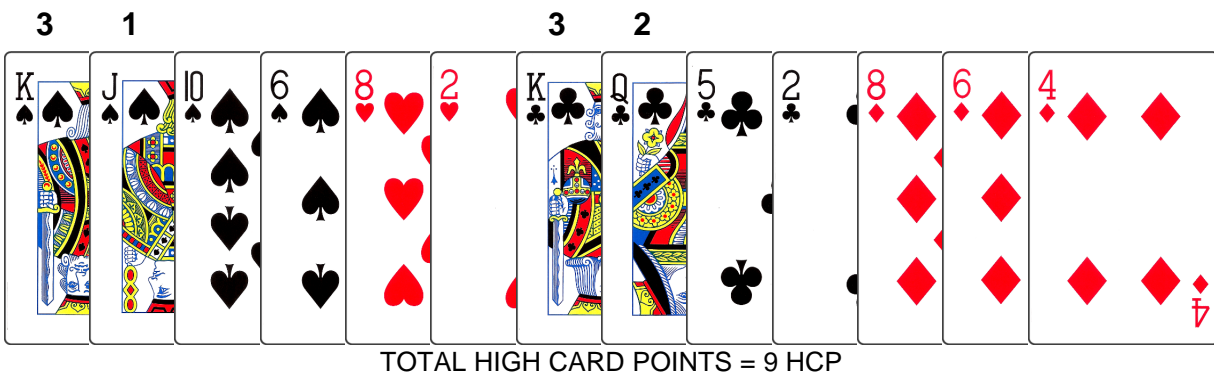
- Counts their *high card points* with each Ace = 4, each King = 3, each Queen = 2, and each Jack = 1 point.
- Announces their point count.

The sum of the four point counts must equal 40 points.

For example, the South hand from the example deal has 18 high card points (HCP)



and the North hand has 9 HCP:



This means the North-South partnership has 27 (9+18) HCP and the East-West partnership must have 13 (40-27) HCP.

✓ **Rule:** The partnership with the highest point total becomes the *declaring partnership* and the partnership with the lowest point total becomes the *defending partnership*.

If both partnerships have exactly twenty points, the cards should be redealt.

✓ **Rule:** The player with the most points in the declaring partnership becomes the *declarer* and declarer's partner becomes the *dummy*.

If both partners have the same number of points, the partner who announced the points first becomes the declarer.

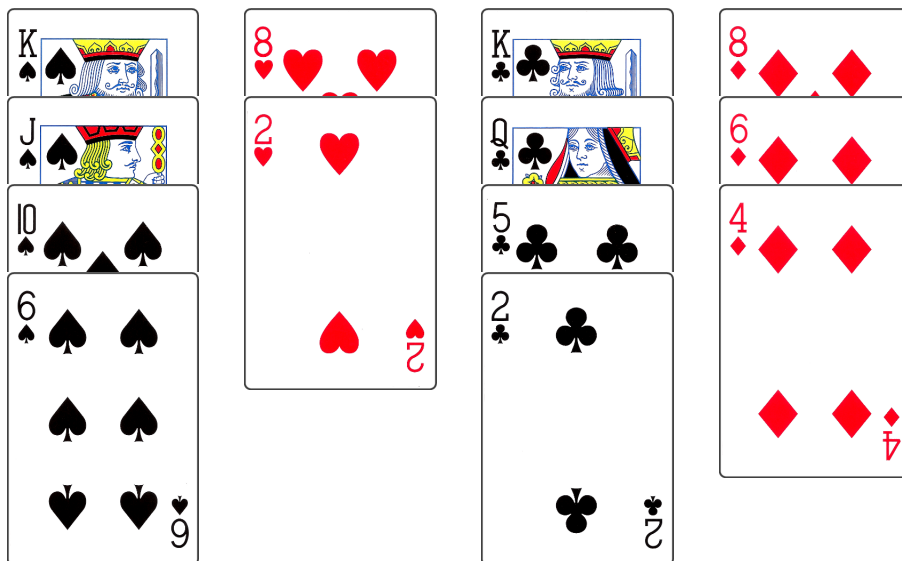
The term *dummy* is based on the meaning of the word *dumb* which is defined as "unable to speak" or "temporarily speechless."

✓ **Rule:** The dummy must not talk or otherwise aid the declarer during the remainder of the bidding or the play of the hand.

✓ **Rule:** The dummy displays the hand face up on the table with each suit arranged in a column.

- **Guideline:** When the dummy tables the cards, they should be arranged into four columns, one column for each suit, and alternating between the red and black suits. The cards in each suit should be arranged in rank order with the highest ranking card in the suit at the top down to the lowest ranking card in the suit at the bottom.

For example, if North from the previous deal becomes the dummy, North should table the cards as follows:



✓ **Rule:** The declarer looks at the combined hands and announces a *contract* which specifies:

- if the trick play will be with a trump suit or without a trump suit.
- if declarer will play for a *part score bonus* or a *game score bonus*.

Declarer must take:

- at least seven tricks to make any part score contract
- at least nine tricks to make a no trump game contract
- at least ten tricks to make a spade or heart game contract
- at least eleven tricks to make a diamond or club game contract

If you make your contract you will earn points for each trick that you take. In addition to trick points you will earn 50 bonus points if you bid and make a part score contract. But you will earn 300 bonus points if you bid and make a game score contract.

• *Suit Guideline:*

If the partnership has at least eight combined cards in a suit it is usually easier to make a suit contract instead of a no trump contract.

Exception: If the eight-card combined suit fit is in diamonds or clubs and you have enough high card points to make a game, it may be easier to take nine tricks to make a no trump game contract instead of trying to take eleven tricks to make a diamond or club game contract.

• *Point Guideline:*

It usually takes at least 26 combined high card points to make a game contract in no trump, spades or hearts.

It usually takes at least 28 high card points to make a game contract in diamonds or clubs.

North is the dealer for this example. Starting with the dealer and going clockwise, each player announces their high card point (HCP) total as shown in the center of the example.

BIDDING EXAMPLE ONE		NORTH - DUMMY		
		♠ K J T 6 ♥ 8 2 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ K Q 5 2		
		DEALER		
WEST	North 9 HCP East 5 HCP South 18 HCP West 8 HCP 40 HCP	EAST		
♠ A 8 2 ♥ J T 7 4 3 ♦ K 9 7 ♣ 6 4			♠ 9 7 4 3 ♥ Q 9 ♦ Q J 5 3 ♣ 8 7 3	
		SOUTH - DECLARER		
		♠ Q 5 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ A T 2 ♣ A J T 9		

- ✓ **Declaring partnership:** North-South has 27 (9+18) total **HCP**.
- ✓ **Defending partnership:** East-West partnership only has 13 (5+8) or (40-27) total **HCP**.
- ✓ **Declarer:** South has 18 **HCP**, more than North's 9 **HCP**.

North, the dummy, displays the dummy hand face up and South determines the contract:

- ✓ **Evaluate:** The partnership has 27 (9+18) total **HCP**, enough to try for a *game score* bonus. Although the partnership does have a combined total of eight clubs, it is probably easier to take nine tricks in no trump instead of eleven tricks if clubs are trump.
- ✓ **The contract:** South should announce a try for "a game in no trump."

Consider this next example. Starting with South, the dealer, and going clockwise, each player announces their high card point (**HCP**) total as shown in the center of the example.

BIDDING EXAMPLE TWO		NORTH			
		♠ A K 7 6 ♥ 8 5 2 ♦ J 8 7 2 ♣ T 2			
WEST - DECLARER		South 10 HCP	West 13 HCP	EAST - DUMMY	
♠ J T 4 ♥ T 9 ♦ A 3 ♣ A K J 8 6 3		North 8 HCP	East 9 HCP	♠ 8 5 3 ♥ Q 7 6 4 ♦ K Q 9 6 ♣ Q 4	
		SOUTH			
		♠ Q 9 2 ♥ A K J 3 ♦ T 5 4 ♣ 9 7 5			
		DEALER			

- ✓ **Declaring partnership:** East-West has 22 (9+13) total **HCP**.
- ✓ **Defending partnership:** North-South only has 18 (10+8) or (40-22) total **HCP**.
- ✓ **Declarer:** West has 13 **HCP**, more than East's 9 **HCP**.

East, the dummy, displays the dummy hand face up and West determines the contract:

- ✓ **Evaluate:** There are not enough combined points to suggest a try for a game. Defenders can take at least three spade tricks to defeat a club game contract. Defenders can take three spade tricks and two heart tricks to defeat a no trump game contract.
- ✓ **Contract:** West should announce a try for "a part score in clubs."

PLAYING THE TRICKS

The *declarer* plays the cards for the *declaring partnership* and the *dummy* remains silent. Declarer's goal is to take at least the number of tricks required to *make the contract* and earn trick points plus the contract bonus points:

- ✓ at least seven tricks to make any part score contract.
- ✓ at least nine tricks to make a no trump game contract
- ✓ at least ten tricks to make a spade or heart game contract
- ✓ at least eleven tricks to make a diamond or club game contract

The *defending partnership's* goal is to take at least the number of tricks to *defeat the contract* and earn trick points:

- ✓ at least seven tricks to defeat any part score contract.
- ✓ at least five tricks to defeat a no trump game contract.
- ✓ at least four tricks to defeat a spade or heart game contract.
- ✓ at least three tricks to defeat a diamond or club game contract.

✓ Rule: The player to the left of the declarer leads the first card to start the first trick (makes the *opening lead*).

- *Guideline:* An ideal opening lead is the top of connecting cards in a solid or broken sequence of high cards. For example the **K** from **KQJ** sequence or the **Q** from **AQJ**. This high card lead tells your partner that you have the next lower card in the suit.

✓ Rule: Play proceeds clockwise until each player has played a card on the trick.

✓ Rule: Each player must play a card from the lead suit (*follow suit*) unless their hand has no cards (*is void*) in the suit.

- *You do not have to beat the trick when you follow suit.*
- *You do not have to trump if you can not follow suit.*

✓ Rule: The highest ranking trump or the highest ranking card in the lead suit wins the trick.

✓ Rule: The player that played the winning card on the completed trick leads the first card to start the next trick.

SCORING THE HAND

After the thirteen tricks have been played, points are awarded based on the contract and whether or not declarer won enough tricks to make the contract.

✓ Rule: The declaring partnership earns trick points and bonus points if and only if declarer takes enough tricks to make the contract:

DECLARER TRICK POINTS

TRUMP SUIT	TRICKS		
	0 --- 6	7	8 --- 13
No Trump	0 Each	40	30 Each
Spades or Hearts	0 Each	30	30 Each
Diamonds or Clubs	0 Each	20	20 Each

DECLARER BONUS POINTS

Any Part Score Contract	50
Any Game Score Contract	300

✓ Rule: The defending partnership earns trick points if and only if they take enough tricks to defeat the contract:

DEFENDER TRICK POINTS

CONTRACT	TRICKS	POINTS
Any Part Score	7 --- 13	50 Each
No Trump Game	5 --- 13	
Spade or Heart Game	4 --- 13	
Diamond or Club Game	3 --- 13	

SCORING EXAMPLES

	DECLARER				DEFENDER	
	CONTRACT	NEED	TRICKS	SCORE	TRICKS	SCORE
1	No Trump Part Score	7	9	$40 + 2 \times 30 + 50 = 150$	4	
2	No Trump Game	9	9	$40 + 2 \times 30 + 300 = 400$	4	
3	Spade Game	10	9	Defeated	4	$1 \times 50 = 50$
4	Heart Game	10	11	$5 \times 30 + 300 = 450$	2	
5	Club Part	7	10	$4 \times 20 + 50 = 130$	3	

Scoring Notes:

1. Although declarer took enough tricks to make a game in no trump, declarer bid for a smaller part score so the bonus is the smaller part score bonus.
2. Declarer bid and took enough tricks to make a no trump game so the bonus is the much larger game score bonus.
3. Declarer bid a spade game but did not take enough tricks to make the game. The declaring partnership gets nothing and the defending partnership gets points for defeating the contract by one trick.

SCORING TABLES

The following tables can be used to lookup the score that is earned for taking a number of tricks when playing a contract:

PART SCORE CONTRACT

DECLARER TRICKS	DECLARER SCORE		
	NT	♠ / ♥	♦ / ♣
0 --- 6	0	0	0
7	90	80	70
8	120	110	90
9	150	140	110
10	180	170	130
11	210	200	150
12	240	230	170
13	270	260	190

GAME SCORE CONTRACT

DECLARER TRICKS	DECLARER SCORE		
	NT	♠ / ♥	♦ / ♣
0 --- 6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	400	0	0
10	430	420	0
11	460	450	400
12	490	480	420
13	520	510	440

DEFEATED CONTRACT

DEFENDER TRICKS	DEFENDER SCORE			
	PART	NT	♠ / ♥	♦ / ♣
0 --- 2	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	50
4	0	0	50	100
5	0	50	100	150
6	0	100	150	200
7	50	150	200	250
8	100	200	250	300
9	150	250	300	350