

About





Tartli is an old Hungarian game of point tricks and melds for two players, using a 'trick and draw' mechanism of play. Play occurs in two phases. During phase one players do not have to follow suit and draw a replacement card from the stock after each trick. Once the stock is exhausted, players have to follow the lead suit if able to and if unable to follow suit, they must play a trump. Players of Tartli, must keep a good eye on the cards that have been played, and must listen carefully to the melds announced by their opponent. This helps avoid holding on to low value cards for too long in a futile wait to complete a meld with a card that is already gone.

Players & Cards

Two players

William Tell Deck
or other German suited cards

32 (7 – A)

Acorns	Leaves	Hearts	Bells
			

Deal

Deal 9 cards to each player in packets of 3 cards at a time.

Place the 10th card face up on the table. This is the trump indicator.

Stack the remaining 14 cards face down at right angles to the trump indicator half covering it. This stack of cards forms the talon.

Phases

Phase 1 – The second player can play any card, there is no requirement to follow suit, or to trump. There is no requirement to try to win the trick.

If either player holds the 7 of trumps, this can be exchanged for the trump indicator card just before leading to any of the first 7 tricks (note that a player has to be leading to the trick to make this exchange).

Phase 2 – The second player must follow suit if able, and if they cannot follow suit, they must play a trump. Again, there is no obligation to try to win the trick (other than the requirement to trump a plain suit when they cannot follow of course).

If a player wins all the tricks in phase two, they score the entire 161 card points that are available in the hand. This means that the opponent completely forfeits all card points they may have secured during phase one (even if these would have meant they reached 501 or 251) though they still retain any points that they scored for melds.

Rank & Points

Order of cards and card points in trick play:

Trump suit: O(20) 9(14) A(11) 10(10) K(4) U(2) 8 7 (61 points)
 Plain suits: A(11) 10(10) K(4) O(3) U(2) 9 8 7 (30 points per suit)

Winning the last trick = 10 card points making a total of 161 card points available in each hand.

Order of cards for melding sequences:

A K O U 10 9 8 7

Sequences

3(20) 4(50) 5,6,7,8(100)

Longer → Higher top card → in trumps → declared 1st

Sets of 4

O(200) 9(150) A,T,K,U(100)

Any set of 4 beats any sequence

Bella

K, O of trumps (40)

Always scores. Other melds don't affect.

Details of play

During each of the first 8 tricks, a player can declare one set and/or one sequence (additionally, they can also declare 'Bella' if they hold it). If declaring a set and a sequence in a given trick, these may have a card in common if desired.

While both players can declare meld in a given trick, only one of the players can score (the exception is 'Bella', which always scores when it is declared). If both players declare meld, only the owner of the highest single item of declared meld will score for all the meld that they declared in the trick. Players are not required to declare meld, it is optional. A card that is part of a meld can be played to the trick that it is declared in. Melds that were declared but not scored, can be redeclared in a future trick (provided that the player still has all of the relevant cards in hand).

Bella can be declared and scored at any time... but it is usually declared as part of the melding procedure, unless a player is very close to 'claiming'. See below.

Procedure...

1. Player declares meld (if applicable), then plays to trick.
2. Second player declares meld (if applicable, and if their best item can possibly beat the other player's best).
3. Players exchange further details to ascertain who has the best single item of meld (if required).
4. The second player plays to the trick.
5. The winner of the meld contest (if applicable) fully specifies all the meld they declared (rank, suit etc) and scores for this immediately
6. It is determined who has won the trick, and the trick winner then collects the two cards and puts them in their trick pile, before drawing from the stock.
7. The loser of the trick draws the next card of the stock.

After scoring for a sequence in a particular suit, a player can declare another sequence in the **same suit** (in different trick of course), re-using cards if they wish.

Players can do this if the new sequence: *has a higher top card.... or.... If the top card is the same, the new sequence is longer.* It is not legal however to declare a second sequence that is fully separate, but directly adjacent.

For example, while it is allowed to declare the 7, 8, 9 of hearts and then the U, O, K (the 10 is missing)... it is not allowed to declare the 7, 8, 9 of hearts and then the 10, U, O (as this second sequence is separate, but exactly adjacent).

Claiming, Scoring and Ending the game

With close scores (or opponent less than 251) a player should claim as soon as possible.

Scoring the game

The game is scored in buli points or 'victory' points. When a player's cumulative points reach 501 they may claim one buli point (if the opponent has reached 251 points) or two buli points (if the opponent has not yet reached 251). The game is normally played up to 5 (or 10) buli points with the first person to reach this number being declared the winner. When a buli point is won, both players' scores begin again from zero.

If an incorrect claim is made, the opponent immediately wins the buli point.

Claiming to have reached 501

A player may claim to have reached 501 at any time and this stops play immediately. This can even occur in the middle of a trick. Points for melds are scored, before the winner of the trick is determined, so if one player reaches 501 as a result of a contest of melds and claims the buli point, the card points for the current trick would not count (even if these points would have meant the opponent reached 251). However, the opponent's card points for previous tricks would still count.

Another example of claiming a buli point during a hand is when a player needs 12 points to reach 501, and on the third trick of the hand they trump the opponent's ace with the 'under' (U) of trumps. The ace is worth 11 and the under worth 2, making a total of 502 points and allowing the player to immediately claim the buli point. Again, the opponent's card points for previous tricks would still count.

If players' total the card points at the end of a hand and both are over 501, then the higher score wins. If scores are equal, the first to score and claim in the next deal wins.

Bela and claiming 501

Bela can be declared and scored at any time, so if a player has 463 points, holds the king (K) of trumps and draws the over (O) after the 5th trick, they may immediately claim the buli point before the 6th trick begins.

Variation – Some players play that bela can only be declared and scored at the same time as other melds (during the contest of melds) Since bela always scores, this can mean that both players could reach 501 simultaneously. In this case, the higher total wins the buli point. If the totals are equal, the current trick is scored to determine the winner. If the current trick is worth zero points, further tricks are played until someone breaks the tie either by declaring and scoring another meld, or by taking at least one point in a trick.

Players should agree the rules for scoring bela, before starting the game.