

Zaraba Twenty-Two

Designer: @sugech

Players: 3

*Another rough day at the market
Beyond the shining victory
Hello from the bottom of the dark valley
Reading the stock market waves
I'm aiming to be a success tomorrow!*

The following descriptions are based on the assumption that you have some knowledge of trick-taking games. There is no explanation of terms. Please be aware in advance.

WHAT KIND OF TRICK-TAKING GAME IS IT?: This is a trick-taking game for exactly three players, with must-follow and no trump cards.

One of the features of this game is that the value of each card taken in a trick can go up or down like a stock price. Each player, depending upon their turn in a trick, has a distinct role: the lead player narrows down the conditions for stock price changes, the second player typically chooses the stock to change, and the last player's card will finish determining who wins the trick.

WHAT TO PREPARE: 1 deck of playing cards; a way to keep score, such as pen and paper

GAME PREPARATION: Remove the Queen and King cards as well as the Jokers; these are not used for this game.

The card strengths are as follows:

← Weak A · 2 · 3 ··· 9 · 10 · J Strong →
(A is calculated as 1, J as 11)

Shuffle the 44 playing cards and deal 14 cards to each player. There will be two cards left over. Place them face up on the table where everyone can easily see them. These cards are called "stock price cards", and the place where the cards are placed is called "stock chart area".

PROCESSING THE STOCK CHART: Arrange the cards by suit. As the game progresses, more and more stock cards will be added, so it is a good idea to move them around a little each time so that the rank and number of the cards can be easily seen.

As you will see later in the scoring section, the value of the cards you have won will go up or down depending on the state

of the stock chart, so be sure to put them in a place where they can be easily seen and everyone can understand the situation.

HOW TO PLAY: The player who has made the most money in the stock market recently will be the first player to start the round. If you don't know, use rock-paper-scissors or any other appropriate method to decide. (In subsequent rounds, the round starting player will move in a clockwise direction.)

The start player leads to the first trick; the second player is called the second player, and the third player is called the last player.

The lead player chooses two cards from their hand and places them face up on the table. These two cards are called the lead cards. (You can play any combination of cards, but if you have only one card in your hand when you become the lead player, this round ends and you proceed to score calculation.)

The turn then passes clockwise to the second player. This player then follows either suit of the two lead cards. This game is "must-follow", but there are many situations that can arise.

- If you do not have any cards in your hand that can follow either of the two lead cards, play any card from your hand, to the table and end your turn. Since there was no suit followed, the second player cannot win the trick.
- If the two lead cards are of different suits, declare which suit you want to follow and play a card of that suit from your hand to the table. The lead card that was followed stays on the table and becomes the card the lead person played to the trick. Afterwards, the unfollowed lead card is sent to the stock chart area as a stock price card; this card will not belong to anyone, is not used in the trick resolution, and is not acquired. Your turn now ends.

(If you can only follow one suit, you must follow it. This is a must-follow game. In this case, the lead card of the suit you could not follow will always be moved to the stock chart area.)

- If two lead cards are of the same suit, you must play a card of that suit from your hand to the table. Afterwards, the second player decides which of the two lead cards should be sent to the stock chart area and which should be left on the table. This is the end of the second player's turn.

The turn then passes to the last player. The last player basically decides the winner of the trick by following the suit decided by the second player. The exact procedure changes

depending on the situation, so I will describe the possibilities here:

- If the second player has already decided on a suit, and that suit can be followed, the last player must also follow by playing a card from their hand to end the turn. If they can't, they play any card from their hand and end their turn. If the last player does not follow, they are not eligible to win the trick.
- If the second player could not follow suit and both of the lead cards are still on the table, the last player's options are the same as the previously described second player's options.

Once everyone has taken their turn, if the two lead cards are still on the table (no players followed), the lead player chooses which card to leave on the table and which to send to the stock chart area.

There should now be one card in front of each player on the table. Compare the ranks of the cards of the lead suit, and the player with the strongest rank wins the trick.

← Weak A · 2 · 3 ··· 9 · 10 · J Strong →
(A is calculated as 1, J as 11)

The winner takes the three cards from the trick. (Stock cards sent to the stock chart area are not collected.)

Keep your acquired cards face down and do not mix them with the cards in your hand. You may look at the cards you've acquired at any time, but you may not look at other players' acquired cards.

Next, check the end-of-round conditions, and if the conditions are not met, the winner of the trick becomes the next lead player and repeats the procedure.

END OF ROUND CONDITIONS: If any of the following situations occur at the end of a trick, the round ends and points are calculated.

- A player has zero cards in their hand
- The next lead player has only one card in their hand (and thus cannot play the next two lead cards)

At that point, the round ends and the scores are calculated. Any cards remaining in players' hands are discarded and not included in any score calculation.

SCORE CALCULATION: The score is determined by the cards you acquired and the status of the stock chart.

Calculation of the Stock Chart - Group the cards in the stock chart area by suit and sum the ranks of the cards of the same suit.

However, there are exceptions from the previously stated card values. If there is an A (Ace) in the stock price area, it is calculated as rank 11. If there is a J (Jack) in the stock price area, it is calculated as rank 10.

Compare these sums to the following conditions to calculate the points earned for cards acquired in each suit.

- If the sum of the ranks of a suit is 0 (there are no cards of that suit), then acquired cards of that suit are worth 0 points.
- If the sum of the ranks of a suit is 1-21, each card acquired in the suit is worth a number of points equal to the number of cards of that suit in the stock chart area. (Example: If there are 3 spade cards in the stock chart, summing to 13, and a player has 5 spade cards, they earn $3 \times 5 = 15$ points.)
- If the sum of the ranks of a suit is 22 or more, each acquired card of that suit is worth -1 point.

END OF ROUND: Next, collect all of the cards, shuffle, and repeat the setup process. The start player for the next round will shift clockwise from the previous start player.

After three rounds are completed, each player totals their points from the three rounds, and the player with the highest score wins. In the case of a tie, the winner of the game is the one who wins at "eight eastern fists"¹.

Congratulations to the winners! If you play the stock market now, you'll gain a windfall! Oh, but I can't be responsible for that, so you're on your own...

¹ <https://www.weblio.jp/content/%E6%9D%B1%E5%85%AB%E6%8B%B3>