

# Rules of Solo

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## 1 Introduction

Anna Cubed plays the card game Solo, sometimes called Solo Whist. It is a trick-taking game with trumps and bidding.

## 2 Players and Cards

There are four players and a standard 52 card deck. Aces are high. Ultimately players play for themselves, though they make temporary alliances based on the target bet – one against three or two against two – for the duration of the hand.

## 3 The Deal

Deal and play proceeds in a clockwise direction. The deck is shuffled and the deal starts with the player to the dealer's left, and proceeds as follows:

- The player to the dealer's left is given 4 cards. The other three players are given 3 cards each.
- The player to the left of the dealer is given 3 cards. The next player is given 4 and the remaining two are given 3 cards each.
- The first two players are given 3 cards each. The third is given 4 cards and the dealer takes 3.
- The three players are given 3 cards each and the dealer takes the remaining 4 cards.

The trump suit in the first hand is always **Hearts**. At the end of each full hand (13 tricks) the trump suit is incremented. The order is always **Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds, Spades**, and **No Trumps**. These are cycled; after **No Trumps** comes **Hearts**. The trumps order always increments in this fashion, even if a bet causes the playing trump to be different.

For example: **Clubs** is the current trump suit. A player successfully bets **Abundance** and chooses **Spades** as trumps. Once the hand has been played to completion the next trump suit will be **Diamonds**.

## 4 The Bidding

Bidding starts with the player to the dealer's left. A bid can only be made if it outranks a previous bid. Users may also opt to not make a bid by passing. The possible bids (in ascending order) are shown in Table 1.

Contract	Score	Description
Prop	1	(Proposal) Bidder proposes that they can win <b>8 tricks</b> (with the help of another player yet to be determined) using the current trump suit.
Cop	1	(Acceptance) Bidder accepts a previous player's proposal to make <b>8 tricks</b> using the current trump suit.
Solo	1	Bidder aims to win <b>5 tricks</b> playing alone using the current trump suit.
Misere	2	Bidder aims to <b>lose all tricks</b> playing alone with no trump suit.
Abundance	3	Bidder aims to win <b>9 tricks</b> playing alone. Bidder chooses trump suit before the first trick is played.
Abundance Trumps	3	Player aims to win <b>9 tricks</b> playing alone in the current trump suit.
Misere Ouverte	4	Bidder aims to <b>lose all tricks</b> playing alone with no trump suit. After the first trick is played, the bidder's cards are revealed for the duration of the hand.
Abundance Declared	6	Bidder aims to win <b>all tricks</b> playing alone. There are no trumps and the bidder plays the first card.

Table 1: Possible bids in Solo.

A **goulash** occurs if all four players pass. The cards are collected up starting at the player to the dealer's left, left unshuffled and re-dealt as described above. The trump suit is also incremented. This is repeated until someone places a bet.

Players sometimes get the opportunity to upgrade their bets:

- A player bids **Prop** but all other players pass. If the bidding player is to the left of the dealer then they have the option of upgrading their bet to **Solo**. If the bidding player is elsewhere on the table then the player to the left of the dealer is given the option to bid **Cop**.
- A player bids **Solo** and the bet is superseded by **Misere** or **Abundance**. The bidder is given the option to upgrade to **Abundance Trumps**.
- A player bids **Misere** and the bet is superseded by **Abundance** or **Abundance Trumps**. The bidder is given the option to upgrade to **Misere Ouverte**.
- A player bids **Abundance** and the bet is superseded by **Abundance Trumps** or **Misere Ouverte**. The bidder is given the option to upgrade to **Abundance Declared**.
- A player bids **Abundance Trumps** and the bet is superseded by **Misere Ouverte**. The bidder is given the option to upgrade to **Abundance Declared**.

This opportunity to upgrade goes around the table in a clockwise direction just once. If players choose not to upgrade their bets a goulash occurs.

For example: player 0 is the dealer. Player 1 bids **Solo**, player 2 passes, player 3 bids **Misere** and player 0 passes. Player 1 is given the option to upgrade to **Abundance Trumps** and accepts. Player 3 is then given the option to upgrade to **Misere Ouverte** and accepts. Player 3 then has the winning bid. Player 1 is not given another chance to upgrade their bet once more to **Abundance Declared**.

## 5 The Play

Play always starts with the player to the left of the dealer *except* when a player has bid **Abundance Declared**. In this case the winning bidder plays the first card. Any card may be played first (known as **leading** a card) in a trick. The other three players must then **follow suit** (play a card of the same suit as the card led). If a player cannot follow suit they are free to play any card in their hand.

The trick is won by the player who laid the highest card. If any player(s) played a trump card then the highest trump wins. Otherwise the trick is won by the player who played the highest card in the leading suit.

Once all four players have played a card the four cards of that trick are discarded. The winner of the trick then leads a card for the new trick. This is repeated until all cards have been played or when the hand can be declared won or lost based on the winning bid.

## 6 The Scoring

If a player **wins** or **makes** the contract they receive the points for that bet which are added to their current score. Other players are not penalised. Similarly, if the player fails to make their contract then no points are awarded to or removed from any player in that round.