

Haggis

BY SEAN ROSS

A climbing game for two or three players.

Object

The object of the game is to play all your cards before the other player(s) while also trying to capture certain scoring cards during play. Additional points may be earned by betting that you will be first to play all of your cards.

Components

A Haggis deck consists of 54 playing cards, with ranks 2 through 10 in five suits (*suit cards*), plus three Jacks, three Queens, and three Kings (*face cards*). There are also three Player Aid cards and this rules document. The playing cards rank, from low to high: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J, Q, K.

Beginning the Round

With two players, remove one complete suit, one Jack, one Queen, and one King from the deck before the game begins.

A game of Haggis is played over several rounds (*hands*). For the first round, select one of the players to be dealer.

Place a set of three face cards (one Jack, one Queen, and one King) face-up in front of each player.

Shuffle the suit cards and deal 14 face-down to each player. A player's hand consists of these 14 dealt cards which are picked up and held in hand plus the 3 face cards, which remain face-up on the table until played.

The remaining suit cards (*8 cards for 2 players, 3 cards for 3 players*), the Haggis, are put aside without looking at them.

Betting

Players may bet to be the first to “go out” (*play all cards from hand*). A player may declare a bet at any time before she has played any cards. A bet may be for 15 points (*Little Bet*) or for 30 points (*Big Bet*).

All players may place bets. The bets do not have to be equal. A player need not place a bet.

Once declared, a bet may not be retracted or altered. A player who has not bet may not do so after playing a card.

Play

Each round is played over of a number of tricks. For the first round, the player to the dealer's left leads to the first trick by playing an opening card combination. A card combination may be a set, a sequence, or a bomb.

Sets

A set is a group of cards of the same rank. Sets may consist of one to eight cards (*singles, pairs, 3 of a kind, etc.*).

Sequences

A sequence (*or run*) is a set of three or more singles, or two or more larger sets (*pairs, 3 of a kind, etc*) of consecutive rank. Each set in a sequence must contain the same collection of suits (e.g., each pair in a sequence of pairs must be of a same two suits).

Face Cards

Each face card (J, Q, or K) may be used as a wild card to stand for any card in a set or sequence, but only if played with at least one suit card.

Face cards may be used as wild cards to form sets of up to 8 cards (7 with two players). When played as part of a sequence, face cards may have whichever suit is required.

Note face cards do not have to be played as wild cards; they can be played naturally as singles, in a larger set, or in a sequence. Example: a J will beat a single 10; 9-10-J will beat 8-9-10; 10-10-J-Q (*where the Jack is “natural” and the Q “wild”*) can be played as a sequence to beat 9-9-10-10.

Face cards can be wild only when played with at least one suit card. A face card played alone is a single of its printed rank. A combination of multiple face cards without suit cards is always a *bomb*.

Bombs

A bomb is a special combination of point cards. Their use is explained in the Trick Play section (below). A face card cannot be used as a wild card in a bomb. There are 6 types of bombs. Ranked from lowest to highest:

- 3-5-7-9 (*rainbow; these 4 ranks in 4 different suits*)
- J-Q
- J-K
- Q-K
- J-Q-K
- 3-5-7-9 (*flush these 4 ranks in one suit*).

Trick Play

After a combination of cards is led, play proceeds clockwise with each other player having the option to play a higher ranking combination or pass. Note that a player with a higher combination can choose to pass instead of playing it. A player without a higher combination (including one who has gone out) must pass.

To be higher ranking, the new combination must be of the exact same type, have the exact same number of cards, and have higher ranking cards. So if a single card is led, only a higher single card can be played; if a pair is led only a higher pair can be played; a three card sequence can only be beaten by a higher three card sequence; and so on.

Bombs are the only exception to this rule. A bomb can be played, in turn order, to beat any combination except a bomb of the same or higher rank. After a bomb has been played only a higher ranked bomb may beat it.

Players continue in this manner, playing successively higher combinations of the same size and type (*or bombs*) or passing until a combination is played and all of the other players pass in succession.

A player *goes out* when she plays her last card (*including face cards*). When a player goes out, record the number of cards in the hand of the opponent who holds the most cards at that time (*including unplayed face cards*). The player who goes out first is the *shepherd*; the other players are *sheep*.

In a two player game, the trick ends as soon as one player either passes or goes out.

In a three player game the trick ends as soon as either two players pass in succession or two players have gone out. A player that passes may still play until the trick ends.

When the trick ends, the player who played the highest combination is the winner of the trick. If the highest combination played was a not a bomb, the cards played to the trick are captured by the winner. If the trick was won by a bomb, the cards played to the trick are captured by one of the winner's opponents (*the winner of the trick chooses which*).

The winner of the trick leads the next trick. In a three player game, if the winner of the trick has gone out, the player to her left leads.

Ending the Round

When all but one player has gone out, the round is over. The player still holding cards is the *black sheep*.

The last player to go out captures all cards played to the final trick (*unless the last combination played was a bomb in which case the final trick's cards are captured by an opponent, as detailed in Trick Play*). The black sheep does not get to play any more cards.

The shepherd captures all cards remaining in the black sheep's hand and those in the Haggis. Remember to record the number of cards in the black sheep's hand *before giving them to the shepherd*.

Scoring

Points are scored for 1) Cards left in your opponents' hand, 2) Point cards captured during trick play and at the end of the round, and 3) Bets.

A player that goes out scores 5 points for each card in the hand of the opponent who held the most cards at the moment she played her last card. Remember, unplayed face cards count as part of the hand.

All point cards (*i.e., any 3, 5, 7, 9, J, Q, or K*), captured during trick play and at the end of the round, score their point value for the capturing player.

Points for any bets are scored. The shepherd scores the sum of all the players' bets (including her own); in a three player game, a sheep that did not bet scores any bet made by the other sheep.

Example: Adam, Brenda, and Carol are playing. Adam and Brenda both make Little Bets after receiving all their cards. Carol does not bet. Adam goes out first. As shepherd, Adam earns 30 points for his bet and Brenda's. As a sheep who bet, Brenda does not earn any points for bets. As a sheep who did not bet, Carol earns 15 points for Brenda's bet. With the same bets, if Carol had gone out first instead of Adam, she would have earned 30 points for the other players' bets; neither other player would earn points for bets, as they were sheep who bet.

Revised scoring for three players. The sum of all the players' bets are divided between the shepherd and the sheep who went out: the shepherd scores her own bet plus $\frac{2}{3}$ the value of the sheep's bets; the sheep who went out scores $\frac{1}{3}$ the value of the sheep's bets.

Example: Adam, Brenda, and Carol are playing. Adam and Brenda both make Little Bets. Carol does not bet. Adam goes out first and Brenda goes out second. As shepherd, Adam earns 15 points for his bet and 10 points from Brenda's for a total of 25. As a sheep who went out, Brenda earn 5 points from her own bet. With the same bets, if Carol had gone out first and Brenda second, Carol would have earned 20 points ($\frac{2}{3}$ of the other players' bets); Brenda would have scored the remaining 10 points.

Continuing Play

After adding the points scored this round to each player's cumulative score, another round begins and new hands are dealt.

The dealer is the leader in points; if there is a tie, the dealer is the shepherd of the round that just ended.

The player with the fewest points gets the first lead; if there is a tie, the player to the left of the dealer leads.

Winning the Game

Continue playing rounds until an agreed upon cumulative score is reached (*or passed*) by at least one player. The player with the most points wins. If the scores are tied, continue playing rounds until there is a winner.

For a shorter game, 250 points is suggested. For a longer game, 350 points is suggested.

Tournament Rules: In three player tournament setting, instead of the winner deciding who captures the cards, a trick won by a bomb is captured by the player with the next highest combination played to the trick. If a trick is won by a lead bomb, the trick is captured by the player to the right of the player that led with a bomb.