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Tricky Bid

A trick-taking game for 2-4 daring players

(Each player puts up an ante card.) The winner of the trick gets some or all of the ante cards. However, it isn't the number of tricks won that decides the winner at the end of the game, but the total value of ante cards won. The dilemma is: do you use your high cards to win tricks, or as lucrative ante cards?

Components

80 cards numbered 0-15 in five colors

Setup

At the start of the game, a dealer is chosen. The dealer shuffles the cards and deals them:

2 players: the dealer sorts out two colors and puts them back into the box. Each player receives 16 cards.

3 players: the dealer sorts out two colors and puts them back into the box. Each player receives 12 cards.

4 players: All five colors are used and each player receives 16 cards.

The remaining cards are placed on the table as a face-down draw pile. The top card is flipped over and determines the trump color. The player to the dealer's left is the starting player.

Goal of the game

Each player tries to win tricks that yield high ante cards. It doesn't matter how many tricks a player wins, only how many points s/he scores with his/her ante cards.

Play

The ante

Before each trick, the players bid one of their hand cards. This card is their ante card for the following trick. Beginning with the starting player and proceeding clockwise, the players place a card from their hand openly in front of them.

The trick

The starting player also begins the trick by placing a card openly in the middle of the table. The other players follow in clockwise order and have to follow suit in the color of the starting player's card, called the lead card. A player who doesn't have a card of that color may either trump or dump (a player who plays neither the color of the first card nor a trump card can never win the trick, no matter how high the card is). When all players have played a card, the player who played the highest trump card wins the trick. If no trump was played, the player with the highest card in the lead color wins the trick.

Winning the ante

The winner of the trick gets his/her own ante card plus all other ante cards of that same color and places the card(s) face-down in front of him/her. All ante cards in other colors and all trick cards are placed on a discard pile.

Changing trump

The winner of the trick can now decide whether trump shall be changed or not. If s/he decides to change trump, the previous trump card is discarded and the top card from the draw pile is flipped over. The color of this card is the new trump color (this can be the same color as before).

The next trick

For the next trick, the player to the left of the previous starting player leads. Winning a trick has no influence on the playing order. Instead, the right to lead the new trick proceeds in clockwise fashion. Beginning with the new starting player, each player now places another ante card in front of him/her, the trick is played, and so on.

End of the round and scoring

When the last trick of a round has been played (and therefore no one holds any more cards), the players add up the numbers on the ante cards they won and note the results.

Next rounds and end of the game

In the next round, the new dealer is the player to the left of the previous dealer. The number of rounds played is the number of players (or, if everyone agrees, a multiple thereof).

At the end of the game, the player who has collected the most points wins. In the case of a tie, all players involved are declared winners.

Tricky Bid for five or six players

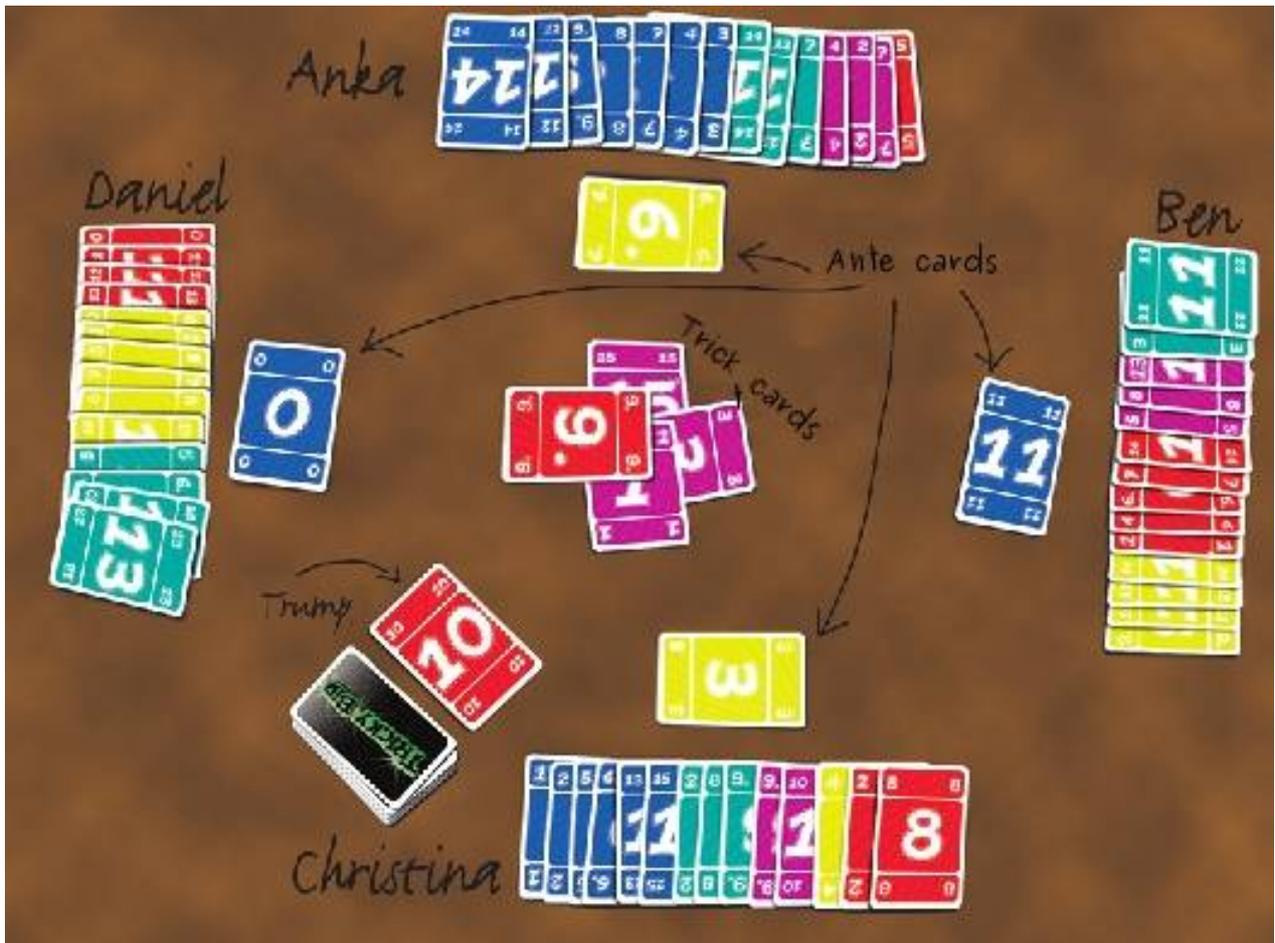
Tricky Bid can also be played with 5 players (four colors, 10 cards per player) or 6 players (five colors, 12 cards per player). However, with more players the game becomes more dependent on luck than with fewer players.

Example:

The first trick of a game with four players is shown in the picture. Daniel is the dealer and Anka is the starting player. She puts up a yellow 6 as her ante card, in order to get rid of yellow (which enables her to trump later when someone leads with yellow). For the same reason, Ben puts up a blue 11. He hopes to win the first trick if the lead card is blue. Christina has more than one card of each color and practically no chance to win the first trick. She puts up a yellow 3, because if, against all odds, she does win the trick (when the lead is blue, for instance), she can also win Anka's yellow 6 – and if Anka wins the trick, Christina only loses 3 points. Daniel puts up the blue 0 because he not only gets rid of a second color, but also gets a risk-free (the 0 counts for nothing, after all) chance to win Ben's 11.

Anka and Christina now play for nine points (6+3), Ben and Daniel for 11 points (11+0). Anka starts the trick with a pink 15. All others have to follow suit with pink now, if they can.

Ben and Christina both put down their lowest pink card. Daniel is lucky because he doesn't have pink cards. He can either trump or dump now. Since he can win 11 points, he trumps of course. Daniel now collects both of the blue ante cards and puts them face-down in front of him. These are his first points. The two yellow ante cards and the four trick cards are discarded. Daniel decides to keep trump (if he decided to change it, the trump card would be discarded and a new trump card would be flipped over from the top of the draw pile). Since Anka led the previous trick, it is now Ben's turn to begin the next trick by putting up an ante card.



(English translation by Hilko Drude and Amgad Squires)