S.A.C.R.E. Bleu! Card Game (Score, Advertise, Cycle, Return, or Exchange)

Setup: 2-7 players. Split a standard deck of cards into 4 piles: red Queens, Kings, and Aces (pile 1), black Queens, Kings, and Aces (pile 2), number cards 2 through 10 (pile 3), and Jacks (pile 4). If there are fewer than 7 players, put both Jokers in pile 4. If there are 7 players, put one Joker in both pile 1 and pile 2. Shuffle piles 1, 2, and 3. Deal the following cards face-down to each player:

- 2 players: 1 card from piles 1 and 2, 13 cards from pile 3 (15 total per player)
- 3 players: 1 card from piles 1 and 2, 10 cards from pile 3 (12 total per player)
- 4 players: 1 card from piles 1 and 2, 8 cards from pile 3 (10 total per player)
- 5 players: 1 card from piles 1 and 2, 7 cards from pile 3 (9 total per player)
- 6 players: 1 card from piles 1 and 2, 6 cards from pile 3 (8 total per player)
- 7 players: 1 card from piles 1 and 2, 5 cards from pile 3 (7 total per player)

Players look at their cards. Shuffle the remaining cards from all 4 piles together to re-form the deck.

Gameplay: The game lasts 8 rounds. Each round every player takes a turn by choosing to Score, Advertise, Cycle, Return, or Exchange. Any player with fewer than 3 cards plays with their hand face-up and skips the rest of their turns. The shortest player goes first and turns rotate to the left.

Victory: The player with the highest score wins. If there is a tie for first, the player in the tie latest in the turn order wins. **Only winning matters; there is no "second place"**. When the game ends, all losing players exclaim "Sacré bleu!" in despair over their loss.

Special Round 8 Rules: In round 8, Cycle cannot be chosen and Return operates differently (see Return). Players' hands and the deck are displayed face-up from the start of round 8 through the end of the game. If a player chooses Advertise, Return, or Exchange in round 8, they may exercise a free bonus Score opportunity immediately after their turn**.**

OPTION 1 (Score): Place a sequence of cards of the same suit face-up on the table. For example, a continuous sequence of 5,6,7 of clubs. Sequences must be at least 3 cards.

- Sequences of the same suit are worth the # of each card. For example, a sequence of 5, 6, 7 of clubs = 18 points.
- All face-cards and Aces are each worth 10 for scoring but are distinct cards that go in the order Jack, Queen, King, Ace. Additionally, the Ace can "loop" for sequences. For example, a sequence of 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace, 2 of spades = 61 points.
- Jokers can be substituted for any card but are worth 0 points. For example, a sequence of Joker (replacing the Queen of clubs), King of clubs, Ace of clubs = 20 points.
- Only a single sequence can be Scored per turn. Likewise, "extending" an already scored set is not allowed.
- Scoring a sequence that precludes winning is not allowed. For example, if you trail the leader by 10 points, you cannot Score your last 3 cards if they are the 2, 3 and 4 of hearts.

OPTION 2 (Advertise):

1. Advertise a card by placing it face-up in front of you. This card cannot be a Joker.
2. Every other player places a non-Joker card face-down that is of equal or greater potential scoring value than the card you offered. For example, if you offer an 8 players must place an 8 through Ace. If you offer a Queen, players must place a 10 through Ace.
3. Players without an eligible card reveal their hand privately to you as proof.
4. If at least 1 player has an eligible card, peek at each face-down card. Select a trading partner and swap cards. Cards not selected are returned to their owners' hand.

OPTION 3 (Cycle) **[Cycle is not an eligible option in round 8 or if the prior player with more than 2 cards chose Cycle; Cycle cannot be chosen twice in a row.]**: Force every player in the game with enough cards (including yourself) to pass a certain quantity of cards to a single player a certain number of spots to their left. Cards are passed face-down simultaneously.

- The maximum quantity of cards is half the number of cards dealt to each player, rounded up. For example, if there are 5 players the maximum number of cards is 5.
- You cannot dictate that cards are selected randomly.
- Players with fewer cards than the specified quantity of cards do not participate at all. For example, if the rule is "Cycle 2 cards one player to your left" but the player to your left has only 1 card, pass 2 cards to the player two spots to your left instead.
- An example of a valid Cycle rule: "Cycle 3 cards to the player four spots to your left."

OPTION 4 (Return): Return any quantity of cards to the bottom of the deck in any order. Then:

- If it is not round 8, draw the same quantity of cards from the top of your deck and place the cards in your hand without revealing them.
- If it is round 8, search the deck and place the same quantity of cards in your hand, selecting whichever cards you like.

OPTION 5 (Exchange):

1. Give a player a card face-down, placing it in their hand. If after receiving the card the player has at least 8 cards in their hand, they set aside 3 cards from their hand face-down.
2. Look at that player's remaining hand. Reveal a card and place it in your hand. You cannot choose a card that was revealed by a different player via Exchange since your prior turn.
3. Cards the other player set aside are returned to their hand.

Some advice:

- **How to win:** Scoring a high-value sequence is how you win. Cards enabling such sequences are especially valuable (like Jacks & Queens). In the first third of the game gather any high-value cards, in the middle third target a particular suit, and in the last third maximize your high-value sequence and whatever other points you can obtain.
- **Score**: Don't choose Score during your first 2 turns. That is a common new player mistake Winners typically score two sets but may score just 1 set or even 3 sets, especially if they use the free bonus scoring opportunity in round 8.
- **Advertise/Exchange**: Choose Advertise or Exchange if you need a specific card. Advertise is better with 5-7 players or when you don't know who has the card, and Exchange is better with 2-4 players or when you know who has the card. Exchange is a safe choice if you have no idea what to do on a given turn, but don't be afraid to get riskier with other options.
- **Cycle**: Choose Cycle when you think a specific player has more valuable cards than you (perhaps because they chose Return), especially when you aren't targeting a specific card. Receive cards from that player and choose the maximum quantity of cards to cycle. Don't be afraid to give up a good card if on average you'll receive better cards in return.
- **Return**: The deck has better cards than your hand until it's been exhausted as it is disproportionately face-cards. At least the first player should choose Return in round 1.
- **In summary:** Got a great hand of high value cards of the same suit? Choose Score. Need a specific card to get that great hand? Choose Advertise or Exchange depending on whether you know who has it. Got a bad hand? Choose Cycle or Return depending on whether you know who has better cards and whether there are good cards left in the deck.
- **Setup**: Orient the card box vertically in front of the first player. When that player begins their turn, they rotate the box ⅛ around (45°) to track round count. When the box returns to vertical orientation, round 8 rules are in effect and the game is in the final round.