

Ace-King-Queen

A crash course for the urban handball game

About Ace-King-Queen

Ace-King-Queen (sometimes referred to as Chinese Handball, or just “King-Queen”) is a game that originated in the confined space of city sidewalks. It is a small-scale variation of conventional handball; the main difference is that a player is supposed to hit the ball on the ground *before* it strikes the wall. Additionally, more than 2 players are usually involved, and the order in which they play—“Ace-King-Queen,” just like cards in a deck—gives the game its name. If you know more, share it with us!

To learn more about Ace-King-Queen, visit
<http://www.streetplay.com/thegames/acekingq.htm>

Game Essentials

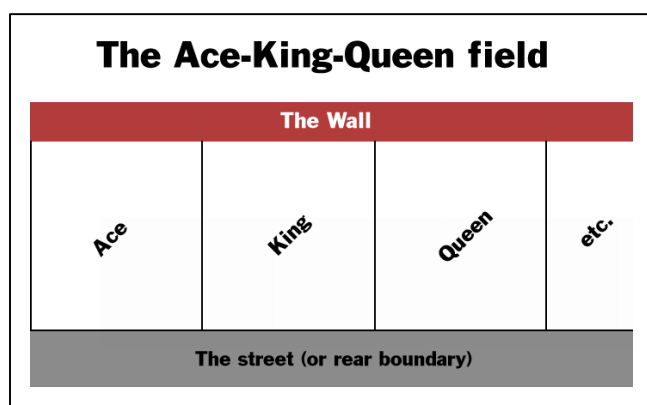
Players: at least 2, ideally 3-4 (there’s no limit)

Materials needed:

- Bouncing rubber ball (spaldeen is ideal)
- A sidewalk (boxes optional)
- A wall

Time to play: About 10 minutes, depends on how many points

The Ace-King-Queen field



The Ace-King-Queen field

Ace-King-Queen is typically played on a sidewalk in front of the wall of an apartment building. The grooves in the concrete define boxes in which each player resides (called “Ace,” “King,” “Queen,” etc.). Ace-King-Queen can also be played on asphalt without grooves in it; this variation of the game is explained below.

How to play

The players decide the order in which they are to start play, and occupy the boxes corresponding to this order. The “Ace” is the player that serves; s/he hits the ball, using the palm of the hand, to the player in the King box. The ball must first bounce on the ground (once only), then bounce against the wall, and then bounce

again on the field of play in the King box, or another player’s box. The player in that box then hits the ball (either “on the fly” or after it has bounced no more than once) in the same manner to another player. If a player in a box fails to hit a ball, or if the ball doesn’t bounce before hitting the wall, or fails to land in a box after hitting the wall (either by going too far back before bouncing, or landing wide of the field), it’s considered “missed” or “out.” The player in whose box the ball bounces after hitting the wall is the one who must hit it next. A ball can be hit into any other players’ box—including his/her own box!

As soon as a player misses a shot, s/he gets a point, and goes to the end of the line of players, and the others move up accordingly. An exception is made when the Ace misses a shot: while going to the end of the line like any other player who misses a shot, the Ace doesn’t get a point when this happens. When a player reaches a certain number of points (typically 11, or 21—it’s up to the players), s/he is eliminated from the game. The last remaining player wins.

One of the distinguishing features (and source of strategy) of Ace-King-Queen is a player’s ability to keep the ball in play by hitting it to him/herself. A player might do this to perfectly position the next hit, slamming it into an opponent’s box at just the right angle. You might even agree beforehand just how many times in a row a player may do this to avoid tedious or unfair games.

If the only available wall is adjacent to a patch of ground with no boxes—like you might find in a driveway or behind a school building—Ace-King-Queen can still be played. In this case, the players must hit the ball in order (they can’t “hold it in their box” since there’s no boxes). Depending on how much space is available, this can make for an extremely lively game—the players often end up running around a lot. Typically in this variation, players agree beforehand the width and depth of the field of “out of bounds” purposes.

The last word

Ace-King-Queen can be played by young kids and older ones, and can involve a lot of intensity, skill, and strategy. As players learn to impart spin on the ball and hit it low to the ground, they begin to succeed—not to mention having their techniques copied by other players! Anywhere a cement wall meets a concrete or asphalt floor, Ace-King-Queen can be played. And, since a game can be relatively brief, it’s easy to squeeze in a couple of games during recess or lunch break.

This Streetplay Rule Sheet is available at: <http://www.streetplay.com/rulesheets/acekingqueen/>