

BASIC RULES OF KLAVERJASSEN

Introduction

Klaverjassen is one of the most popular card games in the Netherlands, traditionally played in cafes and social clubs, as well as at home. The game is for 4 players who play in pairs, sitting opposite each other. The game has a number of variants, named after the cities where they originated: **Amsterdam**, **Rotterdam** and **Utrecht**. We play Rotterdams as that is the most common played game in New Zealand.

The Pack

A 32 card pack is used, consisting of the cards A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7 in each of the usual four suits - spades, clubs, hearts and diamonds. Note that on Dutch cards the corner indices are usually **A** (Aas) for the ace, **H** (Heer) for the king, **V** (Vrouw) for the queen and **B** (Boer) for the jack.

The Object of the Game

The object of the game is to score as many points as possible in 16 hands. In competition games the players on one table will rotate so as to have had each of the other three as a partner, so playing 3 sets of 16 hands.

In each hand the object of the game is for the player (and partner) who chooses trumps to collect more than half of the available points. If they fail to do this then they score nothing at all and the opposing pair receives all of the points.

Points are collected by taking tricks containing valuable cards, and also as bonus points during the play.

The Deal

Before a game begins a score keeper is appointed. The player left of the score keeper begins shuffling and deals, not as single cards, but in 3 groups, first three cards to each player, then two cards, and then three cards. The dealer make trump. If all passes then the dealer HAS to make trump.

The Ranking and Values of the Cards

In each hand one suit will be trumps. The ranking of the cards and their values are different in the suit chosen as trumps from the other suits. The ranking, from high to low, and the card values are as follows:

	high	low
Trump suit rank:	jack	nine	ace	ten	king	queen	eight	seven	
card values:	20	14	11	10	4	3	0	0	
Other suits rank:	ace	ten	king	queen	jack	nine	eight	seven	
card values:	11	10	4	3	2	0	0	0	

This gives 152 points in the pack in total. Extra 10 points are given for the last trick. This makes the total of 162 points.

The Play

Irrespective of who chose trumps, the player to the left of the dealer leads to the first trick. The other three players must follow suit if possible. If no trumps are played, the highest card of the suit led, according to the ranking order [listed above](#), takes the trick. If the trick contains trumps, the highest trump wins. The player taking the trick leads the next trick and so on.

Rotterdam Rules

1. If you cannot follow suit, you must always play a trump if you can;
2. When playing a trump, you must beat any trumps already played to the trick if you can (this applies when trumps are led, and also when a non-trump card was led which another player has already trumped);
3. If you have no card of the suit led and no trumps you may play any card.

Reneging

Not following these rules means reneging. Reneging is a fact as soon the trick is turned over. One of the players has to mention there was reneged and have to proof it. This can be done at any time the hand is played but have to be established before the counting. If reneging is proofed it will be punished by forfeiting all the points, 162 + 100 roem to both players. If it cannot be proofed all the points, 162 + 100 roem goes to the other players. Hence you have to be sure! Reneging happened rarely deliberate.

Bonus Points

The bonus points for taking a combination of cards in a trick are called **roem**. The commonest type of roem is a run, or unbroken sequence of cards in a suit. For sequences, the order of cards in each suit is **ace, king, queen, jack, ten, nine, eight, seven**. Note that this applies equally to trumps and to other suits, and is different from the ranking order of the cards for trick taking purposes. The possible roem are as follows:

- Run of three cards of the same suit - 20 bonus points
- Run of four cards of the same suit - 50 bonus points
- Run of three cards of the same suit, including the king and queen of trumps - 40 bonus points
- Run of four cards of the same suit, including the king and queen of trumps - 70 bonus points
- Four kings, queens aces or tens - 100 bonus points
- Four jacks - 200 bonus points
- King and queen of trumps (stuk) - 20 bonus points

There is also a bonus of 10 points for the team who took the last trick and an additional 100 bonus points if one team takes all the tricks.

Bonus points are noted on the score sheet as follows:

20, 40, 50, 70, 100, or 200.

Players use their skill to collect bonus points in the tricks that they or their partners take, and avoid giving bonus points to the opposing pair. When bonus points are made they must be claimed by the pair who wins the trick in order for them to be counted. It is sometimes correct deliberately not to claim bonus points; this happens if your team chose trumps, but you expect to lose the hand (in which case the bonus would go to the opposing team).

Scoring

At the end of each hand the points in the tricks are counted by the team that did not play. Bonus points are already recorded by the score keeper. If the team of the player who made trumps has more points than their opponents, then each team is credited with the points they obtained. If the team of the player who made trumps fail to take more points than their opponents, then the team which made trumps score no points

at all, and all the points for the hand, including bonus points collected by both sides, are credited to the opposing team.

If no extra bonus points are obtained then the points in one hand add up to 162 (152 for the cards and 10 for the last trick). The team which chooses trumps must therefore obtain at least 82 points in order to score.

Signalling

Signalling to your partner is an accepted part of the game, and is necessary to skilful play. The most important signals are discards to indicate to partner which is your own strong suit, and leads to indicate the strength of your trumps. There are many ways of doing this, the most common being:

Same suit signals.

Here you discard a low card (7, 8 or 9) of a particular suit to indicate that you have the ace (the highest card) of the same suit. Discarding a picture card of a suit warns your partner not to lead that suit. If you discard an ace means you have a strong suit of the ace and suggest your partner to play all your trumps and other free cards and come back with the suit of the ace signed.

Other signals

If you come out with a 10 means or you have either the ace as well and expect a run or either your 10 is bear. If the ace is left of the player he will take it (with the ace) and a run can be prevented. If the ace is with the partner he will try to make a run and leave the trick to you. However, it is bad luck if the ace with the fourth player! Having a bear 10 is prone for a run anyway!

Signalling a ten means you have a poor hand.

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Lead signal.

The player who chooses trumps and leads the first card can indicate that he has a weak trump hand. If he has the jack of trumps (the highest trump) but little else, he leads a low card of another suit. If he does not have the jack, then he should lead the ace of another suit. His partner then knows if it is safe to lead trumps or not.

There is of course no guaranty signalling will work.

Dutch Terminology

Nel - the nine of trumps

Roem - bonus points

Stuk - the king and queen of trumps

Nat or **beet** - not getting more than half of the points

Pit or **mars** - when one team wins all the tricks

Boom (tree) - the set of 16 deals which make up a game

Seinen – signalling.

Verzaken – reneging.