

About

Pitch is an American development of the very old game of 'All Fours'. All Fours originated in England during the 17th century. It spread to America where it developed numerous variations and additions, of which 'Pitch' is one. All Fours evolved in the Caribbean too, where it has gone on to become the national game of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Players,
Cards &
Deal**

4 Players in partnerships

See below for variations.

52 (2 – A) (♥♦♣♠)

Cards rank: A (highest) – 2 (lowest)

Deal 6 cards to each player.

Objective

Four 'match points' available in each hand:

High – Capturing the highest trump that is in play.

Low – Capturing the lowest trump that is in play.

Jack – Capturing the trump jack (if it is in play)

Game – Capturing the most card points.

**Card
Points**

A	K	Q	J	10	9, 8, 7... 2
4	3	2	1	10	0

This means that if a trick contains an ace, a queen, a three and a 10 that trick will be worth:

$$4 + 2 + 0 + 10 = 16 \text{ card points}$$

The team with the greatest number of card points at the end of the hand scores 1 match point for 'game'

Bidding

Beginning with the player left of the dealer, players may either pass, or make a bid higher than the last. Each player can only speak once. Bids are a number between 2 and 4, corresponding to the four 'match points' that are available in the hand. So, a bid of 3 for example requires the partnership to secure three out of the four 'match points' that are available (it does not matter which three of these are secured).

Note that the minimum bid is 2.

Note that if the other 3 players pass, the dealer must bid.

The winning bidder leads ('pitches') any card to the first trick. This suit of this card establishes trumps.

**Rules
of
play****If a trump is led...**

All must follow with trump if they have one.

If not holding a trump, play any card.

If a 'plain suit' is led...

Players holding the lead suit may choose to EITHER follow suit OR trump (i.e. players may choose to trump even if they can follow the lead suit).

Players not holding the lead suit may play ANY card.

Scoring

At the end of the hand, match points are awarded for high, low, jack and game. If the partnership makes their bid, they score as many points as they took (e.g. if they bid 2 and actually took 3, they score 3 points).

If the partnership does not make their bid, they lose the number of points they bid. In any case, the defending partnership always scores for the points that they made.

Claiming

The game is played to an agreed score (for example 11 points). However, a win can only be claimed just after successfully fulfilling and scoring for a bid. So, while it is possible for a partnership to reach (or even exceed) 11 points due to points picked up when the other team are the bidders, they are not able to claim. They must first succeed in a bid. Then they can claim the match. In the case where a partnership reaches (or exceeds) 11 in a hand where they are themselves the bidders, then of course they can claim the win straight away.

Variations

The 'All Fours' family of games is so old that there are a huge number of variations to almost every aspect of the games that are derived from it. These can be researched on-line.

The game described above is more accurately named 'Auction Pitch'.

Below are some suggested ways to play with / without bidding, and for different numbers of players.

Partnerships without bidding

Players play in partnerships, but there is no bidding. The player left of the dealer simply leads a card to the first trick and this suit becomes trumps. At the end of the hand, each partnership scores the points they took.

Solo with bidding

Players play as individuals. Bidding and play are the same as for the main description, although the dealer is not forced to bid if all others pass. If all pass, the cards are thrown in and redealt.

Solo without bidding

Players play as individuals. The player left of the dealer simply leads a card to the first trick and this suit becomes trumps. At the end of the hand, each player scores the points they took.

Solo Pitch for two or three players

Players play as individuals. The bidding and the rules of play are the same as in the main description (except that the dealer is not forced to bid). The winning bidder plays alone against the other two who form a temporary partnership (both winning any points that their side makes).
