

Setback

2-7 players

52 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Medium

Win the bid and score at least as many points as you declared.

SETUP

- Use a standard 52-card deck.
- Deal 6 cards to each of 2-7 players.
- Players bid 1-4 points; highest bidder pitches (leads) to set the trump suit.

SCORING

- High: 1 point for the highest trump in play.
- Low: 1 point for the lowest trump in play.
- Jack: 1 point for capturing the jack of trumps.
- Game: 1 point for highest card-point total (Ten=10, A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1).

Tip: Lead your highest trump first to draw out opponents' trumps and establish control.

ON YOUR TURN

- Bidder leads any card; its suit becomes trump.
- Follow suit or play a trump; otherwise play any card.
- Highest trump wins, or highest led-suit card if no trump.

Setback, also known as Pitch, is an American trick-taking card game descended from All Fours. The opening lead 'pitches' the trump suit, and players compete to capture scoring points across several categories. It is widely played across the United States in both casual and tournament settings.

Objective

Win the bid and score at least as many points as you declared. Points come from specific trump cards and trick values. The first player or team to reach the target score wins the game.

Setup

1. **Players:** 2 to 7 players, individually or in partnerships.
2. **Deck:** Standard 52-card deck (some variants use a stripped deck).
3. **Deal:** Each player receives 6 cards (or 9 in some variants).
4. **Bidding:** Each player bids the number of points they expect to win (typically 1-4, or higher in extended versions). The highest bidder pitches (leads) the first trick, and that card's suit becomes trump.

Gameplay

1. **Pitch the trump:** The winning bidder leads any card; its suit is trump for the hand.
2. **Follow suit or trump:** Players must follow the led suit or play a trump. If unable to do either, they may play any card.
3. **Win tricks:** The highest trump wins the trick, or the highest card of the led suit if no trump is played.
4. **Complete the hand:** Play all tricks, then determine scoring.

Scoring

- **High:** One point for the player who holds the highest trump in play.
- **Low:** One point for the player who holds the lowest trump in play.
- **Jack:** One point for the player who captures the jack of trumps.
- **Game:** One point for the player with the highest total card-point value in tricks (Tens=10, Aces=4, Kings=3, Queens=2, Jacks=1).
- **Setback penalty:** If the bidder fails to meet their bid, they are 'set back' by the bid amount.

Variations

- **Ten-Point Pitch:** Expands to 10 scoring points by adding off-jack, jokers, and other special scoring cards.
- **Partnership Pitch:** Played in fixed teams with shared scoring.
- **Cutthroat Pitch:** Every player competes individually.

Tips and Strategies

- Bid conservatively unless you hold multiple trump honors and can control the hand.
- When pitching, lead your highest trump to draw out opponents' trumps and establish control.
- In partnership play, support your partner's bid by playing trumps high when they lead.

Tips & Strategy

Choosing when to bid and when to pass is the critical decision. A strong trump holding with the ace and several mid-range trumps usually justifies a bid.

The setback penalty makes overbidding costly. Experienced players bid just enough to win the auction without overcommitting, then play to maximize every point.