

Tactical Spades - Official Rules

Overview

Tactical Spades is a multiplayer trick-taking card game for 1-4 players. Empty seats are filled with AI opponents: Blaze (aggressive), Echo (cautious), and Hex (adaptive). The game uses a standard 52-card deck and plays through 25 rounds with varying hand sizes.

Round Structure

The game follows a pyramid pattern of card distribution:

Rounds 1-13: Start with 13 cards, decreasing by 1 each round down to 1 card

Rounds 14-25: Start with 2 cards, increasing by 1 each round back up to 13 cards

How to Play

1. Ruling Suit (Trump)

At the start of each round, a ruling suit (trump) is randomly chosen from the unused cards. For example, in round 2 with 12 cards each (48 cards dealt), 4 cards remain - the ruling suit is picked from those. When all 52 cards are dealt (rounds 1 and 25 with 13 cards each), the ruling suit defaults to Spades.

2. Bidding Phase

After seeing your hand and the ruling suit, bid how many tricks you think you can win. Your bid can be any number from 0 to the number of cards in your hand.

3. Playing Tricks

The first player leads a card - this sets the lead suit for the trick. Other players must follow the lead suit if possible. If you cannot follow the lead suit, you must play a card from the ruling suit (trump) if you have one. The highest ruling suit card wins the trick. If no ruling suit cards are played, the highest card of the lead suit wins.

4. Card Rankings

Cards rank from highest to lowest: A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2

Scoring

Exact Bid: Bid x 10 points (e.g., bid 3, win 3 = 30 points)

Overbid (Bags): Bid x 10 + 1 per extra trick (e.g., bid 2, win 4 = 22 points)

Underbid: -10 points per missed trick (e.g., bid 3, win 1 = -20 points)

Special Abilities

Tactical Bid

Available to the first player of each round (Rounds 1-24, not Round 25). After seeing initial bids, you may change your bid to any valid number. This ability can be used every round - it's not a one-time use.

Tactical Shuffle

Available Rounds 17-24 (after playing down to 1 card and back up to 5+ cards). Each player can use this ability ONCE per game. After all players have bid, you can trigger a reshuffle - everyone gets new cards and must bid again. A blue 'Shuffle Ready!' indicator appears when this ability is available.

Winning the Game

The player with the highest total score after all 25 rounds wins. If you're signed in, your stats (games played, wins, total score) are tracked on the leaderboard.

AI Opponents

Blaze: Aggressive bidder who adapts strategy based on score position

Echo: Cautious player who uses void setup and conservative tactics

Hex: Adaptive AI that learns and adjusts to player behavior over time

Sniper: ???

Notes

Spectator Mode: Signed-in players can watch ongoing games without participating. Click 'Watch Games' from the main menu to browse active games or enter a game code directly. Spectators see the table, scores, and cards played in real-time, but cannot see players' hands.