

Widderkopf

(Ram's Head)

A Sheepshead-like game for 2 players.

Introduction

This is the seventh game in an ongoing exploration of Strawman Variations—developing two player versions of trick-taking games by adding **strawmen** (one or more piles of cards, usually with the top card exposed, that form part of a player's hand).

Note that these rules assume familiarity with trick-taking games and their related terminology.

Object

Seventeen tricks are played each hand; certain cards are worth certain points; the main object of the hand is to capture 61+ points.

The Cards

A pack of 36 cards is used consisting of **A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6** in four suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades).

In Widderkopf, the Queens and Jacks are promoted to be permanent top trumps (ranked in a specific order, by suit) with all the rest of the cards, in a named trump suit, ranking below them.

For example, if ♦ are trumps, the cards rank, from high to low:

Trumps: ♠Q, ♠Q, ♥Q, ♦Q, ♣J, ♠J, ♥J, ♦J, ♦A, ♦10, ♦K, ♦9, ♦8, ♦7, ♦6

Clubs: ♣A, ♣10, ♣K, ♣9, ♣8, ♣7, ♣6

Spades: ♠A, ♠10, ♠K, ♠9, ♠8, ♠7, ♠6

Hearts: ♥A, ♥10, ♥K, ♥9, ♥8, ♥7, ♥6

The cards have values:

A = 11 **10** = 10 **K** = 4 **Q** = 3 **J** = 2

Plus One for the Spitzer

An extra card point is awarded for capturing the 7 of trumps (the **Spitzer**); making a total of **121 card points** available per hand.

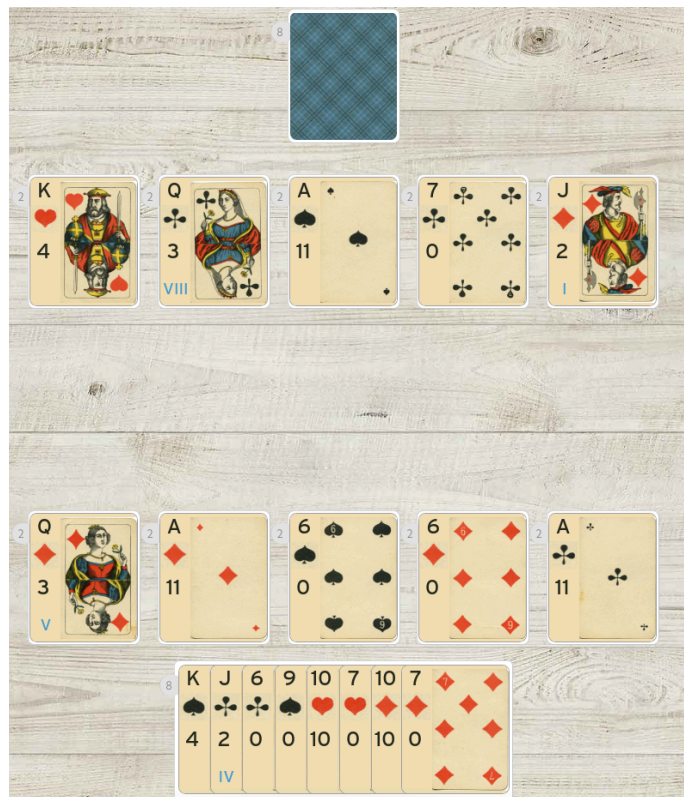
The basic object of the game is to take **61 card points** in tricks. The card points are used to determine which player has won the round – but keep in mind that card points are not the same as game points (which are written on the score-sheet as a result of winning or losing).

The Deal

The first dealer is selected at random. The turn to deal then alternates between players throughout the game. The dealer shuffles and the non-dealer may either cut or "bump" – that is, knock the cards to indicate that they should be dealt as they are, without cutting.

Seventeen cards are dealt to each player. Deal 5 face-down, 5 face-up on top of the face-down cards, and 8 in the hand to each person.

The resulting table looks something like the image shown (right).



Choosing Trumps

The player with the lower score chooses a trump suit; if the score is tied, the non-dealer chooses.

After trumps have been chosen, each player discards one card, face-down, to start their opponent's capture pile.

Cracking & Recracking

Until you have played your first card, either or both players may say “**Crack!**” to double the **game points**, the game value for collecting the most card points. It may help to ask: “**Are you going to crack?**”.

If one player cracks, the other player may **recrack** by saying, “**Recrack!**”. If this happens, the cracker may “**Crackback!**”. And, finally, the recracker may “**Crack Around the Corner!**”

The base amount awarded for collecting the most card points (61+) is 1 game point. Cracking and recracking--by saying “*Crack!*”, “*Recrack!*”, “*Crackback!*”, or “*Crack Around the Corner!*”--can raise this amount to **2, 4, 8, or 16 game points**.

The Play

The play begins with the non-dealer leading to the first trick.

Players may play a card from their hand or from the face-up cards on the table in front of them. When a card from the table is played, the card below it (if there is one) is only turned over after the trick is complete.

If a trump is led, you must play any trump if you have some; otherwise, you may play any card. If non-trump is led, if you can follow suit then you must follow suit; a player who cannot follow suit may play any card, including trumps.

A trick is won by the highest trump in it; or if there were no trumps, by the highest card of the suit led. The trick winner puts both card played to the trick into their own capture pile.

The winner of each trick leads to the next one.

Scoring

After all tricks have been played, both players add up the card points in their capture piles.

The player with 61+ card points will score the current game value for the round.

Schneider

If a player collects 91+ card points, the current game value is doubled. (*If nobody cracked, the game would be worth 2 points*).

Schwarz

If a player collects all 121 card points, the current game value is quadrupled. (*If nobody cracked, the game would be worth 4 points*)

So the current game value (between cracking, recracking, schneidering, schwarzing, etc.) can range from **1 point** all the way up to **64 points!**

Game End

Play for as long as you like or play to an agreed-upon number of rounds.

For a short game, 4 rounds is recommended. For a full game, 6 rounds are recommended. For a proper match, 8 rounds are required.

The player with the higher score wins. If you are tied, play until you are not.

Credits

Designer:

Sean Ross

Playtesters:

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