

Königrufen

HARD

The Game

Königrufen (King-calling), is the most popular Austrian Tarock game for 4 players, using a 54 card Austrian Tarot deck. There are 22 tarocks: Sküs, XXI down to I; and 8 cards in the side suits: King, Queen, Knight, Jack, then **the black pips 10 to 7** or **red pips 1 to 4**. The game is played counter-clockwise. Dealer, after shuffling and left hand player cutting, deals the cards out in packets of 6: a round to the players, then the 6 card talon to the table, finally another round of 6 cards to each player. A round of bidding follows to decide the *Declarer*, starting with Forehand (dealer's right).

Bidding

Forehand starts with saying *Mein Spiel* (My Game), reserving the right to choose from the first 3 contracts, that **only they can choose**, if no one else is bidding. Other players have the option to Pass or say a higher contract. The player speaking earlier has the right to hold the highest bid. This is the Forehand, or the next player to the right if Forehand passes in a later bidding round. **The Declarer will be the player who said the highest Contract.**

Contract	Value	Description
<i>Rufer</i>	1	Calling a King, 3 cards from talon, take 36+ points
<i>Trischaken</i>	2	Avoid taking valuable cards in tricks
<i>Sechserdreier</i>	+2/-4	Play alone, 6 cards from talon CLOSED, take 36+ points
Piccolo	2	Play alone, win exactly 1 trick
Zwiccolo	2	Play alone, win exactly 2 tricks
Solorufer	2	Calling a King, no cards from talon, take 36+ points
Bettel	3	Play alone, lose all tricks
Besserrufer	1+bonus	Same as Rufer but a <i>bird</i> (I, II, III, IIII) bonus must be announced
Farbendreier	3	Play alone, 3 cards from talon, tarocks don't trump!
Dreier	4	Play alone, 3 cards from talon, take 36+ points
Piccolo Ouvert	5	Play alone, win exactly 1 trick, all hands exposed
Bettel Ouvert	6	Play alone, lose all tricks, all hands exposed
Farbensolo	6	Play alone, 0 cards from talon, tarocks don't trump!
Solodreier	8	Play alone, 0 cards from talon, take 36+ points

Calling a King

If the Contract involves calling a King, the Declarer names the suit of the called King, the holder of that card will become their secret partner. Declarer can call a King in their own hand. **If they have 3 Kings, it's allowed to call the „4th King“.** If they have all 4 Kings, then they have to call one in their hand.

Talon Exchange

When the Contract allows the exchange 3 cards, the talon is turned up in two sets of 3 cards. The Declarer chooses one set and the other one is put aside; these will count for the Opponent's tricks. Declarer then discards 3 cards face down, **no Kings or Trull cards can be discarded**, tarocks only if there's no other choice and those then must be discarded face up.

Announcements

Beginning with the Declarer, there's a round of announcements, where certain bonuses can be announced. **Kontra** (doubling the score) can be said on separate elements of the game that have so far been announced. Defenders can only announce something if the partnership became clear by bonus announcements or Kontras. Kontra levels can be: kontra, rekontra, subkontra, hirschkontra and mordkontra. Each level multiplies the subject's score by 2. The announcement phase ends after three consecutive passes. See Bonuses on the following page!

Bonus	Value Silent/Announced	Description
Trull	1/2	Take Sküs, XXI and I in tricks
4 Kings	1/2	Take all 4 Kings in tricks
Sack	-/2	Take 46+ points in tricks
Mondfang	1/-	Capture XXI from the Other team
Sküsfang	2/-	Capture Sküs from the Other team
Pagat Ultimo	1/2	Win the last trick with I
Uhu	2/4	Win the 2nd last trick with II
Kakadu	3/6	Win the 3rd last trick with III
Marabu	4/8	Win the 4th last trick with IIII
King Ultimo	1/2	Win the called King in the last trick
Valat	10/20	Win every trick

Playout

Positive contracts: First card is led by the player to the dealer's right.

Negative contracts and Farben contracts: Declarer leads to the first trick.

One must follow suit if possible, and must play a tarock if void of the led suit.

In negative contracts only, you must beat the highest card in the trick if possible.

In Trischaken the Pagat can only be played when you have no more tarocks.

A trick is won by the highest tarock if any (except in Farben contracts), or the highest card in the suit that was led. Winner of a trick leads with a card to the next trick.

The Emperor Trick (*Kaiser Stich*): If all three Trull cards are played to the same trick, the Pagat wins!

Scoring and Payment

Card point values:

Sküs, XXI, I, Kings: 5p

Queens: 4p

Riders: 3p

Jacks: 2p

Other cards: 1p

Cards are counted in triplets, deducting 2 points from each triplet. From a leftover single or double card, deduct only 1 point. **There is a total of 70 points in the deck.**

Payment is made between 2 and 2 or 1 and 3 players, depending on the contract.

Notes on Contracts and Bonuses

Solo contracts: Normally the whole talon counts for the defenders. If the called card is in the talon, the whole talon counts for the Declarer. **All bonuses count double in a Solo game.**

Farben contracts: There are no trumps. Tarocks act as an ordinary suit. When void of a suit, you must still play a tarock, but they will be lost. A player can only lead a tarock when they have nothing but tarock cards. When it's a Farbendreier, trumps MUST be discarded, suits only if there's no other choice, and those are then discarded face up. Valat is the only possible bonus.

Ouvert contracts: In an Ouvert (open) contract all the hands are exposed AFTER the first trick.

Trischaken: All four players play as individuals. The talon cards are added one by one to the first six tricks. The player with most points pays 2 to the others. If player(s) take no points, only they get paid. A player taking 36+ points, or if the vorhand loses, points are doubled (x4 if vorhand took 36+).

Birds: Pagat, Uhu, Kakadu, Marabu. They can be lost even when silent, by playing it in the relevant trick and not winning it. **When announced, they must be kept as long as possible.** The highest one from the announced birds is forced out first, when having to play them prematurely.

Valat: If made, silent bonuses are not paid for Trull, 4 Kings and Sack. Talon is won with it as well.