

Scotch Whist

Scotch Whist is sometimes called Catch the Ten because one of the objects of the game is to win the trick that contains the 10 of the trump suit. It first appeared in *The American Hoyle* (or *Gentleman's Handbook of Games*) of 1868.

Number of players

Any number from two to eight may play. If two, three, five or seven play, each plays for himself. If four, six or eight play they may either play each for himself, or form into partnerships.

Cards

Scotch Whist is played with a pack of 36 cards. The deck is reduced by removing the 2s, 3s, 4s, and 5s from the standard pack. The cards rank from Ace (high) to 6 (low) with the exception that

the Jack of the trump suit is promoted to rank above the Ace. Every player must begin with the same number of cards: if five or seven players take part, the ♠6 is removed from the pack; and if eight players take part, all four 6s are taken out.

Dealing varies with the number of players taking part in the game. If two play, each receives 18 cards that are dealt in three separate hands of six cards each, to be played independently; if three play, each receives 12 cards that are dealt in two separate hands of six cards each, to be played independently; if four or more play, the cards are dealt out in the normal clockwise rotation. In every case the dealer turns up the last card to indicate the trump suit.

How to play

The player on the left of the dealer leads the first trick. Thereafter the player who wins a trick leads the next. Play follows the usual routine of trick-taking games: a player must follow suit, if he can, to the suit led and if he cannot he may either trump the trick or discard on it.

The object of the game is to win tricks containing the five top trump cards, and the player, or partnership, that does so scores 11 points for the Jack, four points for the Ace, three points for the King, two points for the Queen, and ten points for the 10. Over and above this, each player, or partnership, counts the number of cards taken in tricks, and scores one point for every card in excess of the number

originally dealt to him, or them. The game ends when a player, or partnership, has reached an agreed total, usually 41 points.

It stands to reason that a player must direct his play towards winning tricks that contain the top cards of the trump suit, particularly that which contains the 10, since the Jack can only go to the player to whom it has been dealt, and usually the luck of the deal determines who will win the tricks that contain the Ace, King and Queen.

In a partnership game the player who has been dealt the 10, either singleton or doubleton, would be well advised to lead it. It gives a good score if his partner is able to win with the Jack; if an opponent wins the trick the partnership must hope to recover by aiming to win as many tricks as possible. If the game is being played all against all, the player who has been dealt the 10 should try and get rid of all the cards in his shortest suit, so that he can win the 10 by trumping with it.