

DRACULA'S WHIST

a Card Game



RULES OF PLAY



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Overview

A trick-taking game for 4–6 players, in teams of two

Teams play a series of rounds, competing to earn points in two ways:

1 WINNING TRICKS



Each round is a hand of whist. Winning more tricks than your “book” (see *Scoring*) earns points, but only if your team wins at least as many tricks as it bid.

2 FILLING IN YOUR SET SHEET



Tricks that contain a **Blood card** (the 2, 4, 6, or 8 of Hearts) are set aside into a shared pile called **the thrall**. Once per round, one team claims the thrall and uses its cards to check off boxes on their Set Sheet. Completed sets earn bonus points.

WINNING THE GAME

The first team to reach 27 points wins.



What You Need



SPADES



CLUBS



DIAMONDS



HEARTS



CUPS



TREES

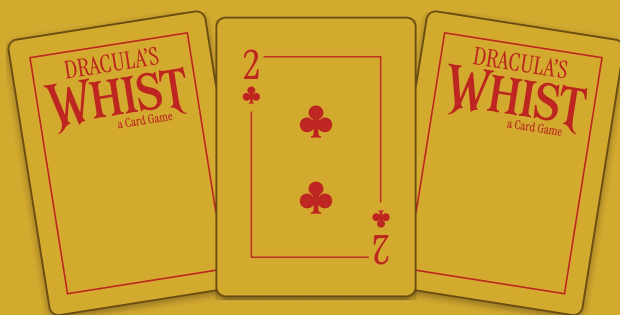
4 PLAYERS · 32-CARD DECK

6 PLAYERS ADD

- **4 players:** Use the 32-card deck (Spades, Clubs, Diamonds, and Hearts). Each suit runs from 1 (low) to 8 (high). Play in two teams of two.
- **6 players:** Use the 48-card deck (the same four suits plus Cups and Trees). Play in three teams of two.
- A **Set Sheet** and pencil for each team. Sheets to copy are on pages 20–21.

HEARTS ARE ALWAYS THE TRUMP SUIT

The **even** Hearts (2, 4, 6, 8) are called **Blood cards**. The **odd** Hearts (1, 3, 5, 7) are ordinary trumps. The next page shows them all.



Hearts and Blood

Hearts are trumps in every round: any Heart beats any card of another suit. The four **even** Hearts are the **Blood cards**. A trick that contains one goes into the thrall instead of a team's trick pile (page 12).



THE FOUR BLOOD CARDS

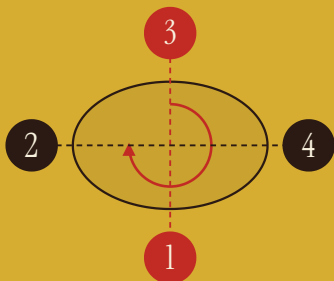
The four **odd** Hearts are ordinary trumps. They win tricks the same way, but a trick that holds only odd Hearts stays with the team that won it. The **1 of Hearts** has a job of its own: the team that wins the trick containing it claims the thrall for the round (page 12).



THE ODD HEARTS · ORDINARY TRUMPS

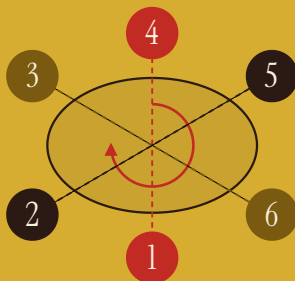
Teams and Seating

Partners sit directly across the table from each other. Play always passes **clockwise** (to the left).



FOUR PLAYERS

Teams: 1 & 3 · 2 & 4



SIX PLAYERS

Teams: 1 & 4 · 2 & 5 · 3 & 6

Dealing

Choose any dealer for the first round; after that, the deal passes to the left each round. Shuffle and deal out the whole deck. **Everyone gets 8 cards.**

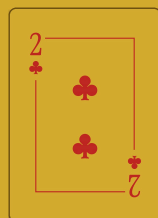
BEFORE THE FIRST ROUND

- 1 Choose teams and sit across the table from your partner.
- 2 Give each team a Set Sheet and a pencil.
- 3 Choose a dealer, shuffle, and deal out the whole deck.
- 4 Find the 2 of Clubs: whoever holds it opens the bidding.

Bidding

A **bid** is the total number of tricks you think your team will win this round (out of 8).

The player holding the **2 of Clubs** speaks first, and bidding goes clockwise from there. On your turn, either **pass** or **bid a higher number** than the current highest bid.



SPEAKS FIRST

Once you pass, you can no longer bid on the current round. Bidding ends when a bid stands and everyone else passes in turn (that is, when no one raises the bid).

Two things to keep in mind when you bid:

- **Your team's bid is the highest number anyone on your team said.** If your team wins fewer tricks than that number, you score nothing this round, so try not to over-bid.
- If neither player on a team bid, that team's bid is 0. A bid of 0 can't fail, but see *Claiming the Thrall* (page 12) for why bidding low has its own cost.

If every player passes without anyone bidding, every team's bid is 0, teams do not exchange cards, and the player holding the 2 of Clubs leads the first trick.

WHY BIDDING LOW HAS A COST

A team that bids 0 can't fail its bid, but every trick it then wins is an overtrick. If that team claims the thrall, it loses 3 cards for each one, so a low bid can leave very little to check off.

TABLE TALK

You may not say or show what's in your hand. You may not communicate with your partner about what to bid or what cards to play.

EXAMPLE · A FOUR-PLAYER AUCTION

Seat 2 holds the 2 of Clubs and opens with a bid of 3. Seat 3 bids 4. Seat 4 passes. Seat 1 bids 5. Seat 2 passes, and seat 3 passes too, so seat 1's bid stands.

Seats 1 & 3 are a team; the highest number either of them said was 5, so **their bid is 5**. Seats 2 & 4 **bid 3**, the only number their side named. Having passed, seat 4 could not have re-entered the bidding.

TURN	SEAT	SAYS	HIGHEST BID
1	2 (holds 2 of Clubs)	Bids 3	3
2	3	Bids 4	4
3	4	Passes	4
4	1	Bids 5	5
5	2	Passes	5
6	3	Passes	5

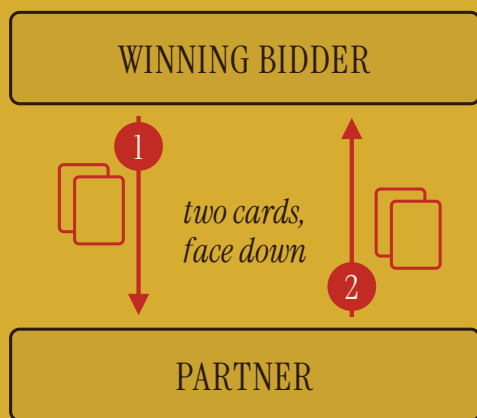
Seat 1 made the winning bid, so seats 1 & 3 perform the Transfusion (next page) and seat 1 leads the first trick.

Transfusion

Winning the bid has benefits. Before the first trick:

- 1 The player who made the winning bid passes **two cards of their choice, face down**, to their partner.
- 2 The partner picks them up (holding 10 cards temporarily), then passes **any two cards** from their hand, face down, back.

Both players end with 8 cards again. **Only the winning bidder's team does this.**



THE WINNING BIDDER PASSES FIRST; THE PARTNER PASSES BACK

Playing a Trick

The player who made the winning bid leads the first trick of the round. After that, whoever won the latest trick leads the next one.

- 1 The leader plays any card from their hand **except a Heart**. Hearts may not be led until a Heart has been played earlier in the round (trumps must be “broken” first). *Rare exception: a player who has nothing but Hearts may lead one anyway.*
- 2 Going clockwise, every other player must play a card of the suit that was led, if they have one.
- 3 A player with no cards of the led suit may play anything, including a Heart.
- 4 The highest card of the led suit wins the trick unless anyone played a Heart, in which case the highest Heart wins.
- 5 The winner gathers the trick and leads the next one.

The round continues until all 8 tricks have been played.

EXAMPLE · ANATOMY OF A TRICK



SEAT 1 LEADS



SEAT 2



SEAT 3 · WINS



SEAT 4

Seat 1 leads the 5 of Diamonds. Seat 2 follows suit with the 7.

Seat 3 has no Diamonds, so may play anything, and chooses the 2 of Hearts. Seat 4 follows with the 8, the highest Diamond on the table.

Seat 3 wins the trick: a Heart is a trump, and beats every card of the led suit.

Because the 2 of Hearts is a Blood card, the trick goes into the thrall (next page) rather than seat 3's trick pile, but it still counts as a trick won by seats 1 & 3. Hearts are now broken, so from here on anyone may lead a Heart.

The Thrall

Whenever a completed trick contains a **Blood card** (any even Heart: 2, 4, 6, or 8), the whole trick goes face up into a shared pile called **the thrall**, instead of into the winning team's trick pile.

The trick still counts toward the winning team's trick total, so keep track of who won it. *An easy way: let each team keep its Blood tricks in a separate stack beside the thrall until the round is scored, then add them in.*

Tricks with no Blood card (including tricks with only odd Hearts) are kept by the team that won them, as usual.

Claiming the Thrall

During each round:

- The team that wins the trick that **contains the 1 of Hearts claims the thrall** for this round.
- If you win the thrall, announce it, and turn the 1 of Hearts sideways in whichever pile it lands so everyone can check it later.



TURNED
SIDEWAYS

The claiming team doesn't take the thrall right away; that happens at the end of the round.

End of the Round

When all 8 tricks have been played, do these three steps in order:

1 Score the tricks

Count each team's tricks, including tricks that went to the thrall.
Then, for each team:

- If the team won **fewer tricks than it bid**, it scores 0 this round.
- Otherwise, in the **4-player game**: the first 3 tricks score nothing (this is called the “book”), and every trick after the third scores **1 point**.
- In the **6-player game**: the first trick scores nothing, and every trick after the first scores **1 point**. (With three teams there are fewer tricks to go around, so the book is smaller.)

	4 PLAYERS	6 PLAYERS
The book (tricks that score nothing)	3	1
Each trick beyond the book	1 pt	1 pt

2 Claim the thrall

The claiming team takes the thrall **minus a penalty for winning more tricks than they promised**. Count how many tricks the claiming team won **beyond its bid** (if it won fewer than its bid, that number is zero). Multiply that number by three, then shuffle the thrall and remove that many cards at random. The claiming team gets the remaining cards.

THE OVERTRICK PENALTY

Lose 3 thrall cards for every overtrick.

An overtrick is a trick won beyond your bid.

3 Fill in the Set Sheet

The claiming team checks off each of its thrall cards on its Set Sheet (page 16), then discards them. Score any newly completed sets right away.

Then the deal passes to the left and a new round begins.

EXAMPLE · SCORING A FOUR-PLAYER ROUND

The Red team bid **5** and won **6** tricks, including the trick with the 1 of Hearts. The Black team bid **3** and won **2**. Three tricks contained Blood cards, so the thrall holds 12 cards.

STEP	RED TEAM	BLACK TEAM
1 · Tricks	Made their bid. 6 tricks – book of 3 = 3 points .	Missed their bid: 0 points .
2 · Thrall	Claimed it. One overtrick (6 – 5): 3 cards shuffled out, so they keep 9 of the 12 .	—
3 · Sets	Check off the 9 cards. The Diamonds row is now complete: + 3 points .	—

Red scores **6 points** this round; Black scores none. Had Red bid 6 instead of 5, they would have kept the whole thrall.

The Set Sheet

Each team keeps a sheet with one box for every card in the deck. For 4-player games, use the grid of **32 boxes** (four suit rows of 8). For 6-player games, use the grid of **48 boxes** (six suit rows of 8). Rows are suits, and columns are ranks 1 through 8.

When your team claims the thrall, check off the box for each card you kept (if it isn't checked already).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
									
									
									Suit set · 3 pts
									

3 pts

TWO SETS COMPLETE: ALL DIAMONDS AND ALL 7S

A **set** is complete when every one of its boxes is checked:

- A **suit set** (like “all Diamonds”) needs all 8 cards of that suit to be checked.
- A **rank set** (like “all 5s”) needs that rank’s card from every suit in play (4 cards in the 4-player game, 6 in the 6-player game).

Scoring the Set Sheet

Score each set once, as soon as it's completed:

COMPLETED SET	BONUS
All Hearts	1 point
All 1s, all 2s, or all 3s	1 point
All 4s, all 5s, or all 6s	2 points
All 8s	2 points
All 7s	3 points
Any other complete suit	3 points

A card can count toward both a suit set and a rank set. Checked boxes stay checked for the rest of the game.

Winning the Game

VICTORY

The first team to reach 27 points wins.

If two teams reach 27 in the same round, finish scoring the round completely. Whichever team has the higher total wins. If they're still tied, play one more round; the higher total after it wins.

A Round at a Glance

- 1 **DEAL** · 8 cards each. The deal passes to the left each round.
- 2 **BID** · The holder of the 2 of Clubs speaks first; then clockwise, pass or raise. A team's bid is the highest number either partner said; if neither partner bids, it is 0.
- 3 **TRANSFUSION** · The winning bidder passes 2 cards face down to their partner, who passes any 2 back.
- 4 **PLAY 8 TRICKS** · The winning bidder leads first. Follow suit if you can. Hearts are trump and can't be led until broken. Any trick holding a Blood card (even Heart) goes to the thrall, but still counts for the team that won it.
- 5 **CLAIM** · The team that wins the trick containing the 1 of Hearts claims the thrall. Turn the 1 sideways.
- 6 **SCORE TRICKS** · Bid not made: 0. Otherwise 1 point per trick beyond the book (3 tricks with 4 players, 1 trick with 6).
- 7 **TAKE THE THRALL** · Shuffle it and remove 3 cards per overtrick (tricks won beyond the bid). The claiming team keeps the rest.
- 8 **FILL IN THE SET SHEET** · Check off the kept cards, then discard them. Score each newly completed set at once.

Scoring at a Glance

TRICKS	4 PLAYERS	6 PLAYERS
The book (tricks that score nothing)	3	1
Each trick beyond the book	1 pt	1 pt
Team won fewer tricks than it bid	0	0
COMPLETED SET	BONUS	
All Hearts	1	
All 1s, 2s, or 3s	1	
All 4s, 5s, 6s, or 8s	2	
All 7s	3	
Any other complete suit	3	

WINNING

First team to **27 points**. If two teams get there in the same round, the higher total wins; if still tied, play one more round.

Set Sheet

Four-player game · 32 cards · one sheet per team. Copy freely.

TEAM

PLAYERS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Suit set
 SPADES									3 pts
 CLUBS									3 pts
 DIAMONDS									3 pts
 HEARTS									1 pt
Rank set	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	2 pts	2 pts	2 pts	3 pts	2 pts	

Score

Cross off your total as it grows. The first team to 27 wins.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27

Bids

Your bid and the tricks you won, round by round.

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
BID												
TRICKS												

Set Sheet

Six-player game · 48 cards · one sheet per team. Copy freely.

TEAM _____ PLAYERS _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Suit set
 SPADES									3 pts
 CLUBS									3 pts
 DIAMONDS									3 pts
 HEARTS									1 pt
 CUPS									3 pts
 TREES									3 pts
Rank set	1 pt	1 pt	1 pt	2 pts	2 pts	2 pts	3 pts	2 pts	

Score

Cross off your total as it grows. The first team to 27 wins.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27

Bids

Your bid and the tricks you won, round by round.

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
BID												
TRICKS												

Glossary

Bid The number of tricks (out of 8) a player says their team will win. A team's bid is the highest number either partner said; 0 if neither bid.

Blood card An even Heart: the 2, 4, 6, or 8. Any trick containing one goes to the thrall.

Book The tricks that score nothing: the first 3 with 4 players, the first 1 with 6 players. Every trick beyond the book is worth 1 point, provided the team made its bid.

Broken Hearts are broken once any Heart has been played in the round. Until then a Heart may not be led, unless the leader holds nothing else.

Claiming team The team that won the trick containing the 1 of Hearts. It takes the thrall at the end of the round.

Follow suit Play a card of the suit that was led. You must, if you have one.

Led suit The suit of the first card played to a trick.

Overtrick Each trick the claiming team won beyond its bid. Three thrall cards are removed per overtrick.

Rank set Every card of one rank, across all suits in play: 4 cards with 4 players, 6 with 6.

Set Sheet A team's grid with one box per card in the deck. Thrall cards you keep are checked off here.

Suit set All 8 cards of one suit.

Thrall The shared, face-up pile of tricks that contained a Blood card. One team claims it each round.

Transfusion The exchange before the first trick: the winning bidder passes 2 cards to their partner, who passes any 2 back.

Trick One card from each player, won by the highest Heart if any was played, otherwise by the highest card of the led suit.

Trump Hearts, always. Any Heart beats any card of another suit.



WHIST

Win tricks. Claim the thrall.
Fill your Set Sheet before they fill theirs.
The first team to 27 points wins.

4-6 PLAYERS · TEAMS OF TWO



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DRACULA'S WHIST · A CARD GAME