

[Direct Hit]

A game in 3 acts by Günter Burkhardt and published by Berliner Spielkarten.

[Translation by Rick Heli. All editorial additions in square brackets.]

**Players:** 3-5

**Ages:** 10 and up

**Game length:** about 30 minutes

**Contents:** 50 playing cards [1-10 in 5 suits], 4 price cards, 1 scoring track, 1 "meld points" card, 5 pawns

## Idea of the Game

A complete round consists of 3 phases. In Phase 1 the players buy in turn a single card, until each has 8. In Phase 2 each player may, by melding, score points with his 8 cards. And in Phase 3 a normal trick-taking game will be played with each trick counting 5 points.

As a rule it will take several rounds to find a winner. If after a complete round, i.e. after all 3 phases, a player has his pawn in the goal area (61-70 points), he wins. Should there be several pawns in this area, the winner is the one whose pawn is closest to number 66. [Nothing is said about whether it is better to be over or under. Apparently a tie is just that. –translator]

## Setup

[See the picture "Abb. 1)" in the German rules for a clearer idea of how to lay things out.]

- The scoring track (1-80) is placed in the middle of the table.
- The four price cards are placed face up next to one another just below the scoring track and in the order [left to right] 4 - 2 - 1 - 0.
- The 50 playing cards are shuffled and the deck placed face down to the side of the four price cards.
- The top card is revealed and half placed under the deck – the suit of this card will serve as the trump suit for the entire round.
- Each player takes a pawn and places it on the scoring track:

**3-4 players:** on the 25 space

**5 players:** on the 30 space

(At the start the pawns are somewhat crowded, they will be distributed rather shortly thereafter.)

- The "meld points" card is placed face up next to the scoring track. This card merely serves as an overview reminder; with experienced players it is mostly not needed and can be laid aside.

[The example labeled "Abb. 1)" appears at this point in the German rules. The trump card in the picture is a green 8.]

## Course of Play

The game is conducted in 3 consecutive phases:

### Phase 1 - Buying Cards:

Next the top four cards of the deck are revealed and placed to correspond to the price cards. For each price card there is exactly one playing card. If there is a trump card, it is placed under the most expensive price card, i.e. under the 4.

If more than one trumps are revealed, then the highest such goes under 4, the second under 2, etc.

Among non-trumps, the higher their rank, the more expensive they are (among tied non-trumps the decision is left to the dealer), for example:

[Here in the German rules is the picture labeled "Abb.) 2".]

The youngest player goes first. He takes the card of his choice into his hand and deducts its price from the scoring track (the card below the zero is naturally free).

Now the player reveals the top card from the deck. The four cards are once again arranged so as to correspond by rank as previously described.

[Only later in the rules is a very important point made which would fit more conveniently here. Thus: if a new non-trump card ties existing card or cards in rank, then the new card is placed to the right of these existing cards. Now back to your regularly scheduled example. –translator]

For example:

*Sabine takes (see Abb. 2) the green 4 (trump) and moves her pawn back on the scoring track by the corresponding cost, 2 spaces. Now Sabine takes the top card from the deck, a red 2, and re-arranges the four up cards accordingly:*

[Here in the German rules is the picture labeled "Abb.) 3".]

Now the next player takes his turn in clockwise order in the same way as just described: he takes the card of his choice into his hand, deducts points from the scoring track accordingly, reveals a new card and re-arranges the four up cards according to their values so as to correspond to the price cards. Players continue to do this in order until each player has 8 cards.

## **Phase 2 - Melding Points:**

Each player may now meld cards in order to score points.

The cards in question must be revealed for this purpose. The points scored are immediately recorded on the scoring track.

The player who feels that he has the lowest sum of all card ranks must at the request of the player to his left show them to this player. The smallest sum must be melded, the others are optional. In particular:

[Here in the German rules is the picture labeled "Abb.) 4".]

### **Melding Points:**

|                             |             |           |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 3 cards of the same rank —> | Triplet:    | 5 points  |
| 4 cards of the same rank —> | Quadruplet: | 10 points |
| 5 cards of the same rank —> | Quintuplet: | 25 points |

Cards in all 5 suits: 5 points

Smallest sum: 5 points and Start Player

[The rules don't say what to do in case there is a tie for smallest sum. The inventor writes: "My rule: the player who has the most "1" cards; in case of a tie the most "2" cards and so on... Playing regards, Günter]

## **Phase 3 - The Trick-taking Game:**

Now the players use their 8 cards to play a normal trick-taking game. The player who had the smallest sum in Phase 2 is first to lead and plays the card of his choice. In turn each player plays on this, always following the suit led, if able. If unable to follow the suit, he may play another suit, or trump.

The highest trump takes the trick. If no trump was played, then the highest card in the first played suit takes the trick.

Each trick earns 5 points which are immediately received on the scoring track.

The winner of each trick leads the next one and may lead the card of his choice. All must again play a card, the trick winner receives 5 points, etc. All 8 cards are played.

## End of the game

As a rule it will take several rounds to find a winner. If after a complete round, i.e. after Phase 3, a player has his pawn in the goal area (61-70 points), he wins. Should there be several pawns in this area, the winner is the one whose pawn is closest to scoring 66. [Nothing is said about whether it is better to be over or under. Apparently a tie is just that. –translator]

## Miscellaneous

- In each new round a different player makes the first card purchase in Phase 1.
- It should be evident that a player who, for example, has four cards of rank 9 in hand, may only score for a quadruplet or a triplet, but not both.
- It should be evident that in Phase 2 several different things can be melded, for example two quadruplets, or one quintuplet and one triplet, or a triplet, all suits and the smallest sum, etc.
- Concerning the smallest sum meld of all 8 cards, we pray you add honestly. Verification by the lefthand neighbor should be the exception rather than the rule. [Apparently each player is supposed to announce his total and the lowest wins the points, with verification being done only if someone remembers things differently than they seem. –translator]
- If in the course of play a player should overshoot the end of the scoring track (80 points), his pawn then continues from the 41 space. *If Frank, for example, has his pawn on 78 and earns 5 points in Phase 3 from a trick, his pawn lands on the 43 space.*
- If after Phase 3 a player's pawn is on a space in the range 71-80, he must continue to play from that location in the next round.
- If in the course of Phase 1 a non-trump is revealed whose rank is identical to that of one of the existing non-trump up cards, this new card is placed to the right of the other cards of the same rank, that is, so as to correspond to the next lower price card. For example:

[Here in the German rules is the picture labeled "Abb.) 5".]

*It's Peter's turn. He takes the yellow 10 and moves his pawn 4 spaces back on the scoring track. Now he draws a violet 8 from the deck. The red 8 which is already on the table will be promoted to price 4 and the new violet 8 placed immediately to its right, i.e. at price 2.*

## Variant

The goal area is shrunk to 63-69 points. In Phase 1 when a new card is revealed, it is placed in the same space just vacated. Additionally, the player **must** swap (exchange) two cards with each other. The rest of the game is as before.