

MiniBridge Rules!!

Players, Cards, & “The Draw”

MiniBridge is a *mind sport* for four players. They sit around a square table and their positions are called **North**, **East**, **South**, and **West**. The North and South players are partners and the East and West players are partners.

In this software (as in books and newspapers), *you are South*. The computer plays the other three positions.

If you play with real cards, who decides who is who? The cards decide! More specifically, “The Draw” decides.

Often, players agree in advance to play as partners. Nothing wrong with that. However, if you get together with three strangers, we have a method called “The Draw.” *You only draw once each set of four deals (called a “chukker”).*

1. Fan the cards out – face down – on the table (playing surface).
2. Each player “draws” one card and turns it over immediately.
 - The four cards on each end may **NOT** be drawn.
 - If a player draws two cards, that player must draw again.

The player with the highest card becomes North. Second highest becomes South. Third highest becomes East. Fourth highest becomes West.

1. “Six Starting Steps”

Shuffle - Cut - Deal (This is done for you at tournaments!)

1. Dealer's LHO shuffles (Left-Hand Opponent)
2. Dealer's RHO cuts *toward* the dealer (RHO? Duh!)
3. Dealer passes out the cards one by one, clockwise — LHO first.

Count - Sort - Add Up (This computer program does the first two!)

4. **Count** your cards *face down* (Do you have 13?)
5. **Sort** your suits for “Shape”
 - **Balanced**: 5-3-3-2 / 4-4-3-2 / 4-3-3-3
 - **NOT Balanced**: any other Shape
6. **Add up** your HCP (High-Card Points)
 - A=4 / K=3 / Q=2 / J=1
 - 10 is more than zero – call it a plus value (+)

2. Announcing (“Auction” or “Bidding”)

Dealer **announces S&H** (Shape & HCP) first - then the other players announce in clockwise rotation.

- Do the HCP total 40?
- Which partnership has more than 20 HCP?
- Which partner has more?

Determine **3D** – (1) **Defense**, (2) **Declarer**, & (3) **Dummy**

- Defending “partnership” has the lower HCP.
- Declarer has the higher HCP in that partnership.

Declarer’s partner displays **Dummy** and plays the cards Declarer calls

(This happens *after* the opening lead in other kinds of bridge!)

Declarer chooses the **Target & Trumps**: (1) How high? and (2) Where?

(Questions decided by the “auction” in other kinds of bridge)

- (1) **Game or No Game** (25+ HCP = Game, if balanced)
- (2) **Trumps or Notrump** (8+ cards = a good trump suit)

In No Game (also called *partscore*), declarer must win at least seven tricks.

In Game with notrump, declarer must win at least nine tricks.

In Game with hearts or spades as trumps, declarer must win at least 10 tricks.

In Game with clubs or diamonds as trumps, declarer must win at least 11 tricks.

3. Opening Lead & Time to P-L-A-N

Declarer’s LHO makes the **Opening Lead** *face down*

(When it is turned over, “read the lead” & remember it.)

Everyone **Pauses to Look, Analyze and Now Act**

(Insist on 30-90 seconds. Don’t let anyone rush you – even if your first play is obvious.)

RHO tries to win the trick or else **Signals** with a spot card

(**HELD**: High Encourages / Low Discourages)

4. Card Play

Basic Play

Declarer decides which cards are played from the Dummy. Dummy is visible to all players throughout the card play.

The player leading to a trick may play any card. Each other player in turn clockwise plays a card; the four cards played constitute a trick. In playing to a trick, each player must follow suit if possible.

The trick is won by the highest trump if there is one; otherwise by the highest cards of the suit led. The player who wins the trick leads to the next one.

Each player tracks tricks. After all the cards have been played, the players agree how many tricks each side won.

Always **P-L-A-N** before Play

Count & Cash • Promote • Establish • Finesse • “Ruff” • “Sluff” • Have Fun

5. Score

Defense scores 50 for each trick *Declarer is short of the Target*.

Declaring side scores zero for the first six tricks (called **Book**). If they hit the **Target**, they score:

- 20 per trick for Clubs and Diamonds
- 30 per trick for Hearts or Spades or Notrump
- 10 Extra for playing “Notrump”
-- Plus --
- 300 Game Bonus -- or --
- 50 No Game (*Partscore*) Bonus

Examples:

- A No Game Target (or, *partscore*) in notrump, eight tricks are won:
Score 60 for the scoring tricks in notrump + 10 Extra for notrump
Plus No Game (*partscore*) Bonus of 50 = 120
- A Game Target in spades, 11 tricks are won:
Score 150 for the scoring tricks in spades
Plus Game Bonus of 300 = 450
- A Game Target in hearts wins eight tricks. The defense scores 100.

What is a Team Match?

Like many card games, your score in MiniBridge often depends on the cards you are dealt. To diminish the effect of “Lady Luck” and to increase the element of skill, your score can be compared to that of others who played the same deals (called **Duplicate**-style scoring).

Tournaments use duplicate-style scoring for both “pairs events” and “teams events.” ***Team matches determine World Championships.***

A team match is a bridge contest in which each deal is fully played at one table (**Open Room**), after which the same deal is played by entirely different players at another table (**Closed Room**). In this program, you usually sit South in the Open Room. The Closed Room is played by all computer players at the same time as your play. When you finish a deal, usually the computer has played the same deal already. So, you can compare your result with the Closed Room result.

In a team match, the North-South pair in the Open Room and the East-West pair in the Closed Room are teammates. If you take nine tricks (score +140 on a deal) and your teammates score -110 (your opponents in the other room take eight tricks), then the team's net score on the deal is +30. Your play is superior to the computer on that deal. Another possibility is that the defensive card play of your teammates was better than the opponents' card play. However, in this program, it is unlikely because both of the East-West pairs are computer players with no difference in card-play skill.