

Sacrifice

A trick-taking deck-builder for a standard card deck with jokers

For 2 players

By Dan Burkey

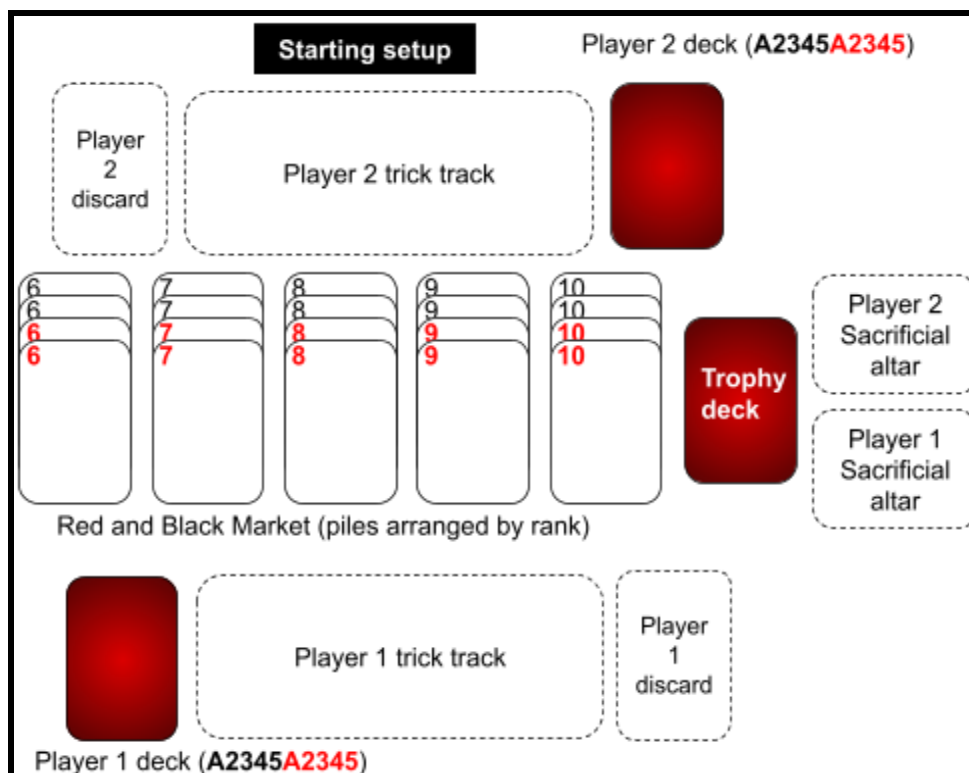
Build your deck and take tricks to gain face cards as trophies. But every trophy has a cost. How much can you bear to sacrifice?

Object of the game

Score the most points by taking tricks to collect trophies and sacrificing cards from your deck.

Setup

1. Give each player a 10-card starter deck consisting of A-A-2-2-3-3-4-4-5-5 with one red and one black card of each value (only the color of each suit matters). Players shuffle these to create their personal draw piles. Each player has their own personal draw and discard piles.
2. Each player will need space for a “trick track” to reveal and track their tricks each hand.
3. Shuffle the face cards and jokers together facedown to create the trophy deck.
4. Sort remaining cards by rank and lay them out in 5 piles: 1 pile each for ranks 6-10. Splay the cards slightly so the cards in each pile are visible.
5. Leave room on the table to make a stack of cards for the sacrificial altars. Over the course of the game, players will permanently sacrifice cards from their hands into their own individual sacrifice piles.



Overview *(For a quick rules reference, see page 5)*

Each round of the game has two phases: Buying and Trick-taking. In the buying phase, players may purchase cards from the Red and Black Market for their decks. In the trick-taking phase, players attempt to collect the most tricks to win the trophy. Each round, the player who won the trophy places it in their discard pile and sacrifices cards from the winning hand to their sacrifice pile. The game ends when all trophies have been collected.

Definitions

These terms will be used throughout the rules. Note that some of the terms are specialized to deck-building games.

Draw: Take the top card(s) from your personal deck.

Discard: Place in your personal discard pile. These cards will be reshuffled and recycled when you need to draw and find the deck depleted.

Sacrifice: When you collect a trophy, place cards from your hand face down on your sacrificial altar. You must sacrifice at least one card for the trophy, but may sacrifice up to the difference between the number of tricks you won and the number your opponent won. These cards remain on the altar for the rest of the game.

Purchase: in the buying phase, reveal and discard 2 cards from your hand, then add an available card from the Red and Black Market to your discard pile. The value of the card must equal the exact total value of the spent cards (When purchasing, Ace=1)

Trump color: Rather than trump suits, this game uses Red (hearts and diamonds) and Black (clubs and spades) as trump colors. The color of a trophy determines the trump color for the hand. Jokers have no color.

Rules of Play

Buying phase:

1. Flip over the top card in the trophy deck to reveal what trophy will determine the trump color and rules for the next phase of the round.
2. Each player draws 5 cards. If **exactly two** of your cards add up to the **exact value** of a market card, you may spend those cards to purchase it. Reveal the cards you are spending, then add them to your discard along with the purchased card. You may purchase up to two cards per round in this manner. All cards in the market are available, even if they are underneath other cards. If you cannot or choose not to purchase any cards, you will use this entire hand for the trick-taking phase.

TIP: purchasing can be a handy way to cycle low value or non-trump cards out of your hand.

In the first round, the buying phase is simultaneous; players decide whether they will purchase cards, then place the pairs of cards they are spending facedown. In subsequent rounds, the player who lost the last trick has the first buying opportunity. Note that the color of the cards used for purchasing doesn't matter for the buying phase.

Trick-taking phase:

Choose cards from your hand to take tricks. If you win the most tricks of the hand, you must add the face card trophy to your discard and sacrifice one or more cards from the hand you just played.

1. After the buying phase, each player draws back up to a hand of 5 cards from their personal draw pile. You may have some of your cards left from the buying phase; if you did not buy any cards, you will use all the cards from that hand.
2. The top card of the trophy deck determines the trump color and rules for taking tricks this hand:
 - a. **King:** Draw two extra cards and play 7 tricks this hand. **Highest** card wins each trick.
 - b. **Queen:** Play 5 tricks. **Highest** card wins each trick.
 - c. **Jack:** Play 3 tricks. **Highest** card wins each trick. Unused cards need not be revealed.
 - d. **Joker** (no trump color): Play 1 trick. **Lowest** card wins the trick, but face cards cannot win a trick (even if they are the trump color).

When taking tricks:

- Card values are as follows:
 - **Joker (low)-Jack-Queen-King-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-Ace (high)**
 - Any card of the trump color beats any card of the non-trump color
 - Note that as trophies are collected and appear in players' hands, they count as lower than any number.
3. For the first trick of each hand, players choose and simultaneously reveal one card from their hand. Any card of the trump color will beat any non-trump card. It is **not** compulsory to play a card of the trump color. The player with the winning card places their card faceup in front of them in their trick track to mark points for the hand. The other player turns their card facedown.
 - a. If there is a tie for the first trick, count both players as winners of the trick and continue playing simultaneous tricks until one player overtakes the other.
 4. For the remaining tricks of the hand, the winner of the previous trick leads a card faceup for the next trick. The other player then follows and plays a card.
 - a. *Note: unlike many trick-taking games, it is **not** compulsory to follow the trump color or leading player's color if you have a card of that color in your hand.*

5. After all necessary cards for the hand have been played, the player who won the most tricks takes the trophy and adds it to their discard pile. Then that player must gather the cards from their hand and secretly choose one or more to sacrifice, placing the sacrificed card(s) face down on their sacrificial altar. This player must sacrifice at least one card, but may sacrifice as many as the difference between the number of tricks they won and the number their opponent won. If you are the hand winner, think *"My tricks minus your tricks equals my sacrifice limit."*
 - a. For example, if the split was 3 tricks-2 tricks, the winner may only sacrifice 1 card. In a 4-1 split, they may sacrifice up to 3. Then all players place the remaining cards from their hands (including any unplayed cards if the trophy was a Jack or Joker) facedown into their discard piles.

Sudden Death

If both players tie for the hand, they continue with a sudden death round. In a Jack or Joker round, use the extra cards in your hand. If your hand is empty, draw a new hand of 5 cards (reshuffling your discard pile into a draw pile if needed), then reveal one card at a time simultaneously. If the cards tie, the sudden death continues until one player overtakes the other. If a new hand was drawn, this is also discarded after the sudden death round. The sacrifice may come from the hand drawn for the sudden death round or the hand that was played initially.

6. If you ever need to draw and find the draw pile empty, shuffle your discard pile to form a new draw pile.

Endgame and Scoring

After 14 hands with all trophies collected, score as follows. The player with the most points wins.

- **Each Trophy scores 10 points**
- **Each sacrificed card scores points equal to its face value (Ace=15 points). Any sacrificed trophies do not gain additional sacrifice points.**

If a player ever has fewer than 7 total cards in their possession (deck+discard+hand) before the final hand is played, the game ends and they lose.

Notes

- The number of sacrifices in each pile is public information. The value of the sacrifices is secret.
- Optional rule: You may freely look at your own discard and sacrifice piles between rounds (during a hand it is a matter of house rules and etiquette)

Sacrifice Quick reference:

<p style="text-align: center;">Round order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw 5 cards 2. Reveal trophy for the round. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Trophy indicates trump color and rules for trick-taking 3. Buying phase (optional) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Loser of last hand buys first b. Purchase up to 2 cards from the market c. Reveal 2 cards that add up to a market card's exact value to purchase it. d. Discard purchased card and spent cards. e. Draw back up to 5 cards 4. Trick-taking phase <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Choose first card and reveal simultaneously b. Winner of each trick leaves winning card face up and leads next trick. c. Winner of most tricks secretly sacrifices one or more cards from this hand and puts trophy in discard. (Max sacrifices= # of tricks won by winner minus # of tricks won by loser) d. In case of a tie, draw 5 more cards for simultaneous-reveal Sudden Death. First trick winner takes the trophy. 5. Discard entire hand. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Trophy Rules</p> <p style="text-align: center;">King</p> <p>After buying phase, draw 2 extra cards. Play 7 tricks this hand. <u>Highest</u> card wins each trick.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Queen</p> <p>Play 5 tricks this hand. <u>Highest</u> card wins each trick.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jack</p> <p>Play 3 tricks. <u>Highest</u> card wins each trick.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Joker</p> <p>No trump color. Play 1 trick. <u>Lowest</u> card wins the trick. Face cards cannot win a Joker trick.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Taking Tricks</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Card values: Joker (low)-Jack-Queen-King-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-Ace (high)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any card of the trump color beats any card of the non-trump color 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Scoring (when all trophies are claimed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Trophy scores 10 points • Each sacrificed card scores points equal to its face value (Ace=15 points). Any sacrificed trophies do not gain additional sacrifice points. <p>If a player ever has fewer than 7 total cards in their possession (deck+discard+hand) before the final hand is played, the game ends and they lose.</p>	

Special Thanks

My wife Mary for being my best playtester and partner; my son Edward for napping just long enough to get in a play of the game every time; playtesters Mike Q. Hanlon, Dave Hanlon, Maddi Spletter, Hunter Burkey, Thomas Burkey, Michael Moore; Kevin Privalle for excellent feedback on strengthening the trick-taking elements; Trevor Suess for clarity feedback.

Sacrifice was designed for the 2021 54-card Game Design Contest on boardgamegeek.com. Thanks to Dustin Culbertson and Side Room Games for hosting the contest!

Changelog

V0.23: Earliest version posted to BGG. Clarified deck refreshing rules, added option for 1 OR 2 sacrifices

V0.3: Include rules for color-trumps and lead playing.

V1.0: Clarify language of rules and clean up format for final contest version.