About

Cego is a tarok game from southwest Germany. It is widely played throughout the region around Baden-Württemberg and the Black Forrest. Cego is a tarot game, often played with a special deck of tarot cards that are specific to this region. The taroks (trocke) in this deck depict animals. While bids where you play with your hand as dealt are included in the game, many of the bids in involve discarding all (or almost all) of the cards you are dealt and playing with the face down 'cego' (or blind) instead. This lends itself to some very thoughtful evaluation and decision making after picking up cards from the deal. Cego has been played since the early 19th Century and a large number of regional variations have developed in most aspects of the rules.

Players	4 players *A 3-player variant is playable, but is less enjoyable and less interesting*	**Cards**	54 Card Cego Deck 32 suited cards (♥♦♣♠) + 22 trocke

Deal & First Lead	Deal 10 cards face down to the centre of the table. These 10 cards form the cego (or blind) Deal a single packet of 11 cards to each player. The declarer (highest bidder) always leads to the first trick.

Rank & Card Points

In red suits (♥♦):
   K, Q, R, J, 1, 2, 3, 4
   4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0

In black suits (♣♠):
   K, Q, R, J, 10, 9, 8, 7
   4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0

Tarocks:
        Gstieß, 21, 20…. 2, kleine Mann
          4   4   0……0   4

In addition, each card in the deck is worth a further ½ point – see counting and scoring

Bidding

Phase 1
Anyone wishing to play utli must say so as this ends the auction and the ulti is played. If no-one speaks to play ulti, then beginning with forehand, players may either pass or announce a solo. If all pass, then phase 2 (all passed phase 1) is activated. If someone bids solo (i.e. to play a 'normal game' directly from their hand without picking up the cego) then phase 2 (in the case of a solo) is activated.

Phase 2 (if all passed phase 1)
If all passed in phase 1, then beginning with forehand, players now have an opportunity to bid either piccolo or bettel, which rank equally. Players earlier in the rotation have priority. A bid of piccolo or bettel ends the auction and is played.

If no player bids a piccolo or bettel, then forehand now makes a mandatory announcement of 'cego'. The next player must now either pass or name the next highest contract (there are no jump bids). If someone names the next contract (i.e. Half – 'Halbe') then forehand has an opportunity to either match the bid by saying 'I'll play myself' or pass. If forehand matches the bid, the other player must either raise to the next level (i.e. One – 'Eine') or must pass. This process can continue if necessary. Once the bidding between these two plays is resolved, the next player now has their turn to speak. So, in this way the bidding is resolved between each pair of players, before the next player in order has their turn to speak. Once 3 of the four players have passed, the winning bidder may announce their final game which must be at least as high as the bid that won the auction[@].

[@] Some play that the final bid cannot be further raised.

If no player bids over forehand's mandatory announcement of 'cego' forehand must then either play a 'cego' or announce a 'räuber'.

Phase 2 (in the case of a solo)
Starting with the next player in order[^], players speak in turn and have an opportunity to bid 'counter-solo' (i.e. 'against the solo', which is actually a normal cego contract but is worth more) or to pass. If all pass, the solo is played. If a challenger bids 'counter-solo', the solo bidder may match[#] this by saying 'I'll play myself' or may pass. If the solo bidder matches the counter-solo the challenger may raise to Half – 'Halbe' and this process continues in the same way as described above, working through the players in order.

[^] *Some play that forehand speaks first after a solo has been bid.*
[#] *Some play that is the challenger, not the original solo bidder who has priority.*

Contracts

Special Contracts: *Players must follow suit…. if unable, they must play a trock. Players are never obliged to try to win the trick.*

Name	Description	Value	
Ulti	Must take the final trick with the little man (tock 1).	80	
Picolo	Must take exactly one trick.	40	
Bettel	Must not take any tricks.	30	
Räuber	The player taking the most points loses.	40	If lost by the announcer, it costs double.

Cego Contracts: *Players must follow suit…. if unable, they must play a trock. Players are never obliged to try to win the trick.*

Note that 'empty' cards retain their point value but have no ability to win a trick. They are a 'gift' to the opponents. If an 'empty' card is led, the opponents must still follow suit if they can, but the empty card can never win. If the 'empty' card is the only card remaining in its suit and the opponents hold no trumps, then the suit played by the second player determines the suit the remaining players must follow.

Name	Description	Normal multiplier	When over solo
Cego	• Keep two cards from the hand. Discard the others. • Pick up the cego. • Discard 1 further card.	1	2 Counter-solo
Half (Halbe)	• Play an 'empty' card from the hand face up. • Keep one other card from the hand. Discard the others. • Pick up the cego. • Discard 1 further card. • Lead the original 'empty' card…. OR …. a card from the hand of the same suit* (which <u>can</u> take the trick). *Whether the empty card is played first or withdrawn and played later in the hand it remains 'empty' and can never win a trick.*	2	3
One (Eine)	• Keep one card from the hand. Discard the others. • Pick up the Cego.	3	4
One empty * (Eine Leere)	• Play an 'empty' card from the hand face up. Discard all others. • Pick up the cego. • Lead the 'empty' card to the first trick.	4	5
Two empty * (Zwei Leere)	• Play two 'empty cards' from the same suit face up. Discard all others. • Pick up the cego. • Lowest trock must now be discarded and kept separate face down. It is shown at the end. • Lead the 'empties' to the first two tricks (lead 1st 2 tricks).	5	6
Two different empty * (Zwei verschiedene)	• Play two 'empties' from different suits. • Discard all others. • Pick up the cego. • The highest trock must now be discarded and kept separate face down. It is shown at the end. • Lead the 'empties' to first two tricks (lead 1st 2 tricks).	6	7
Little man (der Kleine mann)	• Must hold the little man (trock 1). • Play the little man face up. Discard all others. • Pick up the cego. • Lead the little man to the first trick.	7	8

* Some players extend the option that is available in 'half' (i.e. the option of leading alternative card(s) of the same suit as the empty card(s) to the contract of 'one empty'. Some players extend this also to 'two empty' or even further to 'two different' as well.

Special Contracts:

For the contracts of ulti, piccolo and bettel, there is no need to count the card points, as in these contracts the card points are irrelevant. If the declarer wins, the other players all pay the amount of game points to the declarer. If the declarer loses, they pay the amount of game points to <u>each</u> defender.

Counting the card points: for räuber, solo and for all other contracts involving the use of the cego.

The following method of counting card points is a straightforward way to come to the correct amount.

1. Count:
    a. 4 points for the Gstieß, 21, kleine Mann
    b. 4 points for kings
    c. 3 points for queens
    d. 2 points for riders (knights)
    e. 1 point for jacks

> With this method of counting there are 79 card points in the deck.

2. Each card is also worth a further ½ point… so for each pair of cards count 1 more point to the total.

<u>Räuber</u>

For räuber, tricks taken by each player are stored separately. At the end of the hand, the card points taken by each player are counted. The player who takes the greatest number of card points loses. They must pay the amount of game points to <u>each</u> defender. Note that if the announcer of the räuber (which will always be forehand) loses, the amount of game points to be paid is doubled.

<u>Solo, counter-solo and all other games where the cego is used</u>

Note that in solo and also all in all games where the cego is used, the cards found in the cego (or those discarded after picking up the cego) are counted for the declarer in all cases.

Note that if the declarer fails to take a trick in play, they also surrender the cards in the cego and so they score z**ero card points** (the declarer is judged to be 40 points below the 40 that are required.

Note that for a **<u>solo</u>** (i.e. a normal game that is played directly from the hand without use of the cego), the multiplier is 1 for a loss, but the multiplier is 2 for a win.

<u>Calculating the payment</u>

First work out the number of card points that the losing side has. Then determine which compartment this number falls into:

1	35 – 39
2	30 – 34
3	25 – 29
4	20 – 24
5	15 – 19
6	10 – 14
7	5 – 9
8	0 – 4

Each compartment equates to 5…. e.g. if the losing side is in compartment 3 this is 3 x 5 = 15.

Multiplier for the contract is then applied, and result is rounded <u>up</u> to the nearest 10 (if needed)

Example:
> Declarer played 'one' and the opponents took 28 card points.
> 28 points is compartment 3 x 5 = 15…….. x3 ('one') = 45…. rounded up to 50.
> Each opponent must pay 50 to the declarer.

If the declarer has won, each defender pays the amount to the declarer. If the declarer has lost, the declarer pays this amount to <u>each</u> opponent (the loss costs 3 x the amount in total).