

Auf und Ab (Up and Down)

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A totally "twisted" card game for 3 to 4 players from approximately 8 years.

Auf und Ab is essentially a trick-taking game. The players take turns playing cards on the table according to certain rules until eventually one of them gets the cards. In Auf und Ab, however, the most important thing is not to win tricks but to get rid of your cards as quickly as possible. Like some other such modern card games, you can also play more than one card at a time and may also get more than one opportunity to play per round. The sudden change of play between an UP and a DOWN round, however, can significantly affect the strength of your hand and gives the game its special flavor.

Game material

55 playing cards. Each one shows a different combination of two numbers from 0 to 9, with the higher of these numbers shown in blue and the lower in red.

Set-up

The 55 playing cards are carefully shuffled and dealt evenly to all players. Left-over cards (one with three players, three with four players) are set aside face-down. All players sort their cards according to the red numbers and hold them in their hand so that the red edge is on top.

Play of the game

Whoever has the lowest Double Number Card (0-0, 1-1, 2-2, etc.) starts by playing this card - although possibly together with additional cards! Play then continues in clockwise order.

The game begins with an UP round.

UP round

The start player plays either a single card or a set of cards, all of which must show the same red number, e.g. 3-4, 3-6 and 3-8. On their turn, the other players must now play the same quantity of cards but with a higher red number than that just played!

For example, after the opening play shown above, the next player could play 5-6, 5-7 and 5-9 but not 2-3, 2-4 and 2-7. The player after that could then play 6-7, 6-8, 6-9, etc.

If a player cannot or chooses not to play, he passes. It is possible for a player to play cards multiple times during the same round as play comes back around to him. However, once a player passes, he may not play any more cards in that round. The round continues until all players have passed. Whoever played the last card or cards takes all the cards played in that round, sets them aside face-down, and starts the next round.

As long as no one plays one of the five "Change Cards" (see below), play continues with an UP round.

DOWN round

In a DOWN round, all cards played by a player must show the same blue number and the other players must follow on their turn by playing the same quantity of cards with a constantly lowering blue number. Thus, after a play of 7-1, 7-4, 7-2 and 7-5, the next player could play 5-4, 5-3, 5-0 and 5-1 but not 9-4, 9-2, 9-0 and 9-6.

When playing a DOWN round, the player rotate the cards in their hand 180 degrees so that now the blue edge is on top. They then sort their cards according to the blue numbers.

In addition to the normal cards, there are two types of special cards in Auf und Ab, the Double Number Cards and the Change Cards.

Double Number Cards

The ten Double Number Cards, 0-0 to 9-9, are easy to identify because both numbers are displayed in the same color as the edge where they appear, i.e. both are red on the red edge and both are blue on the blue edge. These cards are especially valuable because they can count as either one or two cards when played, at the player's choice!

For example, in a UP round, when playing after a set of three cards, 5-6, 5-7, 5-9, you could play 6-6, 6-8 with the Double 6 counting as two cards.

When a player starts any round by playing a Double Number Card (alone or in a set), he must declare whether it represents one or two cards.

Change Cards

The five Change Cards, 9-0, 8-1, 7-2, 6-3 and 5-4, are easy to identify because their numbers are printed on a light background. When one of these cards is played, the mode of play changes starting with the next round. So, if a Change Card is played during an UP

round, that round will be followed by at least one DOWN round and vice versa (once changed, mode of play stays the same in future rounds until changed again by play of another Change Card).

The effect of a Change Card is canceled if another one is played in the same round, however. So, if two (or even four) Change Cards are played in the same round, the mode of play doesn't change in the following round! If three or even all five of the Change Cards are played in the same round, however, the mode of play will change in the next round.

End of the hand

As soon as any player plays his last card, the hand ends immediately. The other players now count the cards remaining in their hands.

The winner scores points equal to the total number of cards still held in hand by the other players. All cards are then shuffled and redealt and the next hand is played. After playing a previously agreed number of hands, the game ends. The player with the highest score wins.

Sample game

After the deal, the three players, Harald, Wolfgang and Petra, have the following cards:

Harald: 0-0, 0-1, 0-3, 0-5, 1-2, 1-8, 1-9, 2-6, 3-4, 3-6, 4-4, 4-5, 4-7, 5-8, 6-7, 6-9, 7-9, 9-9.

Wolfgang: 0-6, 0-9, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 2-3, 2-4, 2-8, 3-5, 3-8, 3-9, 4-9, 5-6, 5-9, 7-7, 7-8, 8-8.

Petra: 0-2, 0-4, 0-7, 0-8, 1-1, 1-7, 2-2, 2-5, 2-7, 2-9, 3-3, 3-7, 4-6, 4-8, 5-5, 5-7, 6-8, 8-9.

It is not at all easy to say which of the three has the best cards. A general rule applies however: the closer together the two numbers on a card, the better the card. Also, as with many other card games, you can gain a big advantage if you can remember which cards have already been played in that hand. Of course, no one knows for sure which cards were set aside for that hand.

Round 1 (UP): Harald has the lowest Double Number Card (0-0) and starts the game by playing four zeros: 0-0, 0-1, 0-3, 0-5. He could have declared this to be five zeros but he announced that it was only four. All further plays this round must also now be sets of 4. Wolfgang plays four ones: 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6. Petra follows with four twos: 2-2, 2-5, 2-7, 2-9 and Harald plays again with four fours: 4-4, 4-5, 4-7. All players then pass, so the round ends. Because two Change Cards were played during the round (2-7 and 4-5), the mode of play doesn't change in the following round! Harald played the last card, so he picks up all the cards played, sets them aside, and starts the next round.

Round 2 (UP): Harald plays three ones: 1-2, 1-8, 1-9, Wolfgang three twos: 2-3, 2-4, 2-8, and Petra three fives: 5-5, 5-7. Harald passes and Wolfgang continues the round with three sevens: 7-7, 7-8. All players now pass. One Change Card was played (1-8), so the mode of play now changes. Wolfgang played the last card, so he starts the next round.

Round 3 (DOWN): Wolfgang plays four nines: 9-5, 9-4, 9-3, 9-0 and everyone then passes. The mode of play changes because one Change Card (9-0) was played.

Round 4 (UP): Wolfgang plays two threes: 3-5, 3-8, Petra follows with two fours: 4-6, 4-8 and Harald with two sixes: 6-7, 6-9. Wolfgang now plays two eights: 8-8, Petra passes, and Harald plays two nines: 9-9, Everyone passes. Because no Change Cards were played, the next round continues with the current mode of play, UP.

Round 5 (UP): Harald opens with two threes: 3-4, 3-6 and then everyone passes. Because a single Change card was played, the mode of play now changes again.

Round 6 (DOWN): Harald plays one six: 6-2 and Wolfgang must pass. Petra plays one four: 4-0 and Harald passes. Because both of the other players have now passed, she continues to play by herself, first with one three: 3-3 and then with one two: 2-0. She could actually continue to play further but, cleverly, chooses to pass instead.

The players now have the following cards remaining: Petra: 9-8, 8-6, 8-0, 7-3, 7-1, 7-0, 1-1, Harald: 9-7, 8-5, Wolfgang: 6-5, 6-0.

Round 7 (DOWN): Petra plays three sevens: 7-3, 7-1, 7-0 and everyone passes.

Round 8 (DOWN): Petra plays one nine: 9-8, Harald follows with an eight: 8-5 and Wolfgang with a six: 6-5. Petra then plays a one: 1-1 and all players pass.

Round 9 (DOWN): Petra now wins by playing her last two cards, two eights: 8-6, 8-0. She only scores two points, though, for the two cards that Harald and Wolfgang still hold.

A single hand of Auf und Ab as described above lasts only a few minutes with experienced players, so you should play a previously agreed upon number of hands for a complete game. Alternatively, you can play to a pre-determined score, for example, 100 points, with the first player to reach this score being the winner.