





## About

Alsos is an old 3 player game from Hungary. Unusual features of Alsos include that all players (not just the declarer) are able to announce additional 'figures' (undertakings to achieve certain goals within the hand) and that the two defenders do not pool their points in determining if the declarer has been defeated. These features, combined with the fact that not all cards are in play in every hand make Hungarian Alsos an interesting, but challenging game.

Players  
&  
Cards

**3 players** (2 player variant also exists)<sup>^</sup>  
4 may play with the dealer taking no cards<sup>^</sup>  
William Tell deck: 32 cards (7 – A)

Acorns	Leaves	Hearts	Bells
			

## Dealing

Deal two packets of 3 to each player. Can pick up.  
Turn next card up to indicate the 'original' suit.  
Deal another packet of 3. Players can't pick up.

Take the bottom card of the deck, place face up on top of the undealt cards. Place this pile crosswise on top of the 'original suit' card.

Ranking  
Cards, Suits  
& Melds

## Sequences:

Ace, King, Over, Under, Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven

## Sets:

Trump game

Under, Nine, Ace, Ten, King, Over

No-trump game

Ace, Ten, King, Over, Under

## Trump game:

Trump suit:

Under (20), Nine (14), Ace (11), Ten (10), King (4), Over (3), Eight (0), Seven (0)

Non trump suit

Ace (11), Ten (10), King (4), Over (3), Under (2), Nine (0), Eight (0), Seven (0)

## No-trump game:

All suits

Ace (11), Ten (10), King (4), Over (3), Under (2), Nine (0), Eight (0), Seven (0)

## Betli:

All suits

Ace, King, Over, Under, Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven

## Klopitzky:

All suits

Ace, Ten, King, Over, Under, Nine, Eight, Seven

Rank of suits & N.T for 2<sup>nd</sup> bid:

Bells, Hearts, Leaves, Acorns, No-trump  
Lowest ----- Highest

Trump  
game

62 card points in trump suit  
30 card points in other suits  
10 card points for last trick  
= **162 card points**

No-trump  
game

30 card points in every suit  
10 card points for last trick  
= **130 card points**

Game	Value	Explanation
Trump	1	Take more in tricks and meld than opponents.
No-trump	2	Take more in tricks and meld than opponents.
Betli	5	No trumps and must lose every trick.
Klopitzky	3	No trumps and player taking most tricks loses.

Note that defenders do not combine their tricks / scores. The declarer only has to score higher than each opponent separately. **All games (except klopitzky) can be doubled during the rounds of announcements.** Two players tied for most tricks in klopitzky both pay the winner..... if all three tied for most ticks there is no score.

Procedure	1st bid	Starting with the player left of the dealer, players either pass on the original suit or accept it and play as declarer with the original suit as trumps. Players may only speak once. If a player accepts the 'original suit' as trumps, go to 'figures & doubles' from the front (i.e. there will be no 2 <sup>nd</sup> bid).
	2nd bid	<p><b>Only if all passed 1st bid</b></p> <p>Players now have one turn to speak, making an announcement combining their proposed trump suit and figures <sup>^</sup>. The 'original suit' cannot now be bid. If two players wish to play a combination of figures of equal value, the player nominating the higher-ranking suit (or no-trumps) wins the bid. For this purpose, suits rank from low to high – <i>bells, hearts, leaves, acorns</i>, with no trump ranking higher still (above acorns). Examples discussed below. If two players want to play a game of equal value in the same suit (or no-trump) then one bid earlier in the rotation has priority.</p> <p><i>A bid of 'acorns' (value = 1) beats a bid of 'leaves' (value = 1), because acorns is a higher suit. A bid of 'Leaves absolute' (value = 1 + 2 = 3) would beat 'acorns' (value = 1), but would not beat 'no-trump absolute' (value = 2 + 2 = 4). Finally, a bid of 'no-trump absolute' could be beaten by a bid of 'hearts absolute ulti' (value 1 + 2 + 4 = 6).</i></p> <p>If all pass the 2<sup>nd</sup> bid, players skip to the pick-up (2<sup>nd</sup> deal).</p>
	Figures & doubles (from the front)	<p>Once the declarer (who either accepted the 'original suit' or was the winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> bid) is established, and the trump suit (or no trump) has been set, figures can be announced by any player and the game or any figures can also be doubled. The only figures that are carried forward from 2<sup>nd</sup> bid are those the declarer already committed to in securing the winning bid.</p> <p>Starting with the declarer, players announce figures and say 'double' to opponents. The declarer should begin by first re-stating any figures brought forward from 2<sup>nd</sup> bid. Doubles announced 'from the front' (while holding only 6 cards) are worth twice as much i.e. they multiply the value by 4... so announcing 'double the absolute' would raise the value of the absolute from 2 to 8 .... announcing 'double the acorns game' would raise the value of the game from 1 to 4.</p> <p>A player whose game or figure has been doubled, can raise the stakes further by 're-doubling' the value for it at their next turn to speak. Defenders cannot double each other's announced figures, but either defender can re-double an announced figure on behalf of the pair if the declarer has already doubled it. The announcing of figures and doubles may continue multiple times around the table until two players say 'pass' in succession.</p>
	Pick up (2 <sup>nd</sup> deal)	Players pick up their 3 face-down cards dealt earlier. Each player will now have 9 cards in hand.
	3rd bid	<p><b>Only if all passed 1st and 2nd bid</b></p> <p>Players now have one turn to speak and may now bid <b>betli</b> (to lose every trick). If a player says 'betli' the bidding ends. If all players pass the 3rd bid, <b>klopitzky</b> is played.</p>
	Big exchange	<p>If the 'original proposed suit' was accepted as trump – <b>AND</b> – the other exposed card (which is face up on the stock of undealt cards) is an ace or another trump, the holder of the 7 of trumps (or if the 7 is visible, the holder of the 8) may perform a 'big exchange' <b>before any trick play begins</b>.</p> <p><i>....put 7 (or 8) face up on table. Take both exposed cards and also the 3 unknown talon cards into hand (making 13 cards). Discard four cards face down to for a new talon crosswise on top of the 7 (or 8). Cannot discard any trumps. These discards cannot be used in melds and the card points do not count for any player.</i></p>
	Play of first trick.	Play to the first trick, with further announcements of figures and doubles (from the back), and the declaration of melds. To declare meld, a player announces their best single item of 'sequence' and their best single item of 'set' as they play to the first trick – <i>minimum information is revealed at this stage e.g. 'sequence of 3' or 'set of 4' or 'bela'</i> .
	2nd Figures & doubles (from the back)	Also, if the 'original suit' was accepted as trump and there was no 'big exchange', the holder of the 7 of trumps may exchange it for the trump turn up card <b>when it is their turn to play to the first trick</b> .
	Declare meld	In trump games, Betli and Klopitzky, the player to dealer's left leads to the first trick. In no trump games, the player to declarer's right leads to the first trick, so the declarer plays second. In trump games a player who has no card of the suit led must play a trump if possible. A player who has no card of the suit led and no trumps may play any card. At no time is there any obligation to play a 'higher' card or to beat other cards previously played to the trick.
	Small exchange	
	Final doubles (not more figures)	At the end of the first trick, there is a final opportunity to double the game or any figures, but no new figures can be announced. Also, if more than one player has declared meld, these are now compared to decide which is valid. To do this...
	Validation of melds	<i>... further information is revealed step by step. For sets the higher rank beats the lower, and no tie is possible. For sequences of equal length, the rank of the top card of the sequence is revealed first, then if still tied, whether trumps or not trumps is revealed next. If still tied at this point, then neither player scores.</i>
	Remaining tricks	Play of the remaining tricks. Note that defenders do not combine their tricks / scores. The declarer only has to score higher than each opponent <u>separately</u> to win the game.
	Scoring	<p><b>Scoring the 'game'</b></p> <p>If either defender has points equal to or greater than declarer, the game is lost.</p> <p><b>Scoring the 'figures'</b></p> <p>The outcome of each figure is assessed separately to the 'game'.</p> <p><b>Payments:</b></p> <p>The declarer pays both defenders for lost game / figures and is paid by both for won game / figures. For defenders' announcements the declarer pays both for success, or is paid by both for failure.</p>

## Melds:

<b>Sequence</b>	<p><b>3 cards</b> (20 points), <b>4 cards</b> (50 points), <b>5 cards or more</b> (100 points)</p> <p>Can have more than one sequence, but they cannot overlap or abut. If announcing a sequence, you must announce its full length... not allowed to conceal its true length by announcing only part of it.</p> <p>Longer beats shorter, then higher top card beats lower, then trumps beats not trumps. If still tied, no one scores.</p>
<b>Set</b>	<p><b>4 aces, kings, overs, unders, 10s or 9s</b> = 80 points</p> <p>Ranked differently in trump vs no-trump (see p1). No set of 9's in no-trump.</p> <p>Higher ranked set beats lower. No tie is possible.</p>
<b>Bela</b>	<p><b>King and over of trump suit</b> = (20 points)</p> <p>Does not beat and is not beaten by anything. It always scores if declared, regardless of any other melds.</p>

*Melds can share a card e.g. an under in a set of 4 unders can also contribute to a sequence. The player who wins the contest of sequences may score for all their sequences. The player who wins the contest of sets may score for all their sets.*

## Figures:

	Figure	Value		Explanation...
		Front	Back	
	'Marriage'	–	1	Holding the K and O of trumps in your hand before the first trick begins and your side wins the game – <i>counting card points, melds, and last trick</i> .
#	'Absolute'	2	1	Take at least 82 points (in a trump game) or 66 points (in a no-trump game) – i.e. more than half the points – <i>counting card points and last trick only</i> .
#	'100' / '80'	4	2	Take at least 100 points (trump game) or 80 points (no-trump game) – <i>counting card points and last trick only</i> .
#	'200' / '180'	2	1	Take at least 200 points (trump game) or 180 points (no-trump game) – <i>counting card points, melds, and last trick</i> .
#	'4-Ace'	2	1	Take all four aces in tricks.
	'All three'	2	1	Win the Under, 9 and 7 of trumps in tricks.
	'Ulti'	4	2	Win the last trick with the 7 of trumps. <i>player must be holding this card to announce.</i>
	'Family'	2	1	Win the ace, king and over of trumps in tricks.
	'The six'	4	2	Win the top 6 trumps in tricks.
#	'All tricks'	–	5	Win all 9 tricks.

*For a figure announced by a non-declarer, that player has to fulfil the requirement within their own tricks. The exception is 'marriage' where it doesn't matter which defender's tricks secure the win. Figures announced by a non-declarer are scored for (or against) both defenders.*

**Notes:** *All figures are announced, doubled and scored separately to the 'game'. There are no 'silent' figures.*

- Figures can be announced in trump or no-trump games (but not in betli or klopitzky).
- # In a no-trump game the only figures allowed are the 'Absolute', '80', '180', '4-ace' and 'All tricks'.
- If announcing 'Ulti' the player must retain the trump 7 until the last trick, unless there is no legal alternative.
  - It must be won by the announcer – if the announcer's partner wins the trick the 'Ulti' fails.*
- '100' and 'absolute' can't be announced in the same round of announcements.
- A player who announced '100' or '80' from the front cannot announce 'absolute' from the back.
- 'All tricks' and 'Marriage' cannot be announced from the front.
- An additional figure 'Eight' can be played if agreed** – *Taking the second last trick with the 8 of trumps (2 | 1).*
  - If playing with this additional figure, 'Ulti' and 'Eight' cannot be announced by the same player.
  - To announce 'eight' a player must be holding this card. It must be played to the 2<sup>nd</sup> last trick unless it is forced out earlier or is unable to be played to the trick due to the need to follow suit.
    - It must be won by the announcer – if the announcer's partner wins the trick the 'Eight' fails.*

## Variations

^ Variations in the second bid and how the game is adapted for two or four players.

2 <sup>nd</sup> bid	The suit is not revealed as part of the bid e.g. bids of 'trump game' or 'trump ulti' or 'no-trump absolute' are announced. If two players want to play an equal value game, further information as to the proposed trump suit is then disclosed to decide who wins the bid. This variation means that players need not reveal unnecessary information about their hand in order to make a bid. It prevents players later in the bidding rotation from using information about the hands of previous bidders to inform their decisions about their own bids. If two players want to play a game of the same value with an identical suit (or no-trump) then the player earlier in the bidding rotation has priority.
4 players	<p>The dealer deals the cards but does not take part in the play. This means that for each player, every fourth hand, they will deal, but not take part.</p> <p>The dealer still scores for the hand as a 3<sup>rd</sup> opponent of the declarer. So the declarer is paid by 3 players for successes and pays to 3 players for failures.</p>
2 players	<p>Deal 8 cards each in packets of 4 (can be looked at), then the 'original suit' indicator, then one more packet of 4 cards to each (cannot be looked at). Take the bottom card of the remaining cards and place it on top of the deck. Put this stack crosswise on the 'original suit' indicator card. There will be 6 cards left face down in the stack.</p> <p>The big exchange is done by taking the face up cards from the talon. The bottom card of the stack becomes the new face up card on top of the stack and the card from the hand becomes the new face up card on the bottom.</p> <p>In a trump game, the non-dealer leads to the first trick. In no-trumps, the non-declarer (defender) leads first.</p> <p>Absolute cannot be announced from the back in the two-player game. It must be announced from the front (before picking up the last 4 cards).</p>

## 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.
- Selected apps on iOS or Android
- Expert playing groups associated with existing clubs e.g. the German Club, the Dutch Club, The Swiss Society etc.