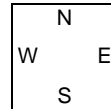


The game of Minibridge.

§1. Introduction to Minibridge.

Minibridge and Contract Bridge are **partnership** games for four players, based on the game of whist. That means that they are games of **tricks** and **trumps**, with play proceeding clockwise around the table. Some deals, however, can be played without any trump suit, in what is called **No-trumps**.

The four players are called North, East, South and West so that North-South are partners against East-West. The table is represented as a diagram in the following way:



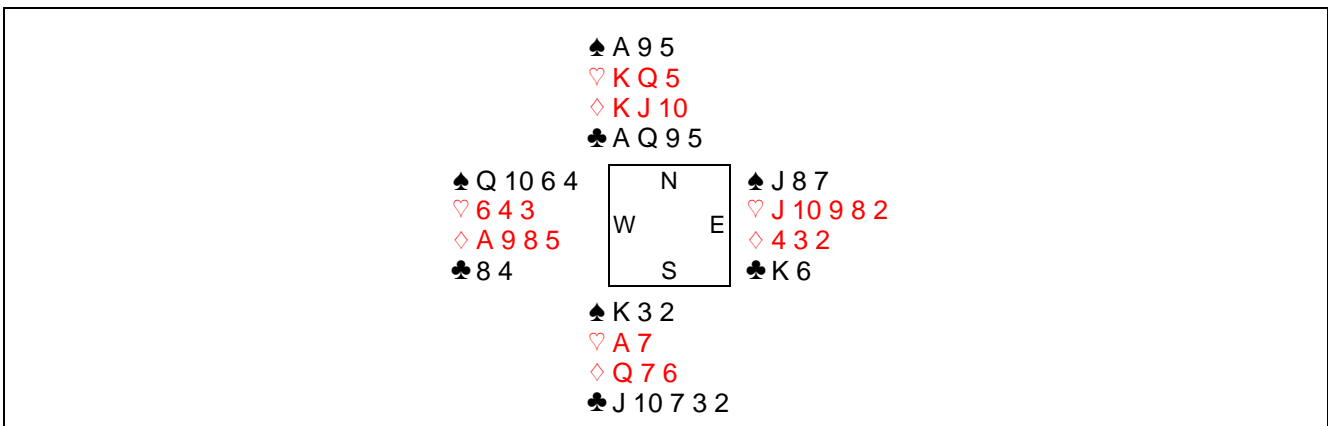
A full pack of 52 cards is dealt out so that each player receives a hand of 13 cards. Players should sort their hands out into suits to make things easier for themselves (although the rules don't say that you have to!)

In all bridge books (and newspaper articles) hands are represented in diagrams similar to the following:

♠ A 9 5
♥ K Q 9
♦ K J 10
♣ A Q 9 5

Note that the order of the suits is always shown as above: – Clubs are lowest, then Diamonds, then Hearts and the “top” suit is Spades. (If it's helpful to you then the order is alphabetical going “upwards”).

A full deal might look something like this:



After sorting their hands out into suits all players assess their hands according to the following formula:

Every Ace	4 Points
Every King	3 Points
Every Queen	2 Points
Every Jack	1 Point

The North hand above, for example, comes to 19 points:

♠ A 9 5	4 points
♥ K Q 9	5 points

♦ K J 10 4 points
 ♣ A Q 9 5 6 points
 Total: 19 points

In the full deal shown above the distribution of points is as follows:

West	North	East	South
6	19	5	10

Note, in passing, that there are **10** points in each suit and **40** points in the whole pack.

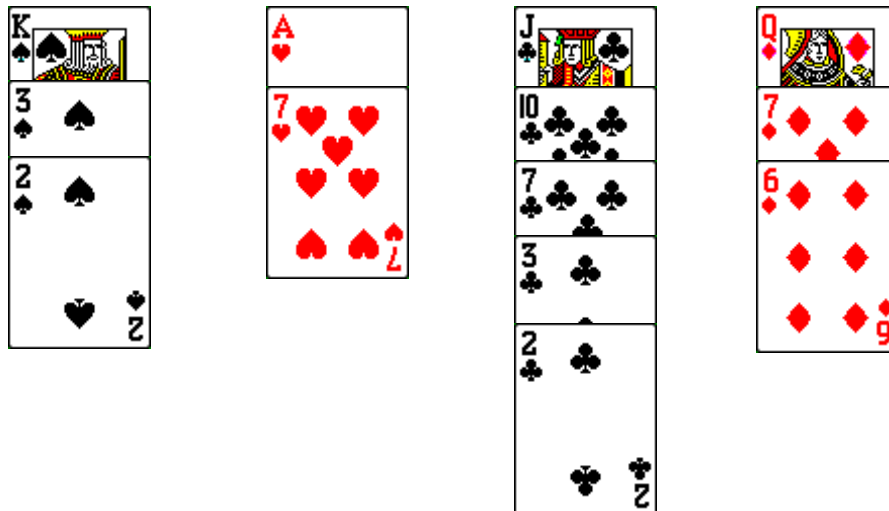
If North had been the dealer then that player would have been the first to announce his hand by saying, "I have 19 points". Then East, the next player around the table clockwise, would say, "I have 5 points", then South would say, "I have 10 points" and finally West would say, "I have 6 points". At this point everyone should use some mental arithmetic to check that the four numbers add up to 40. If they don't... try counting the points again!

The partnership with the most points gains control of the hand and has the privilege of **playing the hand**. (If each partnership has 20 points the deal is a wash-out and the cards are re-dealt).

In the example on the previous page the partnership with the greater number of points is clearly North-South. The player from the stronger partnership with the better hand becomes the **declarer** and his partner becomes the **dummy**. (If both players of the stronger partnership have the same number of points the first person to state his points becomes declarer.)

In the previous example **declarer** is North. The partner of declarer (in this instance, South) displays his hand face upwards on the table as dummy. Dummy's role is to be little more than a robot, following his partner's instructions.

At this stage we will have all hands played without a trump suit (known, logically enough, as **No-trumps**). Later on this will change. Here, South arranges his hand on the table in columns so it looks a little like this:



Although the example above has the suits arranged in the sequence Spades, Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, (black-red-black-red) there is, in fact, no rule that says you have to display the suits in any particular order. The actual obligations are to place the dummy hand face upwards in columns and to order each suit from the highest at the top down to the lowest at the bottom.

Before the dummy has been displayed the player to declarer's left has to make the *opening lead*. In this example that player is East. He places a card (his choice) on the table face up and the game commences. The object is for each side to win as many tricks as possible.

Declarer is in total charge of his side's 26 cards; dummy takes no further part in the game, other than doing what he is told. Dummy's cards are nominated by declarer and dummy can do nothing except play the card that his partner tells him to. Declarer can use a form of shorthand such as "small" to mean "play the lowest card in that suit, please partner" and similar circumlocutions.

As in all types of whist-based games, play is clockwise. The hand that won the last trick leads to the next trick. If dummy won the trick, dummy has to lead to the next trick although, naturally, it is declarer who has to make the choice of which card to lead.

Players make a record of how many tricks are won by each side. The total number of tricks won must, of course, total 13. So, as an example, if North-South end up with nine tricks, East-West must have made four tricks.

Eight deals follow, all played in No-trumps.

Just close the current tab to return to the Vubridge Starter Kit lesson...