

SPADES RULES (CARD GAME)

All participants are subject to Intramural Sports Eligibility Rules, which are listed, in the current Intramural Sports Handbook. NO ID, NO PLAY, NO EXCEPTIONS

The team that reaches 150 points wins a match.

Spades is played quite widely in the USA, but does not seem to have spread to any other countries. It is a plain-trick game in which spades are always trumps. It is most often played as a partnership game by four players, but there are also versions for three and for two players.

Spades for Four Players

The four players are in fixed partnerships, with partners sitting opposite each other. Deal and play are clockwise.

Rank of Cards

A standard pack of 52 cards is used. The cards, in each suit, rank from highest to lowest: A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2.

The Deal

The first dealer is chosen at random, and the turn to deal rotates clockwise. The cards are shuffled and then dealt singly, in clockwise order beginning with the player on dealer's left, until all 52 cards have been dealt and everyone has 13.

The Bidding

Each partnership must make a bid, which is the number of tricks they expect to take. It is important to realize that in spades both sides' bids stand (it is not like other bidding games in which only the higher bid counts). First the non-dealer's side agrees on a bid. Each partner on that side communicates the amount of tricks they expect to take, based on their cards. A certain amount of unspecified bantering about "halves" and "maybes" is permitted, but not specific information about cards held. For example you are allowed to say "I know I can take 4 tricks, I might be able to take 6"; you are not allowed to say "I have a couple of high hearts and a singleton in clubs". The agreed upon bid is then written down. The other side then agrees on a bid in the same manner.

Nil is a declaration that that the player will not win any tricks during the play. Any single player may bid nil. The nil bidder's partner will also bid the number of tricks to be taken by the partnership.

A player whose side is losing may only bid blind nil by at least 100 points. It is a nil bid declared before a player looks at his cards. The bidder may exchange two cards with partner - the bidder discards two cards face down; partner picks them up and gives back two cards face-down in return.

The Play of the Hand

On the first trick, everyone must play his or her lowest club. A player who has no clubs must discard a diamond or a heart. No spades may be played to the trick. On this first trick it does not matter much in what order the four players play their cards - but if you want to be fussy then the holder of the 2 of clubs should lead, and the others play in clockwise order. The highest club played wins the trick.

The player who won the first trick leads to the next. Any card except a spade may be led. Each player, in turn, clockwise, must follow suit if able; if unable to follow suit, the player may play any card. The highest spade played wins a trick containing a spade; if no spade is played, the highest card of the suit led wins the trick.

The player who wins a trick leads to the next. Spades may not be led until either

- * Some player has played a spade (on the lead of another suit, of course), or
- * The leader has nothing but spades left in hand.

Playing the first spade is known as "breaking" spades.

Scoring

A side that takes at least as many tricks as its bid calls for receives a score equal to 10 times its bid. Additional tricks (overtricks) are worth an extra one point each.

Sandbagging rule: A side, which (over several deals) accumulates ten or more overtricks, has 100 points deducted from its score. Any overtricks beyond ten are carried over to the next cycle of ten overtricks - that is if they reached twenty overtricks they would lose another 100 points and so on. (Note: it is not necessary to keep track of overtricks separately as the cumulative number of overtricks taken appears as the final digit of the team's score, if positive).

If a side does not make its bid, they lose 10 points for each trick they bid.

If a bid of nil is successful, the nil bidder's side receives 50 points. This is in addition to the score won (or lost) by the partner of the nil bidder for tricks made. If a bid of nil fails - that is, the bidder takes at least one trick - the bidder's side loses 50 points (but still receives any amount scored for the partner's bid, and the tricks won by the nil bidder count towards making the partner's bid).

A bid of blind nil scores twice as much as an ordinary nil - it wins 100 points if successful and loses 100 points if it fails.

The side, which reaches 250 points first, wins the game. If both sides reach 250 points in a single deal, the side with the higher score wins.

Variations of Spades for Four Players

1. Cards: The game is played with a standard pack with two distinct jokers; the twos of clubs and hearts are removed from the pack leaving 52 cards. The two jokers are the

highest trumps. If one is colorful and the other is plain, the colorful one is higher. If your pack has identical jokers, write "BIG" on one of them, and that one is higher. The third highest trump is the two of spades - so the trump suit ranks big joker, small joker, 2, A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, and 3. For the purpose of following suit, the jokers count as spades.

2. Leading: After the bidding, the dealer leads to the first trick and may lead any card of any suit. Throughout the game, any card may be led to a trick. You do not have to wait for spades to be broken before leading them.

3. Scoring: If a team makes fewer tricks than they bid, they score minus the value of the contract - for example if you bid 8 and lose you score -80. There is no extra score for undertricks.

4. Bidding blind: There is no nil or blind nil bid, but a partnership may bid blind seven, provided neither of them has yet looked at their cards. This doubles the score to 140 if successful and -140 if not. If they make overtricks, these count one each as usual.

5. In theory it is also possible to bid higher numbers blind for double the score: blind 8 is worth 160, blind 9 is 180 and so on. However, such bids will not be worthwhile, except possibly when they give you just enough points to win the game if successful.

Other variations

Variation in the cards and their ranking

In some versions of Spades, some or all of the four twos are elevated to the top of the spade suit, are ranked in some specified order, and are considered to be spades. The rest of the cards rank as in normal.

Spades can also be played with a 54-card pack - the standard pack of 52 plus 2 distinguishable jokers. In this case the two jokers are elevated to be the top two cards of the spade suit, with a particular order of the jokers specified. If jokers are used, then there will be two cards left over at the end of the deal, and these are given to the dealer. Having looked at all 15 cards, the dealer discards any two-card face down. Some play that the two extra cards are given to the holder of the two of clubs, rather than the dealer. Some play that the discard takes place after the bidding.

Variations in the bidding

Some play that each team must bid a minimum of 4 tricks. If a player bids Nil, that player's partner must bid at least 4.

Some play that after each partnership has agreed its initial bid, each side, beginning with the side that made the first bid, is then given the opportunity to increase its bid.

Some play that the bids of the two sides must not add up to exactly 13 tricks. This makes it impossible for both teams to win their bid exactly.

Round-the-table bidding

This is an alternative to partnership bidding. Beginning with some specified player (either the dealer or the player to dealer's left), and proceeding clockwise, each player states a Number (talk about "halves" or "maybes" is permitted) of tricks. When the second player of each partnership bids, the final bid for that partnership is decided. A player who wanted to bid nil would do so at their turn to bid.

In round-the-table bidding, some people play that no one can bid 1 - so for example if the first player of a partnership says x tricks, the final contract must be either x, or else at least x + 2. There is also variation as to whether a bid of "zero" must be construed as bid of nil.

In round the table bidding, some people allow a second round of bidding, in which each side may increase its bid. In this second round, the bidding proceeds exactly as in partnership bidding, beginning with the same side as the player who began the round-the-clock bidding sequence.

A variation found in any form of round-the-clock bidding is that no table talk is permitted. A player may only state a number.

Special actions / bids.

There is great variety in the special bids or actions a player may be allowed to make during his turn to bid. Some of the possibilities are listed below.

Misdeal.

Any player may call this hand satisfies certain conditions. The criteria for a misdeal differ - some possibilities are: 0 or 1 spades, 7-card or longer suit, no face cards. If any player calls a misdeal, the cards are thrown in and a new hand is dealt by the same dealer.

Generally a misdeal may only be called before partner has disclosed any information about his hand, but some people play that partner may be consulted in the following limited manner. A player may ask: "Should I call a misdeal?" His partner may reply yes or no but may disclose any other information about his hand. The reply is not binding.

Nil / Blind Nil.

These have already been described; Nil is sometimes known as Naught. They are sometimes valued at 100 and 200 points rather than 50 and 100. Sometimes the penalty for losing Blind Nil is only half the score for winning it (i.e. +100/-50 or +200/-100). If winning a Blind Nil is worth 200 then you are only allowed to bid it when your side is at least 200 points behind. Some play that when Nil is played the bidder must exchange one card with partner; others do not allow passing of cards even in a Blind Nil. Another possible variation is that if you bid Blind Nil you pass one card and to your partner and can specify one suit which you would like passed back; partner takes this into consideration when returning a card but is not forced to pass the suit you asked for. Some play that there is no penalty for sandbags when playing Blind Nil.

Blind 6

A side must declare this before either partner looks at their cards. It scores 120 points if the side takes exactly 6 tricks. If they take some other number of tricks they lose 120.

Some people play that to win blind 6 you just have to win at least 6 tricks. Some play that a lost blind 6 only loses 60, not 120. Higher blind bids may also be allowed - Blind 7 for 140, Blind 8 for 160 and so on. For some people Blind 7 is the minimum blind bid.

10-for-200

This scores 200 points if a side takes exactly 10 tricks, and loses 200 if they take any other number of tricks. Some people play that to win 10-for-200 you just have to win at least 10 tricks. Some play that any bid of 10 is automatically a 10-for-200 bid.

Moon or Boston

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks and is worth 200 points. The side loses 200 points if they fail to take all the tricks. If playing with 10-for-200 the Moon or Boston is worth 500 points. Some people play that a successful Moon bid automatically wins the game (which is even better than 500 if you had a negative score).

Blind moon

This is a bid to take all 13 tricks, made before either partner has looked at their cards. It is worth 400 points if it succeeds, and the side loses 400 points if it fails.

No trump bids

These are not like no trump bids in Bridge, 500, etc. Spades are still trumps, but a player who bids some number of tricks with "no trump" promises not to win any tricks with spades, except when spades are led. You are only allowed to bid "No Trump" if you hold at least one spade in your hand. The value of the bid is double that of a normal bid for that number of tricks if won; the penalty if you lose is double the penalty for a normal bid (some people play with only a single penalty but this is not recommended). A bid of "No Trump" requires agreement from partner. The person who wants to bid "No Trump" asks partner: "Can you cover a no trump?" and partner replies "yes" or "no". A "No Trump" bid can be made blind, increasing its value to triple the basic amount. The minimum number of tricks which can be bid in "Blind No Trump" is usually set at one less than the required minimum number for a normal blind bid. A "Blind No Trump" bid is usually a desperation play and should be only be allowed when the team is a long way behind - for example more than 400 behind in a 1000 point game. Failing in a Blind No Trump should cost the same as you win if you succeed - i.e. three times the basic value of the bid. However, some people play with only a double or single penalty.

Double Nil

This is a bid in which both partners play Nil at once. One partner may suggest this and if the other agrees it is played. The score if successful is 500 points (or for some people an automatic win). If either partner wins a trick the bid fails. The penalty is variously set at 250, 500 or automatic loss. In addition, if both partners win a trick, their opponents get a bonus of 100 points. A bid of Double Nil is only allowed for a team who are far behind - for example more than 400 behind in a 1000 point game. In a few circles a "Blind Double Nil" bid is allowed. If successful, the bidders win the whole game; if not their opponents win the game. Some play that when a team bids Double Nil, each player of the team simultaneously passes two cards face down to partner before the play starts.

Bemo

Bidding Little Bemo commits the team to win the first six tricks. It is additional to the normal bid; the team scores an extra bonus of 60 if successful and loses 60 if not. Big Bemo similarly commits the team that bids it to win the first nine tricks; they score a 90-point bonus if successful and lose 90 if not.

Variations in the play of the cards

In the first trick, some allow a player who has no clubs to play a spade on the trick. In this case the highest spade wins the trick if a spade is played. As the order of play to the trick may now be important (if you are going to play a spade you would rather wait to see if someone else plays a higher spade first), the holder of the two of clubs should lead to the first trick (or the holder of the lowest club in play if you are playing with jokers and the two of clubs was discarded).

Some play that the player to dealers left leads to the first trick, and may lead any card except a spade. Some play that the dealer leads first and may lead any card except a spade.

Some play that spades may be led at any time - it is not necessary that they be broken first.

Variations in the scoring

Tricks in excess of the contract (overtricks or sandbags) may be worth minus 1 point each rather than plus 1. In this case the penalty for accumulating 10 overtricks does not apply.

Some players use the units digit of the score to count sandbags, but do not regard it as being part of the score - so sandbags are in effect worth nothing until you have 10 of them, when they cost you 100. In this variation if your score was 369 and you bid 7 tricks and took 9 your score would become 331 (not 341).

Some people play that there is a special card that cancels one sandbag on that hand for the side that takes it in their tricks. If the side, which wins the special card, makes no overtricks, or loses their bid, the special card has no effect. The special card may be either a fixed card - for example the three of spades - or may be determined afresh by cutting a card before each deal.

Some play that the penalty for taking fewer tricks than were bid is 10 points for each trick by which the team falls short of the bid, rather than 10 times the bid.

Some play that if a side's cumulative score is minus 500 or worse, that side loses the game (and of course the other side wins).

Some players set the target for winning the game at 1000 points rather than 500.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. No animals in indoor/outdoor facilities. (Exception: Assisted living animals)

2. Forfeit Policy:

- If a team does not have the minimum number of players to start a contest at the scheduled time, they will be given 10 minutes to secure the correct number before the game is declared a forfeit.
- The Sport Assistant will declare a forfeit and award a "win" to the team that is ready to play with the correct number of players after they have properly entered their team on the scorecard.
- If neither team is ready to play with the minimum number of players after the 10-minute forfeit period then both teams will receive a forfeit.
- A team that does not have the minimum number of players after the 10-minute forfeit period shall forfeit the game. Example: game time is at 6pm, the game will be declared a forfeit at 6:10pm. In all cases the game must remain within the time period allotted, this means that the game clock will start at the time the game is scheduled to be played so that the 10 minutes will be deducted from normal playing time.
- A team must start and continue the game with the minimum number of players as stated in the rules for that sport or a forfeit will be declared.
- A team may receive a forfeit due to improper team attire.
- Teams found to have ineligible players in the game or on the game roster may forfeit that game, depending upon time of discovery and the player's effect on the game's outcome.
- Any Intramural Staff may assess forfeits for the use of an ineligible player or for player/spectator misconduct.
- Forfeited games will not be rescheduled.

- If a team forfeits ONCE the first team on the waiting list may replace it (without a refund). If there is no waiting list, the team may continue to play by paying a \$20.00 Re-entry fee at the Intramural Office within 48 hour of the forfeit.
- If a team forfeits or defaults twice (in league) it is dropped without notice.
- A contest completed prior to a team being dropped from the league is official. A contest not played is recorded as a “win” for the opposing team.
- A team will receive a forfeit if a game cannot be continued due to misconduct. The team will also be assessed the re-entry fee.

3. Forfeit Penalties:

- Lose right to protest the game
- All possession in a jump ball situation go to the opposing team
- Start the game with a 10-point deficit

4. Default Policies:

- As a courtesy to their opponents and to avoid a forfeit, a team may request to receive default for any game they will be unable to attend. In order to do so they must notify the Intramural Office at 621-8723 during normal business hours at least 24 hours prior to that game (Sunday games notification deadline is Friday at 4pm).
- Default is recorded as a loss but does not require a fee payment.

5. ID Policy:

Why must a participant have an ID for each and every game? This is an often-asked question during the early part of the activity season. The answer is quite simple. During any and all transactions with the university you student ID officially recognizes you. This is what defines your status as a member of the student body or the campus community. The Department of Campus Recreation, Intramural Sports Program wants to provide the very best services to “OUR” participants. If outside people participate in the program, they are putting participants and the university at risk. The other reason is: if an outside person is allowed to participate, these ineligible individuals would be, in essence, taking the opportunity to participate away from an eligible participant who we are here to serve. Before each game players must present their Cat Card ID so that they may be signed in on the scorecard. Only the names of those players present will be placed on the game score card. Any player arriving after that game has started must present their Cat Card ID to the game official and have their name added to the game score card before entering the game. **NO ID, NO PLAY, NO EXCEPTIONS!**