

# **Tournament Rules of the German Doppelkopf Association (Deutscher Doppelkopf-Verband)**

*translated by Paul H. Eaton*

These Tournament Rules (TR) are a factual description that to apply to all players, and therefore non-gendered language is used where practicable. However to ensure precision, brevity and clarity, male pronouns are sometimes used in preference to other singular forms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This reflects the spirit of the German text which avoids the use of female suffixes (*-in, innen*) for similar reasons.

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## **Thanks**

It should not be forgotten that the Rules Committee would never have been in a position to revise the rules to the extent presented here without the help of many Doppelkopf players.

Singling out individuals is of course unfair to the many Doppelkopf players who have supported us over the years since the tournament rules were last revised in 1994. But not to mention these individuals would be just as unfair.

And so we would like to take this opportunity to give our very special thanks to Gerhard Berger and Hubert Hellebrandt for their numerous comments and constructive suggestions for improvement. We would also like to thank Heinz Zedler for the assistance to adjudicators and the arbitration panel in the appendix "Adjudicator Assistance".

At this point we must also mention our families, who more or less willingly accepted that they had to miss the members of the Rules Committee on numerous weekends and evenings over the past six years.

Sievershausen, Brunswick, April 2000

Hartwig Hake      Hartmut Helmke

## **1 Definitions of the Roles in the Tournament Rules**

<b>English Term</b>	<b>German Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<i>Teilnehmer</i>	All those playing in a Doppelkopf tournament.
<b>Fellow players</b>	<i>Mitspieler</i>	All those playing at the same table.
<b>Players</b>	<i>Spieler</i>	The four people participating in each game.
<b>Opposing side</b>	<i>Gegenpartei</i>	Those of the other team. For a player in the Contra team, Re is the opposing side; for a player in the Re team, Contra is the opposing side.
<b>Opponent</b>	<i>Gegenspieler</i>	A player of the opposing side.
<b>Partner</b>	<i>Partner</i>	A player on one's own team.
<b>Spectators</b>	<i>Zuschauer</i>	People watching a game at a table at which they are not themselves players.
<b>Forehand</b>	<i>Vorhand</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Deal and bidding: the player to the left of the dealer</li><li>2. During play: the person who leads to the trick</li></ol>

## **2 General**

### **2.1 Doppelkopf Terminology.**

- 2.1.1** Doppelkopf is a card game for four or more people. An individual game is played by four players.
- 2.1.2** Doppelkopf is probably a development of Schafkopf which is mostly played in south Germany and which had a set of rules as early as 1895.<sup>2</sup> Doppelkopf was given the name because there are two of every card in the game (the name being a shortening of *Doppel-Schafkopf* i.e. Double Schafkopf). Meanwhile, unlike Schafkopf, Doppelkopf is played in the whole of Germany, but predominantly in north Germany and the Rhine-Main region.
- 2.1.3** On the foundation of the German Doppelkopf Association (*Deutscher Doppelkopf-Verband e.V.*) or GDA (*DDV*) on 27 March 1982 during the 1st German Championship in Brunswick, efforts were made to standardise the rules. Doppelkopf was and is played regionally in very different variants. However, standard rules are essential for sporting competitions, such as those required for GDA tournaments. That is why the GDA always plays in accordance with these Tournament Rules (*Turnier-Spielregeln*) or TR. If you have any questions, the Rules Committee (*Regelkommission*) can provide further information; its address can be found in the association magazine, *Plus Minus*, or on our homepage [www.doko-verband.de](http://www.doko-verband.de).

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<sup>2</sup> Recent research suggests that Doppelkopf and Bavarian Schafkopf descend from the old game of German Schafkopf whose first rules were published in 1811 by Paul Hammer and included 3 variants played with a double pack.

## 2.2 The Doppelkopf Pack

**2.2.1** A Doppelkopf pack comprises 48 playing cards in four suits each of 12 cards. The suits are Clubs (*Kreuz*), Spades (*Pik*), Hearts (*Herz*) and Diamonds (*Karo*). Each card occurs twice in the pack. This gives the following composition:

	A	A	10	10	K	K	Q	Q	J	J	9	9
Clubs	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣
Spades	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠
Hearts	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
Diamonds	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

**2.2.2** Each suit has 2 each of the following cards with point values (*Augen*) shown:<sup>3</sup>

1. Ace (Ass)	11 points
2. Ten (Zehn)	10 points
3. King (König)	4 points
4. Queen (Dame)	3 points
5. Jack (Bube)	2 points
6. Nine (Neun)	0 points

In each suit there are therefore 60 card points so that a Doppelkopf pack has a total of **240** card points.

## 2.3 Card Ranking

**2.3.1** Each card belongs either to one of the **equal-ranking** non-trump suits (*Fehlfarben*), also known as side suits, or to the trump cards (*Trumpfkarten*).

**2.3.2** Each trump card ranks higher than any non-trump (*Fehlkarte*).

**2.3.3** The ranking depends on the type of contract that is declared during the bidding round before play starts. There are the following two types of contract:

Normal Game (*Normalspiel*),  
Solo (*Solo*).

There are four types of Solo:

Suit Solo (*Farbsolo*),  
Queen Solo (*Damensolo*),

<sup>3</sup> Note that, in German packs, the index letter for the Queen is therefore “D” and that for the Jack is “B”.

Jack Solo (*Bubensolo*),  
Ace Solo (*Assesolo*), Fleshless (*Fleischloser*) or Skeleton (*Knochenmann*).

#### 2.3.4 Card Ranking in a Normal Game:

The ranking of the two sets of 13 trumps, in descending order, are:

♥ 10, ♣ Q, ♠ Q, ♥ Q, ♦ Q, ♣ J, ♠ J, ♥ J, ♦ J, ♦ A, ♦ 10, ♦ K, ♦ 9.

In the three side suits the ranking of the two sets of non-trumps in descending order is: in Clubs and Spades: A, 10, K, 9; in Hearts: A, K, 9.

In a Normal Game there are thus 26 trumps and 22 non-trumps.

#### 2.3.5 Card Ranking in a Suit Solo:

There are four types of Suit Solo, because any of the four suits can be made trumps. The cards of the nominated trump suit – A, 10 (except in a ♥ Solo), K, 9 – replace those of the suit of Diamonds in a Normal Game.

This results in the following ranking of the trumps (each of which appears twice) in descending order:

As in the Normal Game: ♥ 10, ♣ Q, ♠ Q, ♥ Q, ♦ Q, ♣ J, ♠ J, ♥ J, ♦ J

and additionally the cards of the trump suit: A, 10 (except ♥ 10), K, 9.

In the three side suits the non-trumps (each of which appears twice) rank in descending order as follows: A, 10 (except for the ♥ 10), K, 9.

In a Suit Solo in Clubs, Spades or Diamonds there are 26 trumps and 22 non-trumps, and in a Suit Solo in Hearts there are 24 trumps and 24 non-trumps.

#### 2.3.6 Card Ranking in a Queen Solo and in a Jack Solo:

The 4 trumps (each of which appears twice) are:

In a Queen Solo: ♣ Q, ♠ Q, ♥ Q, ♦ Q

and in a Jack Solo: ♣ J, ♠ J, ♥ J, ♦ J.

In the four side suits the card pairs rank in descending order as follows:

In a Queen Solo: A, 10, K, J, 9

and in a Jack Solo: A, 10, K, Q, 9.

So in a Queen Solo and in a Jack Solo there are 8 trumps and 40 non-trumps.

#### 2.3.7 Card Ranking in an Ace Solo:

In an Ace Solo there are no trumps and 48 non-trumps.

In the four side suits the cards (each of which appears twice) rank in descending order as follows: A, 10, K, Q, J, 9.

### 2.4 Teams

#### 2.4.1 Doppelkopf is a team game.

#### 2.4.2 The four players form two teams: the **Re Team** (*Re-Partei*) and the **Contra Team** (*Kontra-Partei*).

**2.4.3** There are fundamentally two types of contract: the Normal Game and the Solo.

**2.4.4 The Normal Game:**

If no-one plays a Solo, the two players with the Queens of Clubs become the Re Team; the other two are the Contra Team. If, after the deal, a player has both Queens of Clubs, he may declare a special contract called a Wedding (see 4.4.).

**2.4.5** N.B. It will not be clear at the outset who is partnering whom. Finding out or concealing this is one of the main attractions of Doppelkopf. One is therefore not allowed to indicate whether one is playing "with" or "without" the Queen of Clubs by any action not provided for in the rules.

**2.4.6** The tactics (also called conventions) approved by the Rules Committee of the GDA or by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) do not contradict rule 2.4.5. A tactic is a move which, indirectly, i.e. without an announcement, reveals a player's likely team affiliation or other information to a high probability.

N.B. The use of a particular tactic does not involve a disclosure of one's cards, since, unlike a convention in Contract Bridge, it can also be used as a deception. Therefore, the term "convention" for such a tactic in Doppelkopf, albeit common, is somewhat misleading.

**2.4.7 The Solo:**

A player may attempt to win a hand by playing alone against the other three players. In a Solo, the soloist is the Re Team and the other three players form the Contra Team.

**2.5 Objective**

**2.5.1** Each team tries to win more card points than the other. Further aims are to score bonus points; for the stronger team, to raise the game value as much as possible through both Re/Contra announcements ("Re" or "Contra") and point announcements (e.g. "no 90" or "no 60"); and for the weaker team to score the points the other team announces the weaker team will not make.<sup>4</sup>

**3 Preparation**

**3.1 Scorekeeper**

**3.1.1** The player at seat 4 must keep the scoresheet. By agreement at the table, another player can also take over the scoresheet, but the seating order remains unchanged.

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<sup>4</sup> Card points are the values assigned to individual cards – see 2.2.2 – and used to determine who won and the scale of the victory. Game points are awarded for winning and certain other achievements that earn bonus points. The game points won by one team are deducted from the other – see 7.

## **3.2 Seating**

**3.2.1** Players draw for their seating order. If this seating order is not marked on the table and no consensus can be reached among the players, the scorekeeper chooses a seat. The other players follow on in clockwise order.

## **3.3 The Deal**

**3.3.1** The player in seat 1 begins by dealing the cards for the first hand. Next, the player in seat 2 deals and so on. The cards are only redealt by the same dealer after a Compulsory Solo, but not after a Forced Solo – see 4.1.9 and 4.2.3.

**3.3.2** If the dealer is temporarily absent, the next player to the left may shuffle and deal the cards for the next hand, provided that the rightful dealer has not expressly reserved beforehand the right to deal.

**3.3.3** The dealer must shuffle the cards thoroughly, allow his right-hand neighbour to cut them once, place the remaining packet on top of the cut one and then deal the cards.

**3.3.4** If the cards become boxed (*gestochen*), i.e. reversed, or exposed (*geblättert*) during shuffling, they must be reshuffled before they are cut.

**3.3.5** Cutting is mandatory! It must be done such that at least 3 cards are cut and at least three are left in place.

**3.3.6** If the cutter is temporarily absent, the next player to the right may cut – provided the rightful cutter has not expressly reserved the right beforehand to make the cut.

**3.3.7** Beginning with forehand, the player to the rightful dealer's left, (see 3.3.2), each player must be dealt three cards four times so that each player has 12 cards in his hand.

**3.3.8** The cards are to be dealt in such a way that their faces are not visible to any player. If a card is exposed either by the dealer alone or in conjunction with someone else, the pack must be reshuffled, re-cut and redealt.

**3.3.9** Each player is required to make sure he has been dealt the correct number of cards (i.e. 12).

**3.3.10** A player may only appeal against any immediately obvious irregularity in shuffling, cutting and dealing if he has not yet picked up his cards (e.g. if there has been a breach of 3.3.7 or 3.3.8). A complaint may also be raised against immediately obvious infractions that are only apparent after the cards are picked up (e.g. if cards are distributed 3-3-4-2, or if a card is accidentally exposed at the end of the deal), provided this is done when it

discovered. In this context, a violation of 3.3.1 (wrong dealer) is not an immediately obvious infraction.

## **4 Bidding**

### **4.1 Special Contracts**

**4.1.1** Before the first trick is begun or an announcement made, the contract to be played must be determined through a bidding round in which special contracts may be bid for (*Vorbehaltsabfrage*).

**4.1.2** Beginning with forehand, players are asked in clockwise order whether they are content to play a normal game.

If a player wants to play a Compulsory Solo, a Voluntary Solo or a Wedding, he says loudly and clearly "**Wait**" (*Vorbehalt*).

A bid can only be withdrawn by player 1, 2 or 3 if the next player has not yet spoken. Player 4 can only withdraw his bid if no card has yet been played, and no announcements made (in accordance with section 6), and, in the case of several bids, no-one has specified the contract in accordance with 4.1.6.

In all other cases, the bid stands and the bidder may have to play a Solo, even if he wanted to change his mind.

A player who does not want to bid says loudly and clearly "**Fine**" (*Gesund*, literally "healthy").

**4.1.3** If all players call "Fine", a Normal Game is played.

**4.1.4** If only one player has bid, he must specify the nature of his bid, i.e. he must say whether he is playing a Solo (compulsory or voluntary) or a Wedding.

In the case of a Compulsory Solo, the declarer must lead to the first trick.

**4.1.5** If several players have bid "Wait" in the same bidding round, the following order of precedence applies:

- 1. Compulsory Solo,**
- 2. Voluntary Solo,**
- 3. Wedding.**

**4.1.6** In order to determine who has the highest contract when several players have bid, the bidders are first asked in turn if they want to play a Compulsory Solo. If not, they are asked if they want to play a Voluntary Solo.

If several players have bid, a Wedding contract can never be played.

**4.1.7** Since the earlier bidder has priority if there are several bids of the same rank, the bidding round ends as soon as a player replies “yes” in response to the questions at 4.1.6.

All other bids have no validity and may also no longer be specified.

**4.1.8** When a player is sure that his bid is of the highest rank, he may specify it immediately, even if it is not his turn. It may then be played immediately without further discussion. The other players may now neither bid nor specify their contract.

**4.1.9** In a Forced Solo (see 4.2.3), because it is clear who has to play the Solo, there is no bidding round. The Solo player simply states which type of Solo he is playing.

## 4.2 Compulsory Solo

**4.2.1** Any type of Solo may be played as a Compulsory Solo (*Pflichtsolo*).

**4.2.2** The Solo player must lead to the first trick.

**4.2.3** Each player must play one Compulsory Solo within the overall match (*Spielrunde*). If the number of Compulsory Solos yet to be played equals the number of hands remaining, a player who has not played a Compulsory Solo and is first in clockwise order from the dealer’s left must play a Compulsory Solo; i.e. it is a Forced Solo (referred to as *vorgeführt*, literally “presented”).

It is not possible to overcall such a Forced Solo. The dealer is the player due to deal the next hand, even if he has to play a Forced Solo himself.

**4.2.4** The Compulsory Solo is noted in the scoresheet in the section provided.

**4.2.5** After a Compulsory Solo, the cards are redealt by the same dealer who dealt for the Compulsory Solo.

However, if the Compulsory Solo was played as a Forced Solo, the next player deals.

## 4.3 Voluntary Solo

**4.3.1** A player may only play a Voluntary Solo (*Lustsolo*) if he has already played his own Compulsory Solo. Any type of Solo may be played as a Voluntary Solo, regardless of which Solos have already been played. In a Voluntary Solo, forehand leads to the first trick.

**4.3.2** A Voluntary Solo is noted in the scoresheet in the main section. The next hand is therefore dealt by the next dealer.

## **4.4 Wedding**

- 4.4.1** If a player has both Queens of Clubs and does not wish to bid a Solo, he may choose between two types of Wedding (*Hochzeit*). He may either announce a Wedding (4.4.3) or play a silent Wedding (Suit Solo in Diamonds, see 4.4.5).
- 4.4.2** If, holding both Queens of Clubs, a player does not want to play a Solo, he calls "Wait" during the bidding round (except as provided for in 4.4.5), without specifying his bid right away. If no other player bids, he confirms it by saying "Wedding" loudly and clearly.

### **4.4.3 Announced Wedding**

The play of an announced Wedding can develop in two different ways:

a) The player who, within the first three tricks of the hand, takes the first trick not taken by the holder of the two Queens of Clubs – known as the clarification trick (*Klärungsstich*) – plays as the Re partner (*Re-Mann*) with the former. In this case, the hand continues as in a Normal Game. In the clarification trick it is irrelevant whether a trump or non-trump is led; thus a player who does not hold the Queens of Clubs is also allowed to lead a 10 of Hearts.

b) The player with the Queens of Clubs takes the first three tricks himself. In this case, the third trick counts as the clarification trick and play continues as in a Suit Solo in Diamonds. Thus the clarification trick also confirms whether the Wedding proceeds as a Normal Game or as a Suit Solo in Diamonds. In the latter case, the holder of the Queens of Clubs plays alone as the Re player, while the other three players form the Contra Team. The game is settled as a Solo, but does not count as a Compulsory Solo, so it is noted in the main section of the scoresheet. Any penalty points are distributed up to and including the clarification trick as in a Normal Game, then as in a Solo.

- 4.4.4** In an announced Wedding, the first announcement (Re or Contra) is only allowed after the clarification trick has been completed (fourth card of the trick played). Thus there may be a different window for announcements compared with a Normal Game, but this is not inevitable (see 6.4.2).

### **4.4.5 Silent Wedding**

If a player holding both Queens of Clubs does not call a special and none is bid in accordance with the rules (see 4.1.2), he must play a Silent Wedding. The game is settled as a Solo, but does not count as a Compulsory Solo, so is recorded in the main section of the scoresheet. Any penalty points are distributed as in a Normal Game until it is clear a Solo is being played (by the play of the second Queen of Clubs). Announcement windows for a silent Wedding are the same as in the Normal Game; the special case of announcement windows in an announced Wedding does not apply here.

## **5 Play**

### **5.1 The Lead**

- 5.1.1** Forehand, the player who opened the bidding round, is required to lead to the first trick (except as provided for in 4.2.2). The first card may only be led after bidding has ended and the nature of any bid has been specified.
- 5.1.2** From the second trick onwards, the player who took the previous trick always leads to the next.
- 5.1.3** Once led or played, a card may not be retrieved. The only exception is when play is required to continue after a breach of the rules an illegal play is allowed to be corrected.

### **5.2 Following Suit**

- 5.2.1** After a card has been led to a trick, the player to the left of the leader must play the next card. This is done by placing it face up on the table. The other two players do likewise in clockwise order.
- 5.2.2** There is a **requirement to follow suit**, i.e. everyone must, if possible, play a card of the led side suit, or play a card of the trump suit if a trump was led.
- 5.2.3** A player who does not have a card of the led side suit may either play a trump, i.e. trump it, or play a card of his choice from another side suit. If a trump card is led but a player is unable to follow suit, any non-trump may be played.
- 5.2.4** A card that has been played once may only be retrieved in the event of a breach of the rules against which a complaint has not been brought.

### **5.3 Tricks**

- 5.3.1** A trick consists of one card from each of the four players. It is completed when each of the four players has played a legal card in turn order, i.e. as soon as the fourth card is face up on the table and no one has raised a complaint.
- 5.3.2** The positions of the players "in the current trick" are denoted as follows:

Player 1 is forehand; the player who has the duty to lead to the trick.  
Player 2 is middlehand; the player who must play the 2nd card of the trick.  
Player 3 is middlehand; the player who must play the 3rd card of the trick.  
Player 4 is rearhand; the player who must play the 4th card of the trick  
and thus completes the trick.

**5.3.3** The trick belongs to the player who, in accordance with the rules (see 5.1 and 5.2)

1. played the highest-ranking card of the led side suit to the trick in which suit was consistently followed,
2. leads a non-trump that was neither followed nor trumped,
3. is the only one to have trumped the led side suit,
4. overtrumps a trump card that has been played to the led side suit by playing a higher-ranking trump,
5. if trumps were led, plays the highest ranking trump card of the trick,
6. leads a trump to which only cards of the side suits or lower-ranking trumps are played. If two of the same card are played to a trick, the card played by the earlier player ranks higher. **This also applies to the 10 of Hearts.**

**5.3.4** The player who takes the trick in accordance with to 5.3.3 places it face down in its entirety in front of him. (However, he may lay down cards face down separately (e.g. sideways) as a reminder of bonus points, although this must still ensure the reconstruction of the tricks and the hand for everyone.) This player must lead to the next trick. Tricks are laid on top of each other, not side by side.

**5.3.5** Tricks are to be picked up in such a way that each player can clearly see the last card played. The previous trick can be viewed at the request of a player until the 4th card of the next trick has been played. Exception: if a player indicates, in time, that he wants to look at the last trick, he may do so even if there are already 4 cards on the table.

**5.3.6** Each trick is to be picked up individually, laid down properly and left face down until the end of the hand for verification (but see 5.3.7).

**5.3.7** If a Solo player fails to collect a trick or several tricks in a row, these and all subsequent tricks fall to the Contra Team as soon as the Solo player loses a trick. In a Normal Game, 5.3.6 always applies to the Contra Team.

**5.3.8** If a player looks, counts or turns over the laid away tricks, or counts the card points in them, the hand ends.

## 5.4 Claiming the Win

**5.4.1** **In general, every hand must be played to the end!**

**5.4.2** The question "may I claim [the win]?" (*darf ich abkürzen*) or similar words is to be understood here purely rhetorically, i.e. it implies the player is claiming all remaining tricks.

**5.4.3** Only a Solo player may make a claim. In doing so, he forfeits the right to object to earlier rule breaches.

- 5.4.4** By laying down or showing his cards during the hand without saying anything, a Solo player is claiming he will take all the remaining tricks. If the Solo player is not on lead at this point, his claim implies that he will take the lead by beating any card that is led either with a higher card of his choice in the suit led, or if he has no cards of the suit led with a trump of his choice.
- 5.4.5** If the Solo player can only take the remaining tricks by playing his cards in a particular order, he must indicate that order without being asked. However, it can be assumed that the Solo player would play both in trumps and side suits from the top. However, it need not be assumed that he would have played a trump first unless he specifically states so when ending early.
- 5.4.6** The Solo player may end the hand at any time by giving his unplayed cards to his opponents. The opposing team thus takes all the remaining tricks.
- 5.4.7** If the Solo player concedes the remaining tricks in accordance with 5.4.6 and the window for announcements has not yet ended, the opposing team is allowed to make any permissible announcements. However, the remaining cards are not played.

## 5.5 Clarifying Teams and Partnerships

- 5.5.1** A player's team can only be clarified beyond doubt in the following ways:
1. By announcing a Solo,
  2. In a Wedding by the clarification trick,
  3. In a Normal Game and silent Wedding by playing a Queen of Clubs,
  4. in a Normal Game by saying "Re" or "Contra" or making a point announcement,
  5. By discarding a non-trump when a trump is led in a Normal Game or silent Wedding.
- 5.5.2** The partnerships are only unequivocally clarified when the teams are clearly known by all four players according to the criteria at 5.5.1. The placement of a single Queen of Clubs or just one Re or Contra announcement does not clarify the teams in this sense (for the resulting right of complaint see also 9.7.1).

## 6 Announcements

### 6.1 Definitions

- 6.1.1** A card is "in a player's hand" when it has not yet been played, i.e. a card is considered to have been played when it has touched the table face up (i.e. visibly).

- 6.1.2** The words "at least" indicate that an announcement may be made before the latest possible point in time without subsequent announcements or counter-announcements (according to 6.4.4) having to be brought forward to a correspondingly earlier point in time.

## 6.2 Re/Contra Announcements

- 6.2.1 A Re/Contra announcement (*Ansage*), i.e. "Re" (*Re*) or "Contra" (*Kontra*), is possible as soon as it has been clarified which type of contract is being played. This means that the bidding round must have been completed, if a Solo has been bid it must have been specified and, if a Wedding has been announced, the clarification trick must have been completed.
- 6.2.2 An announcement of "Re" by a Solo player or one with a Queen of Clubs, or "Contra" by a player without a Queen of Clubs or playing against the Solo player, must be made while the announcer still has at least 11 cards in hand. Hence the first trick is also called the "free trick" (*Freistich*).

An exception to this announcement window is the announced Wedding (see 6.4.2.).

## 6.3 Point Announcements

- 6.3.1 Both teams have the option of making point announcements to the effect that their opponents will fail to score a certain number of card points.

To this end, the 240 points in the pack are divided into four levels (limits).

Each level is a multiple of 30 points. A point announcement (*Absage*) of "no 90" ("no 60", "no 30") is a claim that the opposing team will score fewer than 90 (60 or 30) points. "Schwarz" is an undertaking to win all tricks, leaving the opposing team with none. However, if the opposing team achieves the target (the named number of points or, in a *Schwarz*, by taking a trick), the announcer(s) have lost, even if they have taken more than 120 points.

- 6.3.2 A point announcement is only permitted if the same team has already made a Re/Contra announcement.
- 6.3.3 Each point announcement increases the game value; unless neither party achieves its aim.
- 6.3.4 The announcement windows are as follows:

"no 90"	with at least	10 cards in hand
"no 60"	with at least	9 cards in hand
"no 30"	with at least	8 cards in hand
"Schwarz"	with at least	7 cards in hand

An exception regarding these windows is the announced Wedding (see 6.4.2).

#### **6.4 Additional Announcement Rule**

- 6.4.1** Provided it falls within the window (earliest and latest times) an announcement is legal even if it is not the player's turn to play a card.

##### **6.4.2 The Announced Wedding**

An exception to the announcement windows is the announced Wedding. If the first trick is the clarification trick, the windows are as defined in 6.2.2 and 6.3.4. If the second (third) trick is the clarification trick, the number of cards stated there is reduced by 1 (2).

**The first Re/Contra announcement is only allowed after the end of the clarification trick!**

- 6.4.3** If the time for the initial announcement has not passed, any number of stages may be skipped, however, if they are, the unstated announcements must also be legal at this point. In such a case, all levels are included in the calculation.

It follows that players may not make up for a missed announcement after its window has ended simply by making the next announcement in the sequence.

- 6.4.4** Countering an announcement is always permitted with one card less than was necessary for the announcement by the opposing team. Only "Contra" (against the Re Team) or "Re" (against the Contra Team) is permitted as a countering reply.

However a point announcement by the countering team is only legal if their counter had been made in sufficient time i.e. within the legal window for a first Re/Contra announcement by them.

- 6.4.5** If "Contra" and "Re" (regardless of the order) are announced, a third or fourth player, if he makes a further announcement when the partnerships are still unclear, must indicate whether he is on the Contra or Re side.

It is permissible for both parties to announce "no 90" ("no 60", etc.).

- 6.4.6** If several players make different announcements at the same time or one after the other, they are all valid.

- 6.4.7** A repetition of announcements by one team is not permitted.

**NOTE:** If a player repeats his announcement because he thinks that the other players did not hear it due to the level of noise, this is permitted in accordance with the rules. This does not count as an unpermitted repetition of an announcement.

## **7 Scoring and Settlement**

### **7.1 Win Levels and Criteria**

**7.1.1** The cases in which a team has won and receives the base value of one game point are listed in full below, assuming the tricks have been completed and taken legally (see 9.5.1).

**7.1.2** The **Re Team** win if they take at least:

1. 121 card points if no announcements were made,
2. 121 card points if only "Re" was announced,
3. 121 card points if "Re" and "Contra" were announced regardless of the order in which they were announced,
4. 120 card points if only "Contra" was announced,
5. 151 (181, 211) card points having announced "no 90" ("no 60", "no 30"),
6. All tricks having announced "Schwarz".
7. 90 (60, 30) card points if the Contra Team announced "no 90" ("no 60", "no 30") and Re did not commit to a higher number of points
8. 1 trick if the Contra Team announced "Schwarz" and the Re Team did not make a point announcement committing them to a higher number of points.

**7.1.3** The **Contra Team** wins if they take at least:

1. 120 card points if no announcements were made,
2. 120 card points if only "Re" was announced,
3. 120 card points if "Re" and "Contra" were announced regardless of the order,
4. 121 card points if only "Contra" was announced,
5. 151 (181, 211) card points having announced "no 90" ("no 60", "no 30"),
6. All tricks having announced "Schwarz",
7. 90 (60, 30) card points if the Re Team announced "no 90" ("no 60", "no 30") and Contra did not commit to a higher number of points
8. 1 trick if Re announced "Schwarz" and the Contra Team did not make a point announcement committing them a higher number of points.

**7.1.4** If both teams fail to reach their respective targets, **neither** has won and only the points mentioned under 7.2.2 (a) and 7.2.2 (e and f) as well as special points will be awarded.

## 7.2 Game Values

**7.2.1** The game values of the individual contracts are expressed in game points (*Spielpunkte*).

**7.2.2** They are evaluated according to a **PLUS-MINUS system**:

In a Normal Game, each player of the winning team receives the following game points with a positive sign, the players of the losing team with a negative sign:

(a)	Won	1 point as base value
	under 90 scored	1 additional point
	under 60 scored	1 additional point
	under 30 scored	1 additional point
	Schwarz (no tricks taken)	1 additional point

(b)	The following were announced:	
	“Re”	2 additional points
	“Contra”	2 additional points

(c)	The <b>Re Team</b> announced:	
	“no 90”	1 additional point
	“no 60”	1 additional point
	“no 30”	1 additional point
	“Schwarz”	1 additional point

(d)	The <b>Contra Team</b> announced:	
	“no 90”	1 additional point
	“no 60”	1 additional point
	“no 30”	1 additional point
	“Schwarz”	1 additional point

(e)	The <b>Re Team</b> scored:				
	120	points against	a “no 90”	call	1 additional point
	90	points against	a “no 60”	call	1 additional point
	60	points against	a “no 30”	call	1 additional point
	30	points against	a “Schwarz”	call	1 additional point

(f)	The <b>Contra Team</b> scored:				
	120	points against	a “no 90”	call	1 additional point
	90	points against	a “no 60”	call	1 additional point
	60	points against	a “no 30”	call	1 additional point
	30	points against	a “Schwarz”	call	1 additional point

**7.2.3** Bonus points can only be won by either team in the Normal Game. If necessary, they will first be offset against each other and then the points determined under 7.2.2.

The following bonus points are awarded:	
Winning “against the Queens of Clubs”	1 bonus point
Doppelkopf (making a trick with $\geq 40$ points)	1 bonus point
Capturing an opponent’s ♦ A (“Fox”)	1 bonus point
Winning the last trick with ♣ J (“Charlie”)	1 bonus point

**7.2.4** In the case of a Solo, only the points under 7.2.2 are counted. This also applies to a silent Wedding (see 4.4.5).

In a Solo the declarer is credited three times the game value if he wins or has the same amount deducted if he loses.

The three opponents of the soloist are given the game value with the sign reversed.

### 7.3 Scoresheet

**7.3.1** The result of each hand must be entered on the scoresheet immediately after its completion as a win or loss against each player.

- 7.3.2** All players are equally responsible for the correctness of the scoresheet and not just the scorekeeper (see 3.1). It is therefore recommended that the dealer checks over the entries on the scoresheet for correctness.
- 7.3.3** "Correct notation" means that the right point score is entered in the right place on the scoresheet against the right players with the right (plus or minus) sign. In order to detect errors early on, it is advisable to check that:
1. The checksum must be 0 after each hand.
  2. The scores of the four players after each hand are either **all** even or **all** odd (odd-even rule). This rule can only be broken by awarding penalty points in a Solo contract in favour of the Solo player (+3, 0, 0, -3), (+15, 0, 0, -15) or (+21, 0, 0, -21).
  3. The players who scored plus points in a particular hand must be identified by noting their seat numbers or annotating these players clearly.
- 7.3.4** The selected scorekeeper is responsible for submitting the scoresheet to the tournament management after the end of the match.

## **8 Tournament Doppelkopf**

### **8.1 Official Tournaments**

- 8.1.1** All official GDA tournaments are to be conducted in compliance with these tournament rules (TR).

### **8.2 Adjudicator and Arbitration Panel**

- 8.2.1** An adjudicator and an arbitration panel will be appointed.

In the event of a complaint, the adjudicator decides in the first instance on the award of penalty points.

The arbitration panel is convened whenever a player disagrees with a decision by the adjudicator and whenever unsporting conduct is suspected.

The decision of the arbitration panel is final.

- 8.2.2** Penalty points awarded must always be initialled by the adjudicator or a member of the arbitration panel.

### **8.3 Tables of Four**

- 8.3.1** Only tables of four are permitted.

### **8.4 Seating Order**

- 8.4.1** At each table, the player in seat **1** deals first and the player in seat **4** maintains the scoresheet. If another player agrees to the latter, this does not affect the seating order.

## **8.5 Number of Hands and Playing Time**

- 8.5.1** A match consists of 24 hands. It always begins with the adjudicator officially starting the match. This applies to all tables at the same time.
- Only game preparation may be completed beforehand and the cards may be picked up. Beginning the bidding before the match is started is not allowed. The actual playing time is 100 minutes for all tables. In justified exceptional cases, the adjudicator may amend this for individual tables.
- In the event of a complaint, the adjudicator is entitled to extend the time limit at the table in question by the length of the interruption.
- In the case of decisions by the arbitration panel, the playing time of the table concerned and the tables at which the arbitration panel members are playing will be extended by the length of the interruption once the arbitration panel has made its decision.
- Any changes to the playing time are to be recorded immediately on the scoresheet by the adjudicator.
- The end of the match will be announced by the adjudicator.
- After that, hands that have started (a hand is considered to have started as soon as dealing has commenced) are played to the end. Any outstanding Normal Games will be cancelled by the adjudicator. The adjudicator may ask members of the arbitration panel or the tournament manager to do this.
- If overtime is noted on the scoresheet, the official playing time for the table concerned is extended by the overtime recorded there.

- 8.5.2** A match is over when no other player wants to check or object to the recorded game points.
- 8.5.3** Once the playing time has been exceeded, no more hands will be played, with the exception of Forced Solos. This also applies to hands with incorrectly dealt cards.

## **8.6 Compulsory Solos**

- 8.6.1** Each player must play one Compulsory Solo in each match. If the time limit set for the match has been reached and Compulsory Solos are outstanding, the players concerned must still play them; i.e. they must each play a Forced Solo.

## **9 Breaches of the Rules and Penalties**

### **9.1 Basic Rules**

- 9.1.1** The top priority is to observe and comply with the individual points of the GDA's TR and to further promote Doppelkopf according to the GDA's rules.
- 9.1.2** All participants must uphold the principles of fairness and objectivity in every situation and not seek justice in an unsporting manner.

- 9.1.3** A hand may **not** normally be replayed unless a serious breach of the rules has been committed and punished (except for breaches under 3.3).
- (1) In exceptional cases, where the arbitration panel must be called in, the circumstances that led to the hand being repeated must be recorded and immediately forwarded to the GDA Rules Committee.
- (2) In the event of a serious breach of the rules, but no player wants to complain, the hand may be stopped and repeated if all the following conditions are met:
- All players at the table agree.
- Abandonment and repetition take place in the presence and with the consent of the adjudicator.
- If there is only a minor or insignificant breach of the rules, a replay of the hand is out of the question. The adjudicator is entitled to consider a hand abandoned without his prior consent as unsportsmanlike and to convene the arbitration panel.
- 9.1.4** Neither players nor other participants nor spectators may count trumps or card points aloud.
- 9.1.5** Players, participants and spectators must not make any gestures or statements likely to reveal the cards or impede or influence the course of a game.
- 9.1.6** Encouraging a player to break the rules constitutes unsporting conduct. However, if the breach is actually committed, both the unsporting conduct and the infraction must be penalised accordingly, i.e. usually two players then receive penalty points.
- 9.1.7** If it is not expressly stated in the TR or its appendix (the adjudicator guide) or by the GDA Rules Committee whether an infraction is insignificant, minor, serious or unsporting, it is assessed based on 9.2.1, 9.3.1, 9.4.1 or 9.7.1.
- ## **9.2 Insignificant Breaches**
- 9.2.1** An "insignificant breach of the rules" occurs if the infraction has no influence on the further course of the hand or its outcome.
- 9.2.2** If a team would inevitably take all the remaining tricks, any infraction complained of is irrelevant.
- "Inevitably" in this context means that the team concerned would either take all the remaining tricks - regardless of the order in which their own cards are laid - or that the team has indicated the correct order in which they would play their own cards before a possible breach occurred such that they would take all the remaining tricks.
- "Inevitably" does **not** mean with any card distribution; only the one given.

**9.2.3** If a player commits an insignificant breach, no (0) penalty points will be awarded. The game will continue after the complaint has been settled.

### **9.3 Minor Breaches**

**9.3.1** A "minor breach of the rules" occurs when the infraction does not have a decisive influence on the winner of the hand, i.e. there is no game-changing advantage to the transgressor's own team. Violating the rules can very well have an impact on the course and outcome of the game.

#### **9.3.2 Normal Game:**

If a player commits a minor rule breach during a Normal Game, he receives 3 penalty points in the event of a complaint. Each of the other three players receives 1 point. The hand will continue after the complaint has been settled.

#### **9.3.3 Solo:**

If a player commits a minor infraction after it is determined that a Solo is being played, the following measures apply:

(a) If **the Solo player** commits a minor breach, he will receive 3 penalty points in the event of a complaint. Each of the other three players receives one point. The game will continue after the complaint has been settled.

(b) In the case of a minor infraction by **a player of the Contra Team**, two cases are distinguished:

##### **(b1) The infraction may result in a disadvantage to the Solo player:**

In the event of a complaint, the transgressor receives 3 penalty points, which are credited to the Solo player. The two **other players** receive 0 points. The game will continue after the complaint has been settled.

##### **(b2) The infringement does not result in a disadvantage to the Solo player:**

In the event of a complaint, the transgressor receives 3 penalty points. Each of the three **other players** receives one point. The game will continue after the complaint has been settled.

### **9.4 Major Breaches**

**9.4.1** A "major breach of the rules" occurs when the infraction could have a decisive influence on the winner of the hand, i.e. it is possible for the transgressor's own team to gain a decisive advantage in the hand.

**9.4.2** If a **player** commits a major breach of the rules, the game must be stopped immediately in the event of a complaint.

In these cases, the following distinction is made when awarding penalty points:

#### **9.4.3 Normal Game:**

In a Normal Game, the prematurely ended game is counted as "not played".

The offender receives 12 penalty points. This increases by 3 points for each announcement by the other team up to the point at which the infringement occurred. The three **other players** each receive 4 (or 5, 6, 7 or 8) plus points.

#### **9.4.4 Solo:**

In the event of a major breach by the Solo player, rule 9.4.3 applies.

In the event of a major breach by an opponent, the Solo is considered to have been played. The transgressor receives 12 minus points. This increases by 3 points for each announcement made by the Solo player up to the time when the violation occurred.

The Solo player receives 12 (or 15, 18, 21, 24) plus points. The remaining players receive 0 points.

### **9.5 Rule Breaches in a Completed Hand**

**9.5.1** If a breach is committed and a complaint made that does not allow the game to continue correctly (see 9.4 Major Breaches), and one team has already won the game after announcements, the game will be abandoned. The remaining tricks from the time of the breach go to the opponent. No more bonus points can be earned. The infraction will also be punished as a minor breach of the rules. To determine whether the game is already decided (see 7.1), only tricks that have already been completely and legally correct count.

### **9.6 Complaints**

**9.6.1** Only the opponents have the right to complain about a breach of the rules where the partnerships have been clarified; by contrast, if the partnerships are unclear, all players involved in the hand, with the exception of the person who caused it may complain.

A partnership exists if the party affiliation has not yet been clarified for all four players at the time of the violation of the rules (see "Clarification of party affiliation and partnership" in 5.5).

**9.6.2** Any player may point out a violation of the rules.

**9.6.3** A breach of the rules must be reported immediately after it has been discovered by all players. Anyone who carries out an action [continuing the bidding round ("Fine", "Wait", specifying a special contract), playing a card or making an announcement as well as the actively accepted correction of a rule violation] loses the right to complain. A game step (continuation of bidding round, announcement, specifying a contract, playing a card) that constitutes an infraction is considered a valid play if a complaint is not made in time.

- 9.6.4** A player may ask his partner whether to make a complaint or continue playing. The partner(s) may only respond with "complaint" or "no complaint". His answer is binding, i.e. the decision is left to him! In the event of a complaint, the procedure according to 9.2 to 9.5 will depend on the severity of the infraction. In the case of no complaint, the breach of the rules is considered a valid play.
- 9.6.5** The adjudicator must be called to every complaint. The game stops immediately, i.e. the current trick is left open, the taken tricks and the remaining cards remain face down and there are no discussions about the game. If there was a infraction during the deal (e.g. the wrong dealer dealt, there was no cut, the wrong number of cards were dealt), a redeal may take place immediately, i.e. there is no need to wait for the adjudicator's decision.
- 9.6.6** The breach of the rules that was complained about first – not necessarily the committed first – will be penalized. If complaints are made about several violations at the same time, the first one committed will be penalized, provided it is still a legal complaint. If the first rule violation is not major, a complaint may be raised about the second violation.
- 9.6.7** The adjudicator's decision can only be appealed immediately, i.e. the game remains suspended until the decision of the arbitration panel.

## **9.7 Unsporting Conduct**

- 9.7.1** It is unsporting conduct when a player tries to influence other players or uses unsporting means to prevent a hand or match from being correctly scored.
- 9.7.2** If unsporting conduct is suspected, the adjudicator must convene the arbitration panel, unless it is a matter of awarding penalty points under section 9.7.3. Depending on the severity, the following sanctions may be awarded:
- a) Warning (leads to deduction of points or disqualification in case of further misconduct),
  - b) Point deduction (maximum 12) without credit to the other players,
  - c) Disqualification
- 9.7.3.** In the appendix to the TR, unsporting offences that describe a clearly defined action can be marked as bound decisions. In the case of bound decisions, the adjudicator will award the penalty points provided for the action.

## **10 Variations and Recommendations**

Contrary to 2.1.1, Doppelkopf can also be played by 5, 6 or 7 players. It is then played at tables of five, six or seven. Instead of playing at a table of seven, a player, the "floater" (*Springer*) can play at two tables at once.

## **10.1 Variations for Five-Player Tables**

- 10.1.1 Contrary to 3.3, if there are five players, the dealer does not receive any cards himself; he sits out.
- 10.1.2 The dealer scores neither plus nor minus points at a table of five.
- 10.1.3 Contrary to 7.3.3, the even-odd rule does not have to be fulfilled at a five-person table.
- 10.1.4 Contrary to 3.1.1, the player in position 5 at the five-player table maintains the scoresheet.
- 10.1.5 Contrary to 8.5.1, a match at a five-player table lasts 30 hands and must be completed after a default playing time of 125 minutes.

## **10.2 Recommendations for Five-Player Tables**

- 10.2.1 According to 4.2.5, after a Compulsory Solo, the cards are dealt again by the same dealer, so that in extreme cases one player is only involved in 21 games while the others complete 24 or 25. In any case, every player must lead to the first trick in exactly five Normal Games, so that no-one can be involved in more than 25 games.

## **11 Effective Date**

These Tournament Rules of Play are effective from 1 July 2000.

Rules 8.2 and 8.2.1 were amended by the 2002 AGM<sup>5</sup> and were effective from 1 January 2003.

Rules 2.1.3, 4.4.3, 6 and 9.7 were amended by the 2013 AGM and effective from 1 January 2014.

Rule 9.1.3 was amended by the 2015 AGM and effective from 1 April 2015.

Rules 6.4.4, 9.1.7, 9.6.1, 9.6.2, 9.6.3 were amended by the 2016 AGM and effective from 1 April 2016.

Rules 5.1.1, 5.4.3, 5.4.6, 6.4.7, 8.4.1, 8.5.1, 9.7.1 and 9.7.7 were amended by the 2019 AGM and effective from 1 April 2019.

Rule 9 was expanded by the 2024 AGM; and rules 9.6 and 9.7 together with all their subparagraphs exchanged places with one another. The changes are effective from 1 April 2024.

German Doppelkopf Association (*Deutscher Doppelkopf-Verband*) or GDA (DDV)  
--- The Rules Committee of the GDA --

*Rules translated into English by Paul H. Eaton, assisted by John McLeod (November 2023).*

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<sup>5</sup> Annual General Meeting (*Mitgliederversammlung*). Reinhardshagen, den 24. Februar 2024

Valid as at 1 April 2019