

Spinado

Spinado is a less complicated version of Pope Joan (see page 199) with only three pools: Matrimony, Intrigue and Game.

Number of players

Any number from two to seven may play.

Cards

Remove the four 2s and the ♦8 from a standard pack of 52 cards. Cards rank from King (high) to Ace (low). The dealer deals the cards to the players and to an extra hand (widow). As the players must each hold the same number of cards, over-cards go to the widow hand.

How to play

Before dealing the dealer contributes 12 counters to the Matrimony pool, and six each to the Intrigue and Game pools. The other players contribute three counters each to the Game pool. Matrimony is the King and Queen of Diamonds, Intrigue is the Queen and Jack of Diamonds.

The player on the left of the dealer starts the game by playing any card. The other players continue by playing the next higher cards in the chosen suit in succession until a stop is reached. The player who plays the stop card then starts a new run by playing any card he chooses.

The ♦A is known as Spinado and whoever holds it may play it at any time as long as he plays it with the proper card, announcing that he is playing Spinado. It

constitutes a stop, and he receives three counters from each opponent.

During the game, the player who plays the ♦K receives two counters from each of the other players, and if he plays the ♦Q as well he wins the Matrimony pool. The player who plays the ♦Q and the ♦J wins the Intrigue pool, and those who play the Kings of spades, hearts and clubs receive one counter from each of the other players.

The game is won by the player who is the first to play all his cards. He takes the counters in the Game pool and is exempt from contributing to the pools in the next deal, unless it is his turn to deal.

A player who is left with Spinado in his hand pays the winner of the game double for each card he is left with. Spinado, therefore, should not be kept back too long. However, it is not always best to play it with one's first card. If, for example, a 10 is led, and the player who holds Spinado also holds the King and Jack, it is best not to play Spinado with the Jack, because if the Jack proves to be a stop there was no need for the play of Spinado, and the King is the natural stop if another player follows with the Queen.

It is better to play Spinado with some card that is not known to be a stop.