Euchre

Four people play in two partnerships. Euchre uses the standard 52-card pack, but with 28 cards removed (everything below the 9). Hoyle Card Games does not use the joker.

The rank of cards in each non-trump suit: ace (the highest), king, queen, jack, 10, 9 (the lowest).

The rank of cards in trumps: the jack of the trump suit (the Right Bower) followed by the jack of the same color (the Left Bower). For example, if hearts are trumps, they would rank as follows: the jack of hearts, jack of diamonds, and then the rest of the hearts. The trump suit always has seven cards; the next suit (sarr the trump suit) has five; and the cross suits (opposite color as the trump) each have six.

Five cards are dealt to each player. The pack is placed face-down, with the top card turned face-up. This card determines the trump suit for the deal.

The first player may either pass or accept the turned-up card as trumps. If the first player passes, the next player faces the same decision, and so on. As soon as a player accepts the turned-up card as trumps, the dealer discards a card. The discard is placed cross-wise under the undealt cards. The turned-up card belongs to the dealer in place of the discard.

If all players pass, the first player then has the right to name the trump suit, or to pass. (If the first player passes, the next player has an opportunity to name a trump suit, and so on.) The suit of the rejected card card for trumps. If all players pass a second time around, the cards are thrown in for a new deal.

The player who declares the trump suit has the right to play alone. The partner of this lone wolf lays cards face-down and does not participate in the hand.

In play, players must follow suit of whatever card is lead (if able). A trick is won by the highest trump or by the highest card of the suit led. The winner of a trick leads the next card.

The object is to win at least three tricks (of a possible five). If the side that called trumps fails this, it is euchred.

The winning of all five tricks is called march.

In the traditional scoring, the side that called trumps wins one point for making three or four tricks; for winning five tricks, they score two points. For the person playing alone: three or four tricks gain one point; march nets four points. If the side that called trumps is euchred, their opponents win two points. Four-hand euchre is usually played for a game of five points.

Strategies

Don’t be in a hurry to become the declarer and order up trump. While ordering up trump is a huge advantage, remember that if you can’t take three tricks, your opponents gets two points (that’s what you call a big troll lurking under the bridge). Euchre is supposed to be a fun game, right? Do you really want to sweat that hard for your third trick? If you only think you can take two tricks, consider passing. Give your opponents an opportunity to do the sweating instead.

So when is your hand good enough to order up trump? Easy answers are a little scarce, but here’s a idea: your partner will take one trick on average. That means you want an assurance of at least two tricks—and three is better. Takers (winning cards) are aces and the higher trumps (Bowers, ace, k

Be sure you have an unbeatable hand before opting to play alone. Otherwise, let your partner help you. Your odds of gaining extra points (for winning five tricks) is much greater with a partner.

Three trumps of any rank form a very powerful hand. You can quickly force out all the highest trumps subsequently win a couple of tricks.

It’s war when play begins. Fight for every trick as if your life depended on it. If you think you can take
so.

If you play a garbage card, you will lose the trick and may never get the lead back. Your ace of hearts is the best option. It’s like firing your derringer—you’ve only got one shot. If you play it now, you can force out all the hearts and (if you’re not trumped) win the trick.

In the Old West, the fastest gun was always the most feared. The first to trump will often win a given trick. Because there are only five cards in each player’s hand, you won’t have much time to void your suits, so absolutely do not pass up any early trumping opportunities.

**Advanced Strategies**

When weighing trump, always keep in mind which player is the dealer along with a couple of trumps. It’s a can’t-fail proposition. You and your partner may even take five tricks.

Consider how drastically this situation changes if your opponent on the left is dealer. If you order it up in this case, you may still take some tricks, but you won’t take five. By giving up the Right Bower, you’re also giving up at least one trick.

Your kings and aces are better with a backer. A backer is a lower card of the same suit.

If your partner calls trump, play your Bowers right away (unless you’d be trumping your teammate’s ace!). This will allow your partner to strategize better and possibly win all five tricks.

As in other trick-taking games, always remember the highest unplayed card of each suit.