

Ninety-Nine (3p...4p, 5p) Ø Ø Ø

About

Ninety-Nine is an exact bidding game invented by British game inventor David Parlett. The unusual feature of this game is that players discard 3 cards from their hand to make a secret bid for the number of tricks they will take with the other 9 cards. Players can earn a higher score by offering to either expose their bid cards for other players to see, or by additionally offering to play with their entire hand of cards exposed.

Players

Three players.
- 4 or 5 players refer below
All playing for themselves.

Cards

36 (6 – A) (♥♦♣♠)
Cards rank 6 (lowest) – A (highest)

Deal

- Deal 12 cards each
- Deal passes to the left
- First deal is no-trump

Play

Player left of the dealer begins.
Must follow suit, otherwise play any card
Trick is one by the highest card of the lead suit, or by the highest trump if any are played.

Bidding

Players choose 3 cards from their hand to make a bid predicting exactly how many tricks they will take with their remaining 9 cards. They do this by placing any 3 cards face down to their left. For this purpose, a club = 3 tricks.... a heart = 2 tricks... a spade = 1 trick... and a diamond = 0 tricks.

For example:

- Laying aside 3 diamonds would make a bid to take zero tricks.
- Laying aside a club, a spade and a diamond would make a bid to take 4 tricks.
- Laying aside 2 hearts and a club would make a bid to take 7 tricks.

Before the first lead, any player can announce a premium bid by raising their bid to a declaration or revelation. A declaration means that the player will turn their bid cards face up (so that other players will know their secret bid). A revelation means that the player will not only turn their bid cards face up but also all their other cards and play the hand with all their cards exposed.

In any hand, only 1 player may play a declaration or revelation. A player offering to reveal has priority over a player offering to declare. In the case of two players who wish to make the same premium bid, highest priority goes to the player left of the dealer, then the other player(s) and finally the dealer. This means that if player 'A' left of the dealer announces a declaration and this is overcalled by player 'B' announcing a revelation, player 'A' would be able to announce that they will play a revelation (they have priority over player 'B').

Scoring

The highest possible score in a single hand is 99 points.

Baseline trick score:

- All players score 1 point per trick taken.

Successful contract score: *extra points in addition to the baseline trick score.*

- If one player takes exactly the number bid, score additional 30 points.
- If two players take exactly the number bid, score additional 20 points each.
- If all players take exactly the number bid, score additional 10 points each.

Premium score: *extra points scored in addition to trick score and contract score.*

- Successful declaration (make bid exactly) scores a further 30 points
- Successful revelation (make bid exactly) scores a further 60 points
- Unsuccessful premium bids → 30 or 60 is added to the score of both opponents.

Trump suit for next deal depends on how many players matched their bid...

3 → ♣ 2 → ♥
1 → ♠ 0 → ♦

Game is 100 points. When a player reaches this score, the game is over. If more than one player passes 100, in same deal, the highest score wins.

To play with 4 people:

Use full 52 card deck. Deal 13 each. Play 10 tricks. A bid of 3♦ can be either zero tricks or ten tricks. If all 4 players are successful matching their bid, no contract score is awarded (though premium scores may still be) and next hand is no-trump.

To play with 5 people:

Use a 500 deck but remove the 13s. This leaves 60 cards (A – 12, J, Q, K in 4 suits). Deal 12 each. Lay aside 3 and then play 9 tricks. Contract score is 10 if all 5 succeed.... 20 if 4..... 30 if 3.... 40 if 2..... 50 if 1. No one may reveal, but any number of players may declare for a premium of 50 if successful or –50 if not. If 4 or 5 players are successful, the next hand is no-