

Cup rules

Game	Score	Bonus	silent	announced
Rufer*	1	Pagat (I)	1	2
Trischaken*	2	Uhu (II)	2	4
Piccolo	2	Kakadu/Maus (III)	3	6
Solorufer	2	Quapil (IIII)	4	8
Besserrufer	1 + bird	King ultimo	1	2
Bettler	4	Mondfang	1	2
Sechserdreier*	4	Four kings	1	2
Farbendreier	5	Trull	1	2
Dreier (Eigener, Auf)	5	1st Sack ($\geq 45 + 2$)		2
Zwiccolo ouvert	8	2nd Sack ($\geq 55 + 2$)		2
Piccolo ouvert	8	Valat	10	20
Bettel ouvert	8			
Farbensolo	10			
Solodreier	10			

*Vorhand only

(2019/2020 season; www.tarock.tirol)

1) General rules

Königrufen is played with 54 cards, with four players at a table and anticlockwise; if there are five at a table then the dealer sits out. The deck must be cut (by the player to left of or opposite dealer). Each player receives 2×6 cards; the talon may be dealt in the middle or at the beginning. Every deal must be played. Counting of card-points is in threes, subtracting two points for each three cards; with an incomplete set of three, only one point is subtracted. To win a deal, one needs 36 card-points (or 35 points and 2 cards, in the more precise method of counting in which the exact number of cards left over is relevant). Players to a trick must follow suit if they can, and if they can't, then they must play a tarock if they can. In positive contracts, Vorhand leads to the first trick; in negative contracts declarer does.

Any legal play stands. An illegally played card may nevertheless be withdrawn provided the trick has not been turned over and play has not proceeded to the next trick. Anyone may see the previous trick; all other tricks and the talon are taboo (no looking back at previous tricks).

Kontras: The game and the bonuses can be kontraed separately. Inadvertent kontras between partners don't count. In negative contracts each opponent can kontra individually, but in positive contracts each kontra counts for all players.

The Emperor Trick: If all trull cards fall in the same trick, then the Pagat wins (but only if the trull cards are played in the order Mond, Sküs, Pagat).

2) Bidding

Advancing in the bidding: Vorhand begins with “Vorhand” or a bid. Only Vorhand may make the Vorhand bids. Sechserdreier may only be bid at the beginning, but all other bids are open to Vorhand if no-one else bids. Bids can only be beaten by strictly higher bids. One may only increase one’s own bid if someone else has overbid it. Anyone who has passed in the bidding may no longer take part in it (no belated entries or reentries into the bidding).

Announcements: Declarer can call a king, pick up the talon, or announce bonuses. If he has three kings in his hand, he can call “The fourth” (“Den Vierten”) (without naming the suit). He may not call his own king. With Solodreier bonuses must be announced with the bid, since this contract cannot be overbid. The declarer’s announcements are ended by saying “Ich liege”. The other players may now in turn announce bonuses or kontra previous announcements or pass by saying “good” (“gut”). Each announcement permits further announcements to be made, until three players have said “good” in succession (improvements to previous announcements are allowed).

3) Positive contracts

Contracts with the talon: Declarer takes one half of the talon into his hand and discards three cards. The discard is counted with declarer’s tricks, and the other half goes to the opposition. Kings and Trull cards must not be discarded, tarocks can only be discarded when this is unavoidable, and must be discarded face up. In Sechserdreier, the whole talon is taken secretly into declarer’s hand, and the points for going off are doubled (points for game only). The game may be given up only when the called king is in the talon. Declarer need not take the half of the talon with the called king in.

Contracts without the talon (solos): The talon remains face down and is counted with the opposition’s tricks. If the called king is in the talon, that half of the talon belongs to declarer. All bonuses score double (including Valat).

Farbenspiele: Tarocks have no power to trump. A player who possesses suit cards may not lead a tarock. If one cannot follow suit, one must play a tarock if one has any. Declarer must discard tarocks (secretly and no five-point cards; suit cards must only be discarded if this is unavoidable and then face up). The only bonuses are Four Kings, Säcke and Valat.

4) Negative contracts

The pagat may only be played if it is one’s last tarock (except via the rising rule in the Emperor Trick). There are no bonuses in any negative contract.

Trischaken: any card may be led (with the partial exception of the pagat, see above); no kontras. Vorhand can specify whether the rising rule applies or not (“mit Stichzwang” or “ohne Stichzwang”), and whether the talon is added to the first six tricks (face up) (“zu den ersten sechs Stichen”) or to the last one (“zu dem letzten Stich”). Card points are

counted according to the more precise method of counting*. The two players with the most card-points pay the two others two points (2×2). A mayor (with at least 35 points and 2 cards) pays six points (3×2), a virgin (no tricks) receives six points (3×2). If Vorhand has the most points, he pays six (3×2), and pays double if he is the mayor (3×4). Players with the same card points split their victory points; if both middle players have the same number of points, then they pay and receive nothing. If a revoke is committed the offender pays everyone else four victory points (3×4).

In Bettler, Piccolo & co the rising rule applies; there are no bonuses and no talon; no simultaneous declarations. Declarer leads to the first trick.

Ouvert: The cards are revealed after the first trick. If the opponents are allowed to confer, they may confer about their strategy. If not, the opponents may not influence each other in any way, and if they touch a playable card they must play it. If the organiser does not specify, then conferring is allowed.

5) Bonuses

Game and bonuses are scored separately. The opposition can announce bonuses and score unannounced bonuses.

Birds and king ultimo: The birds must take the appropriate trick themselves, but for king ultimo it's enough if partner wins the trick. One can only announce birds if one has them in one's hand (no doing it on behalf of partner). These announcements cannot be freely abandoned. If one must play a bird early, one must begin with the highest bird.

Captures: If the Mond is captured by the opponents, Mondfang is scored; no other captures score.

Valat is added to the score for game, just like other bonuses. If Valat is achieved, then trick bonuses (birds, ultimo, Mondfang) score as bonuses (whether announced or silent), but bonuses for material (Trull, four kings, Säcke) do not. If an announced Valat goes off, game and all trick bonuses may still be scored.

6) Revokes

In case of a breach of the rules (such as failure to follow suit, or trump, or follow the rising rule, mistakes with the talon, playing with the wrong number of cards, playing Besserrufer without the right bird, or illegitimate revelation of information about your hand) all players who have not committed a breach score as if they had wone the game and all announced bonuses. If such a player would be subject to a further publicly verifiable loss of points, they and their partner may claim these points if they are not already accounted for.

* There are various ways of defining this. One is to count as usual in threes. But the number of cards may not be an exact multiple of three; it may fall short by one, or overshoot by one. Then if two stacks of cards have the same card-point total, they are ranked with a stack falling short by one card below a stack with an exact multiple of three below a stack with an extra card.

Tarock etiquette applies, in addition to the rules and the guidelines for interpretation. Judgements of the tournament director must be accepted. Flagrant unsportsmanlike behaviour (such as deliberate cheating) can result in exclusion and banning.

7) Procedure

Three rounds of 16 hands are normally played (20 at a table of five). There is a time limit; the tournament director can end play at tables that are running late.

Ten cents per point. There are no doubled rounds and kontras do not count towards tournament scoring. The order of seating at a table is determined by drawing cards (tarock is first Vorhand). The scorer is responsible for correct and complete writing up.

Victory points for all rounds are added. The player with the most points wins. In case of a tie, the following tie-breakers are used in order: the best round, and drawing lots.

All information is given without guarantee. There is no recourse to legal action.

Enjoy!

Text by Markus Mair. English version by Robin Knight with corrections and improvements by John McLeod, and updates provided by Markus Mair.