



King's Whist: The Humble King Variant

Introduction

In this special variant of German Whist, one card rises above all others: the **King of Hearts**. Known as the **Humble King**, it represents the King of Kings who laid down His crown to serve. While the game is played as a traditional two-player Whist, the Humble King adds a single twist that changes the rhythm of play and the stories told at the table.

Components

- Standard 52-card deck
- Scorepad or counters

Players: 2 players

Ages: 10+

Play Time: 30–40 minutes per deal

Objective

Accumulate the most points during Phase 2 of the game by winning tricks and making use of the **Humble King** when the opportunity arises.

Setup

1. Each player cuts deck and high card determines the dealer.
2. Shuffle the full deck.
3. Deal 13 cards to each player.
4. Place the remaining 26 cards as a face-down stock. Flip the top card face-up beside or on top of the deck (your choice)
5. Play begins with dealer starting first trick of phase 1

The Game

The game is played in two phases: **Phase 1 (Drafting)** and **Phase 2 (Scoring)**.

Phase 1: Drafting (13 tricks, no points)

- The leader plays a card; the opponent must follow suit if able. If not, they may play any card.
- The highest card of the led suit wins the trick.
- **Winner takes the face-up card** from the stock and adds it to their hand.
- **Loser takes the top face-down card** from the stock and adds it to their hand without revealing it.
- Reveal the next face-up card for the following trick.
- Continue until all cards in draw pile are used. Players will have 13 cards in hand for phase 2.

Special Phase 1 Rule: If the face-up card is the **King of Hearts** and you win the trick, you may peek at the next face-down card before your opponent draws it.

Phase 2: Scoring (13 tricks)

- Play 13 tricks with the cards you drafted in Phase 1.
- Each trick is worth **1 point** to its winner.
- Winner of each trick leads the next trick.

The Humble King Rule:

- The **King of Hearts (K♥)** is the **only trump card** in the game.
- When you play the K♥ to a trick, it automatically wins the trick, regardless of suit or rank.
- This effect may occur **once per deal**.
- That trick is worth **+2 additional points** (for a total of 3 points).

End of Deal and Game

- At the end of Phase 2, tally all points.
- For a short game, play a single deal.
- For a longer game, play best of three deals with cumulative scoring. The player with the highest total wins.

FAQ

Q: Isn't this a no-trump game?

A: Yes. The game has no trump **except the Humble King**. The K♥ is the only trump card.

Q: Can the Humble King beat an Ace?

A: Yes. K♥ automatically wins the trick when played, once per deal.

Q: Do I have to play K♥ when I can?

A: No. Follow suit if able, but you are never required to cash the Humble King early.

Q: What if K♥ is led?

A: It still wins the trick and scores the +2 bonus.

Q: Can the Humble King win more than once per deal?

A: No. Its automatic trump effect applies only once per deal.

Glossary

- **Deal:** One complete game of Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- **Trick:** A set of one card played by each player in turn.
- **Lead:** The first card played to a trick.
- **Stock:** The pile of undealt cards in Phase 1, consisting of a face-up and a face-down card.

Player Aid (Optional)

1. **Phase 1:** Play tricks, draft cards from stock (winner takes face-up, loser takes face-down). If K♥ is face-up and you win, peek at the next card.
2. **Phase 2:** Play tricks for points. Each trick = 1 point.
3. **Humble King:** K♥ is the only trump. When played, it wins automatically once per deal and that trick = 3 points.
4. Highest total after Phase 2 wins the deal.