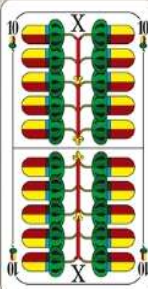
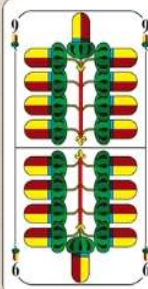
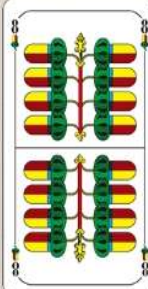
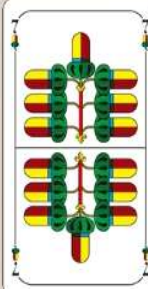


# Introduction to Bavarian Schafkopf

There are 32 cards in the deck. There are 8 cards in each suit. The suits are:

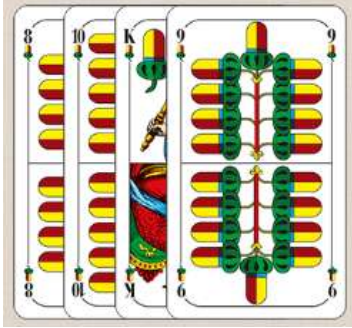
|                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |
| Acorns                                                                            | Leaves                                                                            | Hearts                                                                            | Bells                                                                               |

Schafkopf is a point trick game. This means that every trick is not worth the same amount. Some tricks might be worth zero card points, while others may be worth 40 or more card points. The objective in a hand is not to win lots of tricks, but rather to win lots of card points. Below you can see the number of points each card is worth. You can also see that the 10 ranks between the ace and the king.

|                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                    |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11                                                                                | 10                                                                                | 4                                                                                 | 3                                                                                 | 2                                                                                 | 0                                                                                  | 0                                                                                   | 0                                                                                   |

## How much is a trick worth?

The value of a trick is determined by adding the total number of card points for the four cards that make up the trick. You can see two example tricks below.

|                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |
| This trick is worth 14 points                                                       | This trick is worth 17 points                                                        |

## How do you win the hand?

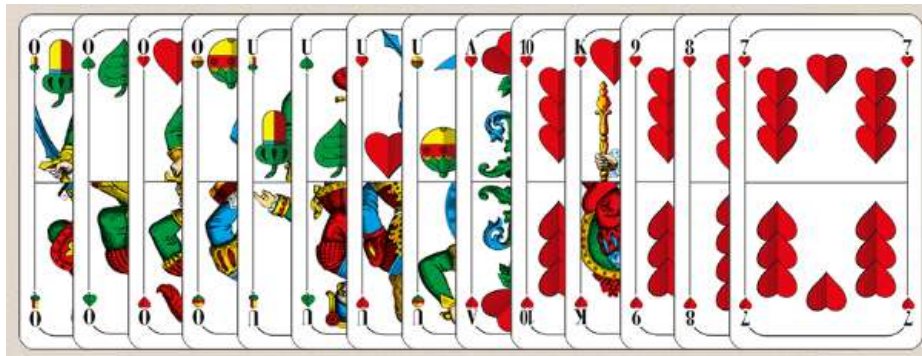
There are 30 card points in each suit and there are 4 suits. This makes 120 card points. To win the hand the player or partnership must take a minimum of 61 card points in their tricks.

## What are the rules of play?

Frist lead is the player left of the dealer. If a trump is led, you must play a trump if you have one. If a card from a 'side suit' is led, then you must play a card of that suit if you have one.... if you do not have a card of that suit, you may play any card (including a trump) as you wish. At no stage are you required to try to win the trick, you may play higher or lower as you wish, while staying within the rules.

### What is a 'deuce game'?

The deuce game is the basic contract that Schafkopf is built upon. The majority of hands are played under this contract. The declarer (the player who won the bid) calls an ace that they do not hold and the holder of that ace becomes the silent partner of the declarer whose identity is revealed when the called ace is played during the hand. In the 'deuce game', there are 14 trumps. These are all the obers (O), then all the unters (U) and then all the hearts. Note that there is a rank order to the obers and unters... the acorn is strongest and the bell is weakest



### Are there any contracts that you play without a partner?

Yes, if you have a very good hand you can bid to play alone against 3 opponents. This carries greater risk, but the rewards are greater too. There are a number of these contracts that can be bid. They use arrangements of trumps that are a little different to the ones above for the usual 'deuce game'. You can find these on the next page.

### So how is the overall game scored?

If the declaring player (and partner if any) take 61 card points, then they are successful and so they are awarded a number of game points towards the overall game. They may receive 1, 2 or 3 game points depending on some other factors. The players on the losing side have their scores reduced by the same amount. Highest score after an agreed number of deals is the winner.

### What happens if everyone passes the bid?

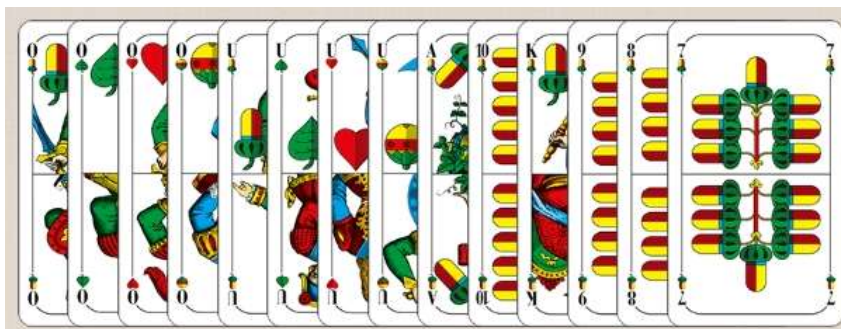
If everyone passes, then to prevent a redeal, players usually play an 'all pass' hand. In this hand, the objective is to avoid being the player who takes the most card points. The idea here is that the strongest hand is likely to lose... *maybe that person should have bid?* The trumps are as for the 'deuce game' and the loser's score is reduced by 3 points, while all other players' scores are increased by 1 point.

### What else is there to know?

The types of contracts played on your own (one against three) and the trumps for these are presented below. There are also some rules around how the called 'deuce' (ace) is selected and played. You can read about these, and also find more information about bidding and all the other scoring details in the 'house rules' on the website if you want to know more. Otherwise, all of these things can be easily explained before the game begins.

### What contracts are available for playing alone?

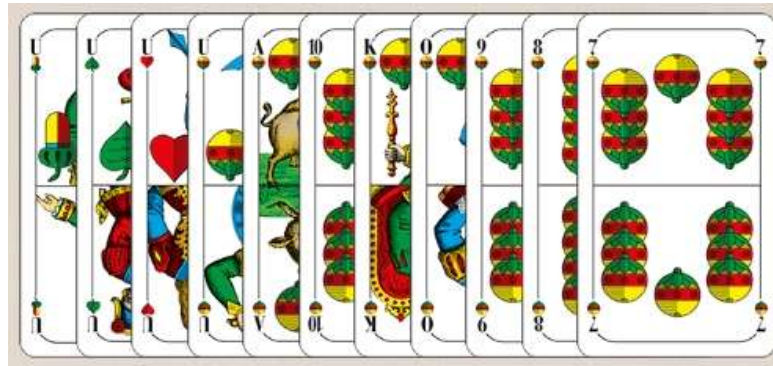
You can play a '**solo**'.... in which there are 14 trumps (the obers, unters and any one of the 4 suits). It's like a 'deuce game', but you play on your own. Here is an example of the trumps for a 'solo in acorns'. As usual, you need 61 card points to win.



You can play a **‘wenz’**.... in which there are only 4 trumps (all the untters). All the other cards act as ‘side suits’ and so these all rank A, 10, K, O, 9, 8,7. As usual, you need 61 card points to win.



You can play a **‘suit wenz’**.... in which there are 11 trumps (all the untters and any suit you choose). All the other cards act as ‘side suits’ and so these all rank A, 10, K, O, U, 9, 8,7. As usual, you need 61 card points to win.



### Should I get the app?

Yes, you should get the free app for android or iOS by following the links on the website. The app is fantastic and has inbuilt tutoring tools such as highlighting trumps, displaying all hands, displaying card points and providing you with guidance about how to play the hand. It is a very good way to learn how to play. Once the hand is underway, press the light bulb icon to access these.

### Finally, a few observations from a non-expert

- There are 14 trumps. If you have 5, including one of the top two obers (or both of the weaker ones) you are usually able to pull off a deuce game pretty well (unless your partner has a very poor hand).
- You need quite a good hand to play one against three. This is because tricks you lose could easily have 25 or 30 card points in them at a time, and once the opponents get 60 you lose.
- The declaring side (bidder and partner if any) will normally play trumps to try and strip these from the defenders, making the called ace safe from being trumped, and also making any aces they hold safe from trumps too.
- The defending side will often go straight to leading the called suit in the hopes that their partner will be void in that suit and can trump the called ace, taking the 11 points and also gaining the lead.
- In general, there’s lots of trumps and not many cards in the side suits... If you have two other cards of a suit in which you have that ace, it’s often best not to lead it to a trick as it is more likely to be trumped. This seems especially true if you are on the non-declarer side. Often you are better throwing an ace like that into a trick that your partner is already going to win rather than leading it out.
- Remember that it’s ‘first past the post’ to the required card points so putting aces and 10s into tricks your partner is going to win is often more important than holding onto them and trying to take a trick with them (particularly if there are still lots of trumps around).
- It can be good to try to get in a position where either you or your partner are playing last to the trick so that you can either trump, throw a worthless card, or throw in an ace or 10 as required.
- Remember that if you lose a deuce game it costs you 1 game point. If everyone passes and you are the player who loses the ‘all pass’ hand, then this will cost you 3 game points. With a bit of a so-so hand, it can be better to play a deuce game and possibly lose 1 point than to risk losing three times as much on the ‘all pass’ game.