

Schafkopf

4 players

32 cards

Difficulty: Hard

Duration: Medium

Score at least 61 of 120 card points as the declaring team or soloist.

SETUP

- Use a 32-card deck; deal 8 cards each to 4 players.
- Players bid: Sauspiel (team), Solo (suit solo), Wenz (Jacks-only trump), or pass.
- In Sauspiel, the bidder calls a suit Ace to find their secret partner.

SCORING

- Ace = 11, Ten = 10, King = 4, Queen = 3, Jack = 2.
- Declarers need 61+ points; defenders need 60+ to defeat them.
- Solo and Wenz pay more than Sauspiel.

Tip: In Sauspiel, deduce who your partner is early by observing play patterns.

ON YOUR TURN

- Follow suit; Queens and Jacks belong to the trump suit.
- Highest trump or highest led-suit card wins the trick.
- In Sauspiel, the called Ace reveals the secret partner when played.

Schafkopf is Bavaria's traditional trick-taking game, predating and influencing both Skat and Sheepshead. Played with a 32-card Bavarian deck, it features permanent trump cards (all Queens and Jacks) and a unique bidding system for solo and team play.

Objective

Score at least 61 of the 120 available card points as the declaring team or soloist. Defenders try to prevent this by capturing more than 60 points.

Setup

1. **Players:** 4 players.
2. **Deck:** 32-card Bavarian deck (or standard deck using 7-A).
3. **Deal:** 8 cards each, dealt in batches of 4.
4. **Bidding:** Players may announce game types: Sauspiel (team game), Solo (suit solo), Wenz (Jacks-only trump), or pass.

Trump Hierarchy

1. **Standard (Sauspiel/Solo):** All Queens rank highest (Clubs > Spades > Hearts > Diamonds), then all Jacks in the same order, then the chosen trump suit from Ace down to 7.
2. **Wenz:** Only the four Jacks are trump (Clubs > Spades > Hearts > Diamonds). No suit trump.

Gameplay

1. **Sauspiel (Team Game):** The player who bids calls a suit Ace they do not hold. The holder of that Ace becomes their secret partner, revealed only when the Ace is played.
2. **Trick Play:** Follow suit if possible. Queens and Jacks belong to the trump 'suit.' Highest trump or highest led-suit card wins.
3. **Card Values:** Ace = 11, Ten = 10, King = 4, Queen = 3, Jack = 2, others = 0.

Tips and Strategies

- In Sauspiel, figure out who your partner is early by observing play patterns.
- Lead trumps to draw them out if you hold a strong trump hand.
- Count points as tricks are won to know exactly where each team stands.

Tips & Strategy

The secret partner mechanic in Sauspiel is Schafkopf's signature element. Deducing your partner's identity early gives your team a significant information advantage.

In Sauspiel, the called player must be subtle about holding the called Ace. Revealing partnership too early allows defenders to coordinate against you.