





About

Schnapsen is an ace-ten game of point tricks and marriages. Points are earned by claiming valuable tricks and by declaring marriages held in hand. The aim is to be the first player to reach 66 card points and thereby win the hand. There are two forms of Schnapsen. There is 'Soft' Schnapsen and 'Sharp' Schnapsen. At *Brisbane Cards*, we play the 'sharp' variant in which the rules around scoring for marriages, exchanging the trump and closing the talon are stricter.

Players	Two
Cards	William Tell Deck... 20 cards (10 – A) <div> Hearts  Bells  Acorns  Leaves  </div>

Rank	A	10	K	O	U
Card points	11	10	4	3	2

Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deal a packet of 3 to each player Turn up the next card for trumps Deal a packet of 2 to each player Place remaining cards on top of the trump card – <i>crosswise & half covering it</i>
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Marriages	<i>K, O of a suit.... card points for declaring...</i>
Trump marriage	40 card points
Non-trump marriage	20 card points

Glossary

Card points	These are points won during the play of the hand for winning cards in tricks and for declaring marriages.
Marriage	Holding the King and Over in the same suit. Marriages can be trump marriages (in trump suit) or non-trump marriages (in other the other suits). Marriages can be declared in both phases of the hand. A player must first win a trick with another card (e.g. an Ace) and then play the king card of the marriage to the next trick to claim the 40 or 20 points.
Talon	The 'stock' of undealt cards. After each trick in phase 1, players take one card from the talon to bring their hands back up to five cards again.
Trump exchange	A player holding the under of trumps can exchange it for the trump turn up card that is sitting face up at the bottom of the talon. This can only be done immediately after winning a trick and before leading to the next trick. The trump cannot be exchanged when only two cards remain in the talon (i.e. one face down card and the bottom face up card remaining).
Closing the talon	A player who during phase 1, believes they can reach 66 points with only the cards that are currently in their hand can close the talon. The talon can be closed by a player who's turn it is to lead to a trick (after both players have replenished their hand to 5 cards of course). However, the talon cannot be closed when only two cards remain in it (i.e. one face down card and the bottom face up card remaining). To close the talon the player takes the face up trump card and lies it face down crosswise on the top of the undealt cards.
Claiming	If a player believes they have reached the required total of 66 card points, they may claim to have won the hand by declaring 'enough'. A win can only be claimed immediately after winning a trick or declaring a marriage – <i>not at any other time</i> . Play ceases and the points for the claiming player are totalled to confirm if their claim is correct. It does not matter if the opponent of the claimer turns out to already have more than 66 points (i.e. they got there first). It is the player who first correctly claims the win who wins the hand (provided they do in fact have 66 points).
Game points	The player who correctly claims a win scores a number of game points towards the total of 7 game points needed to win the match. If the player's claim is incorrect (they don't have 66 points) the opponent scores the game points instead. <i>See the scoring section.</i>

Phase 1

The non-dealer leads to the first trick. During phase one, players do not have to follow suit, do not have to trump and do not have to win the trick – *they may play any card they wish*. The winner of the first trick scores the card points from the trick (e.g. an ace and an under would be $11 + 2 = 13$ card points) and places the cards face down in front of them. These points count towards the 66 card points required to win the hand. The trick winner draws the top card of the talon and the other player draws the next card. The trick winner then leads any card to the next trick. Marriages may be declared (one per trick) and the card points for these claimed. To claim a marriage and score the points, the player must have won a trick first and so be leading to the next trick, to which they must play the king. As they play the king, the player announces the marriage and scores the card points immediately (regardless of whether they win the trick the king was played to).

Play continues as described above until the last card of the talon (the face up trump card) is drawn. At this stage five tricks will have been played and the talon will have been used up and phase two of the hand begins.

Exchanging the trump

A player who holds the under of trumps and has already won a trick, may exchange the under for the face up trump card when it is their turn to lead. However, the exchange cannot be made when there are only two talon cards remaining. This means that the exchange can only occur when a player is about to lead to the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th trick.

Closing the talon

Trump exchange and closing the talon can be done at the same time.

A player who believes that they can reach 66 points with the cards that they currently hold in their hand may choose to close the talon, sending the hand immediately into phase two. The talon cannot be closed when there are only two talon cards remaining. This means that closing the talon can be done by any player who is about to lead to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th trick.

Claiming 'enough'

A player who believes they have reached 66 card points can claim the hand during phase one if they wish – *refer to the glossary*.

Phase 2

The winner of the final trick before the talon was closed or used up leads to the first trick of phase two. During phase two players must follow suit if they can, and if not, they must trump. In following suit or trumping, they must win the trick if they can. Specifically, this means that:

- If a player can follow suit, they must..... *and they must play higher if they are able to*.
- If a player cannot follow suit, they must play a trump.
- If a player cannot follow suit and also cannot trump, they may play any card they hold.

Players who have won at least one trick (*in either phase one or two*) can still declare marriages during this phase when it is their turn to lead to a trick.

Claiming 'enough'

A player who believes they have reached 66 card points can claim the hand – *refer to glossary*.

Last trick

If neither player claims 'enough' before the final tick of the hand, then the winner of the final trick scores 1 game point, regardless of the final number of card points reached by either player. *The exception is if the talon was closed*, in which case the player who closed the talon can use the card points from the final trick to contribute to their claim for 66 card points (see scoring section).

Scoring**Normal game**

The scores are based on the number of card points that the non-claiming player had when the win was claimed.

If the claiming player is correct (i.e. they have made 66 points) they receive:

- 1 game point if opponent has 33 or more.
- 2 game points if opponent has less than 33.
- 3 game points if opponent has taken no tricks.

If the claiming player is not correct (i.e. they have not made 66 points), opponent receives:

- 2 game points if they have taken at least one trick
- 3 game points if they were yet to take a trick

Note that in a normal game, if neither player claims 'enough' before the lead to the final trick, then the winner of the final trick scores 1 game point, regardless of the final number of card points taken by either player.

Closed talon game

The scores are based on the number of points that non-closing player had **at the moment the talon was closed**.

If the closing player makes 66 points (including points won in the last trick) they receive:

- 1 game point if opponent **had** 33 or more.
- 2 game points if opponent **had** less than 33.
- 3 game points if opponent **had** taken no tricks.

If the closing player does not reach 66 points (including points won in the last trick) the opponent receives:

- 2 game points if they **had** taken at least one trick
- 3 game points if they **had** not taken any tricks

Note that it is possible (though rare) that the opponent of the player who closed the talon reaches 66 and claims 'enough' before the closer can do so. In this case the non-closing player receives 2 game points if they had taken at least one trick when the talon was closed, or 3 game points if they were yet to take a trick when the talon was closed.

Scoring the match

Schnapsen is traditionally scored counting backwards from 7. Both players start with a score of 7 and game points are subtracted. The first player to reach zero wins – and the loser chalks up one bummerl. A full match consists of either two or three bummerls. The player who forces their opponent to chalk up two (or three) bummerls wins the match overall.

Variations

There are many variations of Schnapsen, and very similar games exist in other countries.

Marriages	Variations around when marriages can be claimed, and which card(s) can be led
Trump exchange	Variations around when the under can be exchanged for the trump turn up
Last trick	Variations around how and when the last trick counts towards the 66 card points
0 – 7 counts double	Variations around the 0 – 7 score counting as two bummerls instead of one.

You can find out more about the variations for the game of Schnapsen by going on-line.

How we put our house rules together

We gather and read information from different sources when developing the house rules for the games that we play. These sources include:

- Websites such as Britannica, Wikipedia and Pagat.com.
- Books on card games from local libraries.
- International associations where these exist e.g. International Skat Players Association.
- Expert playing groups associated with existing clubs e.g. the German Club, the Swiss Society, the Dutch Club etc.
- Selected apps on iOS or Android