

# 42

## “The Card Players’ Card Game”™

[www.42TheGame.Com](http://www.42TheGame.Com)

**42™** is a card game for 2-7 players, recommended for precocious 12-year-olds and older. It combines bidding, trump suits, and taking or forcing tricks. Sufficiently involved to hold the interest of skilled players, it is not so punishing that you will hate life should you encounter a run of poor luck. While strategy changes with number of players, the game is equally challenging and enjoyable with any number. The more players, the longer it takes to complete the game. It takes about 15-20 minutes for a 2-person game, and about 2 hours for a 7-person game. **Equipment Included:** 1 “42” game board, 21 pegs (or 3 per player), 1 Dealer’s Button, 1 standard 52-card deck including 2 Jokers (not included), and 2-7 players (also not included).

**The Crib Sheet:** If you find yourself daunted by the length of the instructions, it might help to know that, once you’ve read these instructions, and played a few hands, most of the information you need to play is printed on the board.

**To Start:** Each player chooses three pegs of the same color, and places them in the “start” and “home” holes in her chosen column. Each player cuts for a card. The holder of the highest ranked card deals first. (See “Card Order” below for ranking). Place the Dealer’s Button in front of the dealer. (This serves as a reminder of who deals, when it comes to the next round.) Dealer deals 7 cards to each player.

**Determining Trump Suit (“Trump”) and Trump Number (“Trump #”):** Once the cards are dealt, Dealer turns over the top card of the remainder of the deck. This card determines both Trump and Trump #. **Example:** If the top card is the 10 of Spades, Spades are now Trump, and a 10 in any suit is the Trump # for this hand. If either Joker is turned over, there is no Trump Suit or Trump # for that round.

**Bidding:** Once Trump Suit and Trump # are established, players bid the number of tricks they think they can take, of the 7 tricks to be taken in each round. The person to the left of the dealer begins the bidding. Then the player to her left bids, and so on, until each player has bid one time.

- Players bid any number from 0 to 7, by placing their “home” peg in the corresponding number in the bidding section of the board. Once pegged, it cannot be changed.
- Dealer bids last, and may bid any number except the one that would make the total value of all bids equal 7. **Example:** In a 3-person game: Player #1 bids 3. Player #2 bids 4. Player #3 may make any bid except 0.

**The Play:** Once each player has bid once, the player to the left of the dealer leads the first card, face up on the table. Then the person to the left of that player plays a card, and so on until each player has played a card. Each player that follows the led card must follow suit, (must play a card in that suit), unless she:

- is void (has no cards) in the led suit, in which case, she may play any other card.
- plays either Joker.
- pairs the led card. (More about pairing later.)

The card with the greatest value (see Chart on reverse) takes the “trick” (the cards played during that hand). The player who takes the trick, places it face down in front of her, and leads the next card. The play continues until all the cards are played and all 7 tricks taken.

### Accumulating Points:

- Players are awarded 1 point for each trick taken and 3 bonus points for making their exact bid (except a bid of 0 or 7—see below).
- There is no penalty for not making your bid. **Example:** You bid 3 but only get 2 tricks. You still get awarded two points. You just don’t get a bonus.
- **Making a bid of 7:** Players who bid 7, and take 7 tricks, get awarded a total of 14 points, no matter the number of players.
- **Making a bid of zero:** Players who bid zero, and take zero tricks, get awarded a total of **14 points in a 2-player game, 7 points in a 3 player game, and 3 points in a game of 4 or more players.**

**Pegging:** At the end of each hand, the Dealer’s Button is passed left, to the dealer of the next hand, and each player pegs her points on the scoring section of the board, with one of her remaining two pegs. After the first hand, when she scores new points, her rear peg “leapfrogs” in front of the forward peg, to mark her new score. Leap-frogging the scoring pegs after each round, allows players to more easily count new points, and to check that they have been scored correctly.

In a 2-person game, once a player reaches the “14” mark on the board, they would have to successfully make a bid of 7 or zero, to win in one round. In games with more than 2 players, once a player reaches the “14” mark on the board, a player would have to successfully make a bid of 7 to win in one round.

Once players reach the final countdown, the #s 1-7 are marked on the board to let them know the minimum bid required to win. **Example:** Player reaches #3 on the countdown. She now knows if she makes a bid of 3 or greater, or a zero bid, she wins the game, **provided she takes the exact number of tricks that she bid.**

**Winning:** The first player to accumulate at least 42 points, **and** win their bid (take the exact number of tricks they bid), wins. Ties are possible with 3 or more players.

**Game Variation:** For a game with less uncertainty, simply omit the practice of “pairing,” “15-ing,” and one Joker. While simpler to learn, ironically, it may be preferable for skilled card players who would like to be able to assess their hands more accurately, or for tournament play. Though, we think, perhaps not as much fun.

**Taking Tricks: Card order from Lowest Value to Highest, is printed on your board but described here:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Card Order</b>   | <b>Lowest to Highest:</b> 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10, Jack, Queen, King, Little Joker, Big Joker. Higher cards win lower cards.<br><b>Example:</b> Five of Spades is led. Another player plays the Jack of Spades and takes the trick.   |
| <b>Suit Order</b>   | <b>Lowest value to Highest:</b> Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades. Suit order determines the winning card when 2 or more cards of the same numerical value are played. This applies in pairing, Trump #s, or "15s" (More about that below). <b>Example:</b> Queen of Diamonds takes Queen of Clubs.  |
| <b>Trump Suit</b>   | Trump Suit can be led at any time. Players must follow suit unless they are void in it, pair it or use a Joker. <b>Example:</b> Diamonds are Trump. Player #1 leads the Queen of Spades. Player #2 is void of Spades, plays the 3 of Diamonds and is poised to take trick. Player #3 is also void of Spades, plays a 5 of Diamonds and takes the trick.  |
| <b>Pair</b>         | A led card can be paired by any player. <b>A player does not have to be void of the led suit to pair the led card.</b> If more than one pair is made, the card with the highest suit takes the trick, <i>even if one of the cards is in the trump suit or is a trump #</i> . This play can be used to take a trick or to force a trick on another player. <b>Example of pairing to take a trick:</b> Clubs are trump. Queen of Clubs is led. Next player plays the Queen of Diamonds (even though she may have other Clubs) and is poised to take trick, because Diamonds rank higher than Clubs. The next player plays Queen of Spades, (even though she may have other Clubs) and takes the trick, because Spades rank higher than Diamonds.<br><b>Example of pairing to force a trick on another player:</b> Clubs are trump. Queen of Diamonds is led. Next player plays the Ace of Diamonds and is poised to take the trick. The next player plays the Queen of Clubs (even though she may have other Diamonds), forcing the Queen of Diamonds to take the trick, because Diamonds rank higher than Clubs.  |
| <b>15</b>           | A card that, when added to the led card only, equals 15, will take the trick, <i>even if the card played is numerically worth less than the card led</i> , because 15 ranks higher than card order. "15" can be played out-of-suit <i>only if a player is void in the led suit</i> . If more than one player "15s" the led card, first card order, and then suit order determines the winner. <b>Example 1:</b> Player #1 leads the 9 of Clubs. Player #2 "15s" the 9 with a 6 of Clubs and is poised to take the trick (9+6=15). Player #3 is void of Clubs but plays the 6 of Diamonds and takes the trick. (Note: if 9 had been the Trump #, then the 9 of the highest suit played would take the trick, because Trump # ranks higher than "15.") <b>Example 2:</b> Player #2 "15s" Player #1's five with a Jack of Spades. Player #3 takes it with a King of spades. Numbered cards are worth their face value when creating 15s. Although Aces are higher than Kings in card order, they are only worth 1 point and so cannot be used to make a 15, as no other card + 1 would equal 15. That is also true with 2s, 3s, and 4s. Face cards are worth 10 points.   |
| <b>Trump #</b>      | Trump # can be played out-of-suit <i>only if a player is void in the led suit or is using it to pair the led card</i> . If the Trump # is the only card the player has in the led suit, they have to play it. If more than one Trump # is played, the one with the highest suit wins the trick. <b>Example #1:</b> The Trump # is 7. Player #1 leads the Queen of Diamonds. Player #2 Plays the King of Diamonds and is poised to take the trick. Player #3 plays 7 of Diamonds and is now poised to take the trick because 7 is the Trump#. However, Player #4 plays the 7 of Hearts and takes the trick because Hearts rank higher than Diamonds. (Note: We feel it is well mannered to say, "Trump Number" when playing one. This way other players don't miss it, and inadvertently play a card they wouldn't have played if they had remembered this whole business about "Trump #").<br><b>Example #2 (a complex play):</b> Spades are Trump and 2 is the Trump #. Player #1 leads Queen of Hearts. Player #2 plays Ace of Hearts so, due to Card Order, is poised to take trick. Player #3 plays 4 of Spades (Trump Suit), so is now poised to take the trick, as Trump outranks Card Order. Player #4 plays Queen of Diamonds, pairing the led card. Pairs outrank Trump and, since Hearts outrank Diamonds, the Queen of Hearts would now be forced to take the trick. Player #5 plays a 2 of Clubs and takes the trick because Trump # outranks both pairs and Trump suit. |
| <b>Little Joker</b> | Jokers can be played as any suit, at any time. Players agree, prior to play, which Joker will be considered the Little Joker and which will be considered the Big Joker. (This is fairly obvious in most decks.) The Big Joker is the highest valued card in the deck, so will take any trick. It is   |
| <b>Big Joker</b>    | the only card higher than the Little Joker, which will take any other card in the deck, aside from the Big Joker. <b>A player that leads a Joker, must declare the suit to be followed.</b> This may include a suit in which the player has already played void. Such power.   |