

Trick of Balance ~魔女と鉱夫~

[Forewords] We post corrections and rules clarifications on our official website. Please check it out before playing the game. Scan for access →



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1. Components

The icon above the number at the top of the card indicates the card type.

•52 Cards 4 suits x 13 each (Numbers 1~13)

Witch Hat (hereafter "Hat") Staff Helmet Pickaxe Back is the same

•4 Progress Sheets •12 Goal Cards (double side) •20 Player Markers: 5 colors x 4 each

•1 Start Player Marker

The bottom-right corner of each Goal Card shows:
- the number of players the card is designed for
- the recommended set it belongs to

Use this information as a reference when choosing Goal Cards. ("26" on the back of the box is incorrect. For your first game, we recommend using the ★1-1, ★1-2, and ★1-3 set.

Be sure to choose the 3 cards that match your player count.

See "8. Goal Card Details" for details

2. Game Setup

- Choose the starting player using any method. The starting player takes the Start Player Marker.
- Place 3 Progress Sheets in the center of the table where everyone can see them.
- Choose the Goal Cards and place them above the corresponding Progress Sheet, matching the numbers on the cards and sheets. (We recommend using the ★Recommended Set for your first game)
- Place the Player Marker to the left of each Progress Sheet, matching them to the colors of the ○
- Starting with the Start Player and going clockwise, each player takes one Player Marker of their assigned color.
- Prepare the deck.

Example 1 : Game Setup (4 Players)

Align the left side of each Goal Card with the corresponding Progress Sheet.

Place the Player Markers to the left of the sheet in the following order : Blue Red Yellow Green White (The white marker is also used in a 4-player game)

Starting with Player A, each player takes the Player Marker matching the next color from top to bottom of the Progress Sheet. (The color you receive becomes your player color)

In 3- & 4-player games, some Player Markers won't be used. Return them to the box.

3. Round Setup

- Shuffle the cards then deal the following number of cards face down to each player. Set any remaining cards to the side. They are not used in this round.
- After looking at their hands, each player chooses 2 cards and passes them to the player on their right. (Once everyone has placed 2 cards face down, all players pick them up at the same time)

Example 2 : Round Setup Complete (4 Players)

Start Player Marker

Set any remaining cards to the side. They are not used in this round.

Starting Hand: 12 cards

Each player chooses 2 cards and passes them to the player on their right.

4. Game Flow and Objective

Objective Your goal is to be in the MAJORITY for either "Achieved" or "Not Achieved" on each Goal Card.

Game Flow

- Each turn, players play 1 card and compares its strength with the others.
- The player who played the strongest card wins the cards. If the conditions on any Goal Card are met, advance your Player Marker on the corresponding Progress Sheet.
- Continue playing cards in this way. The round ends when all players have no cards left in hand.
- If your progress reaches the Target Value shown on a Goal Card, you have Achieved that goal.
- Check which players have Achieved or Not Achieved each goal, then count the number of players on each side. The players in the majority score points for that goal.

Target Value

NOT Achieved 3 players (A, B, C) Achieved 2 players (D, E)

If 3 out of 5 players have Not Achieved a goal and 2 players have Achieved it, In this case, Players A, B, and C score points. Not Achieved is the majority.

The number of points you score depends on whether you are in the majority for Achieved or Not Achieved. Aim for the higher score!

Points for being in the "Not Achieved" majority (2pt) Points for being in the "Achieved" majority (4pt)

5. Round Flow

- A "Trick" is one sequence in which each player plays 1 card from their hand and the winner is determined.
- Each trick consists of the following four steps. The game progresses by repeating these steps.
- When all players have no cards left in hand, the round ends and scoring begins.
- In other words, 1 round consists of 3-Players 4-Players 12 tricks or 5-Players 10 tricks.

[During a Trick]

- 5-1: Play a card from your hand ⇒ 5-2: Determine the winner of the trick ⇒ 5-3: Check the goal conditions ⇒ 5-4: Prepare for the next trick
- If you are already familiar with trick-taking games, you may skip "5-1: Play a Card from Your Hand" and "5-2: Determine the Winner of the Trick."
- Must follow
 - No trump suit
 - Highest number of leading suit wins
 - The winner takes all cards played
 - The Lead Player of the next trick moves clockwise to the next player*
- *Unlike many other trick-taking games, the winner of the previous trick does not lead the next trick. The lead simply passes clockwise from player to player, so be careful!

5-1 : Play a card from your hand

- Starting with the lead player, players take turns clockwise playing 1 card face up from their hand.
- Players other than the lead player must follow certain rules when playing a card, so be sure to check the conditions below.
- Once every player has played 1 card, proceed to 5-2: Determine the Winner of the Trick.

Rules of Playing a Card (for non-lead players)

The card played by the lead player at the beginning of the trick determines which cards the other players may play.

- Condition 1: If you have a card of the same suit ⇒ You must play 1 card of that suit.
- Condition 2: If you do not have any cards of the same suit ⇒ You may play any 1 card from your hand.

Example 3 : If you have a card of the same suit

Card played by the lead player (player **A**) : Staff () 8

Player **B** has 3 Staff cards ([2], [4], and [7]), so they must choose and play 1 of those cards. Player **B** chooses Staff [2] and plays it face up.



Example 4: If you have no card for the same suit

Card played by the lead player (player **A**) : Staff () 8

Player **C** does not have any Staff cards in hand. They may choose and play any 1 card from their hand. Player **C** chooses Helmet [11].



Additional note: These non-lead-player rules can be easily confused

It is often the case that you might overlook and believe that you do not have any card of the same suit (as in Condition 2) and play any one card, but then notice that you actually have a card of the same suit. To avoid such a mistake, it is recommended to make your action intentional by calling out "OK, I am playing this card because I don't have any STAFF card", for example.

5-2 : Determine the Winner of the Trick

- Compare the cards played by all players to determine the winner of the trick.
- The player whose card meets both of the following conditions wins the trick and takes all cards played:

[Condition ①] The card of the same suit as the lead player's card **[Condition ②] The highest number card**

Example 5 : All players follow the lead suit

(Player **A** is the lead player)

Played Cards: Staff [8], Staff [2], Staff [10], Staff [9]

- The suit led by the lead player is Staff.
- Among all the Staff cards played, Staff [10] has the highest number. Therefore, Player **C**, who played Staff [10], wins the trick.



Example 6 : A player does not follow the lead suit

(Player **A** is the lead player)

Played Cards: Staff [8], Staff [2], Pickaxe [12], Helmet [11]

- The suit led by the lead player is Staff.
- Although Pickaxe [12] has the highest number, it is not a Staff card, so it cannot win the trick. Among the Staff cards played, Staff [8] has the highest number. Therefore, Player **A** who played Staff [8] wins the trick.



5-3 : Check the Goal Conditions

- Check whether you have fulfilled the conditions on the 3 Goal Cards chosen during game setup. Move your Player Marker according to the number of conditions you fulfilled.
- The conditions differ for each Goal Card. For details, see 8. Goal Card Details. The explanation below uses Recommended Set ★1 as an example.
- Once your Player Marker reaches the Target Value, place it to the right of the Goal Card to show that you have achieved that goal.
- If a player who has already reached the Target Value fulfills that goal's condition again, do not move their Player Marker any further.

⚠ This works differently in a 4-player game. See the next page for details.

★1-1: Number of Tricks

- The player who wins the trick moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.
- [Special Ability]** (4- and 5-player games only)
- If the cards you won include **Hat [1] or Staff [1]**, move your Player Marker forward 1 additional space for each of those cards.



★1-2: Ranks 10 or above

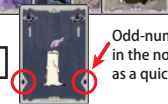
- If the cards you won include any cards that meet the condition, move your Player Marker forward 1 space for each qualifying card.



- Rank refers to the number on the card.
- Cards with a rank of 10 or higher feature more elaborate illustrations.

Odd-numbered cards have a diamond symbol in the notch at the bottom of the card. Use this as a quick reference when counting them.

★1-3: Odd numbers



[Note: When to collect the cards]

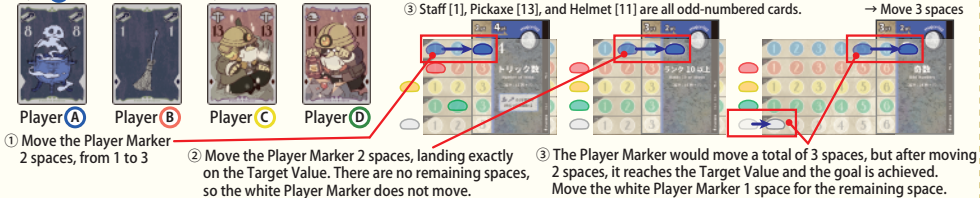
The winner of the trick places all cards won in that trick face down in a pile in front of them. For smoother play, we recommend doing this after completing "5-3: Check the Goal Conditions".

[Special Rules for 4-Player Games]

- If a player who has already achieved a goal fulfills that goal's condition again, move the white Player Marker instead.
- If the effect would move a Player Marker multiple spaces, first move the player's own marker until the goal is achieved, then move the white Player Marker by the remaining number of spaces.
- No player is assigned to the white Player Marker. However, when determining the majority during scoring, the white Player Marker counts as one player.

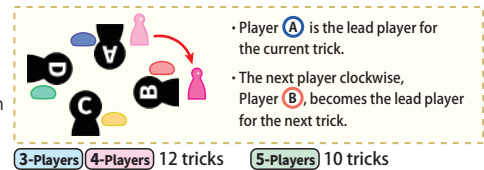
Example 7: Checking the Goal Progress (4 Players)

Player **A** wins the trick as lead player.



5-4 : Prepare for the Next Trick

- The player to the left of the current lead player becomes the lead player for the next trick.
- Pass the Start Player Marker to the next lead player, then return to "5-1: Play a Card from Your Hand" and begin the next trick.
- Repeat this process until all players have no cards left in hand.



6. End of the Round and Scoring

Points for being in the "Not Achieved" majority → 2pt 4pt → Points for being in the "Achieved" majority

- Check each Goal Card to see which players have Achieved or Not Achieved the goal. Only the players in the majority group score points.
- Every player in the majority scores the number of points shown at the top of the Goal Card. (Left: Not Achieved / Right: Achieved)
- Record each player's total score from all Goal Cards, then prepare for the next round by returning to 3. Round Setup.

Example 8 : End of the Round and Scoring (4 Players)

A goal is Achieved once a Player Marker reaches the Target Value.

The number of points awarded depends on whether the majority is Achieved or Not Achieved.



In a 4-player game, the white Player Marker does not represent an actual player, so it does not score any points. In a 5-player game, the white player scores points as normal.

7. End of the Game

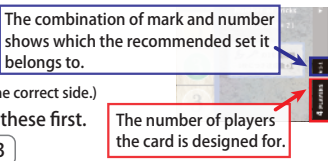
- The game lasts 3 rounds. After the third round, the player with the highest total score wins the game.
- If there is a tie, the tied player who scored more points in the third round wins.
- If there is still a tie, the tied players share the victory.

[Note]

- For a more balanced game, play a number of rounds equal to the number of players.
- If the game feels too difficult after the first round, try playing with only 2 Goal Cards. (See 9. Variant Rules for details.)

8. Goal Card Details

- There are 8 types of Goal Cards in total. Each player count has 3 Goal Cards to choose from, so be sure to select the correct ones.
(Some cards use different sides depending on the number of players, so make sure you are using the correct side.)
- We have prepared 5 recommended combinations. We suggest trying one of these first.
Basic Set : ★1-Set ★1-1 / ★1-2 / ★1-3 ★2-Set ★2-1 / ★2-2 / ★2-3
Advanced Set : ▼1-Set ▼1-1 / ▼1-2 / ▼1-3 ▼2-Set ▼2-1 / ▼2-2 / ▼2-3 ▼3-Set ▼3-1 / ▼3-2 / ▼3-3
- When choosing Goal Cards in 2. Game Setup, Step 3, we recommend using the Basic Set for your first game.
- For later games, or if everyone is already familiar with the game, try the Advanced Set or create your own combination.



Goal Card Details (The examples below all show the cards as they appear in a 4-player game.)

① Number of tricks

The player who wins the trick moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.

[Special Ability] (4- and 5-player games only)

If the cards you won include **Hat [1]** or **Staff [1]**, move your Player Marker forward 1 additional space for each of those cards.

③ Odd numbers

The player who wins any **odd-numbered cards** moves their Player Marker forward 1 space for **each qualifying card**.

Odd-numbered cards have a diamond symbol in the notch at the bottom of the card. Use this as a quick reference when counting them.

⑤ Play lowest rank

The player who **played the lowest-ranked card** in the trick moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.

[Special Ability]

If multiple players are tied for the lowest rank, this effect is canceled and none of those players move their Player Marker.

❗ [Note]—
Even if this Goal Card's Special Ability is triggered, it does not cancel the movements on any other Goal Cards.

⑥ At least 3 lower than previous player

When you play a card with a rank that is 3 or more lower than the card played immediately before yours, move your Player Marker forward 1 space.

"Previous player" refers only to the player on your right who played a card immediately before you.

Unlike most other Goal Cards, this condition may be fulfilled by multiple players in the same trick, so be careful when resolving it.

② Ranks 10 or above

The player who wins any cards with a **rank of 10 or higher** moves their Player Marker forward 1 space for **each qualifying card**.

Rank refers to the number on the card.

Cards with a rank of 10 or higher feature more elaborate illustrations.

④ Ranks 4 or less

The player who wins any cards with a **rank of 4 or lower** moves their Player Marker forward 1 space for **each qualifying card**.

Rank refers to the number on the card.

Cards with a rank of 4 or lower have illustrations of common items.

Example 9: Goal Card ⑤

Rank [3] is the lowest, so Player C fulfills the condition and moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.

Rank [3] is the lowest, but both Players C and D played a Rank 3 card. Therefore, the effect is canceled and neither players move their Player Marker.

Example 10: Goal Card ⑥

1. Compare Players A & B
Rank [12] and Rank [9]. More than 3 lower. Player B fulfills the condition and moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.

2. Compare Players B & C
Rank [9] and Rank [5]. More than 3 lower. Player C fulfills the condition and moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.

3. Compare Players C & D
Rank [5] and Rank [9]. It is not lower. Player D does not fulfill the condition.

Only the ranks are compared, even if the cards are of different suits.

Goal Cards ⑦ and ⑧ are special

- The scoring condition is reversed: instead of the majority, the **minority** among Achieved and Not Achieved scores points.
- If the cards you won include **Helmet [1]** or **Pickaxe [1]**, move your Player Marker **back 1 additional space for each of those cards**

⑦ Number of tricks (Minority Version)

The player who wins the trick moves their Player Marker forward 1 space.

[Note for 3-players]
In 2. Game Setup, Step 3, if you choose Goal card ⑦ or ⑧, in step 6, you must **remove the suit "Hat" or "Staff"**.

⑧ Ranks 4 or less (Minority Version)

The player who wins any cards with a **rank of 4 or lower** moves their Player Marker forward 1 space for **each qualifying card**.

Rank refers to the number on the card.

Example 11 : Goal Card ⑦⑧⑤

Player A wins the trick as lead player.

⑦ Move forward 1 space for winning the trick.
+ Special Effect: Helmet [1] moves the Player Marker back 1 space. ⇒ Total 0 space

⑧ Helmet [1], Wand [1], and Pickaxe [3] are all Rank 4 or lower, for a total of 3 qualifying cards. ⇒ Total 2 spaces
+ Special Effect: Helmet [1] moves the Player Marker back 1 space.

⑤ Rank [1] is the lowest, and both Players B & C played a Rank 1 card. ⇒ Total 0 space
+ Special Effect: Since multiple players played the lowest rank, the effect is canceled.

❗ Game Tip: Number of Opportunities to Fulfill Each Goal

The center of each Goal Card shows the number of times its condition can potentially be fulfilled during a round.

Any amount that may vary due to Special Effects or depending on which cards are left undealt is shown as "?".

Use this information as a guide when deciding whether to aim for the Achieved or Not Achieved majority.

[We apologize for an error on the 3-player Number of Tricks Goal Card] Incorrect: "12 + ?" ⇒ Correct: "12"
The values shown on the 4-player and 5-player cards are correct.

List of Goal Card (Timing for Fulfilling Conditions & Recommended Set Reference)

※1 The actual number may vary due to Special Effects.

Name of Goal Card	Timing for Fulfilling Conditions	Forwarding Value (※1)	Basic Set		Advanced Set		
			★1	★2	▼1	▼2	▼3
① Number of tricks	Taking a Trick	1	★1-1			▼2-1	
② Ranks 10 or above	Taking Cards	0 ~ Number of Players	★1-2	★2-1	▼1-2		
③ Odd numbers	Taking Cards	0 ~ Number of Players	★1-3	★2-2			▼3-2
④ Ranks 4 or less	Taking Cards	0 ~ Number of Players				▼2-2	
⑤ Play lowest rank	Play a Card	1			▼1-3		▼3-3
⑥ At least 3 lower...	Play a Card	0 ~ Number of Players-1 ^{※2}		★2-3		▼2-3	
⑦ Number of tricks (minority)	Taking a Trick	1			▼1-1		
⑧ Ranks 4 or less (minority)	Taking Cards	0 ~ Number of Players					▼3-1

※2 The lead player cannot fulfill this condition, so the number of possible players is the number of players minus 1.

9. Variants (Including for Beginner's rule)

If you are new to the game, want to try something a little different, or are already experienced with card games, give the following variant rules a try!

[Variant Rule ①]: Simple Rules ← **Recommended for beginners. You may even want to use these rules for your first game!**

(1) In 2. Game Setup, Step 2, prepare 2 Progress Sheets instead of 3.

(2) In 2. Game Setup, Step 3, choose **2 Goal Cards instead of 3.**

- Recommended 2-card combinations include: ① + ②, ① + ④, ② + ⑥, and ⑤ + ⑦.
- Once you are more familiar with the game, discuss with the other players and try different combinations, or increase the number of Goal Cards back to 3.

(3) You may also skip the step in 3. Round Setup, Step 2 where each player chooses 2 cards and passes them to the player on their right.

(When you are still learning the game, it can be difficult to know which cards to pass. Instead, keep the hand you were dealt and leave it up to luck!)

[Variant Rule ②]: Deal the Entire Deck & Keep 1 Card (3- and 4-player games only) ← **For players who want to try a slightly different way to play.**

(1) In 3. Round Setup, **deal 13 cards to each player** instead of 12, leaving no cards undealt.

(2) In 5-4: Prepare for the Next Trick, change the condition for ending the round as follows:
"Repeat until you have no cards left in hand." → "Repeat until you have **1 card left in hand.**"

(3) Do not play the final card remaining in your hand. Proceed directly to 6. End of the Round and Scoring.

In other words, each player is dealt 13 cards, but the round still consists of 12 tricks. Since you can choose which card to leave unplayed, this variant gives you more options and adds an extra layer of strategy to the game.

[Variant Rule ③]: Four Goal Cards ← **Recommended for players who are experienced with trick-taking games.**

(1) In 2. Game Setup, Step 2, prepare 4 Progress Sheets instead of 3.

(2) In 2. Game Setup, Step 3, choose 4 Goal Cards instead of 3.

- There are no recommended 4-card sets, so discuss with the other players and decide on a combination together.
- A good starting point may be to add 1 extra Goal Card to one of the existing recommended sets.
- It may be best to avoid using similar majority/minority goals such as ① and ⑦ at the same time.
- Including either ⑤ or ⑥ may also work well.

(3) In 2. Game Setup, Step 4, place 4 player marker as normal rule. If so, there are not player marks as the indicator of player color in Step 5. Please memory or use the other tokens from your collections as substitutes.

(This variant is just experimental as infinite potential, so please enjoy at your own responsibility)

10. FAQ We plan to add more clarifications to the website over time, so if you still have questions, please check the website as well. The following FAQ explain situations that may be unclear. If you are unsure about a rule, check here first.

- Q1 : [1. Components] The number of components listed on the back of the box does not match the actual contents. Which is correct?
- A1 : We apologize for the confusion. Due to production deadlines, the packaging had to be finalized before the rules were completely settled, and the component quantities were later changed. The quantities listed in this rulebook are correct.
- Q2 : [2. Game Setup] Is it okay that there is 1 Progress Sheet left over in Step 2?
- A2 : Yes. There is no problem. The extra Progress Sheet is included for use with the advanced variant rules. For details, see 9. Variant Rules.
- Q3 : [5-1. Play a card from your hand] I accidentally played a card of a different suit even though I had a card matching the suit led by the lead player. What should I do?
- A3 : As soon as you notice the mistake, let the other players know. Then discuss it together and decide how to resolve the situation.
- Q4 : [5-3. Check the Goal Conditions] I fulfilled a condition after I had already achieved that goal by reaching the Target Value. Do I move my Player Marker again?
- A4 : No. Once you achieve a goal, place your Player Marker on the right half of the Goal Card. After that, your Player Marker does not move any farther even if you fulfill that goal's condition again.
- Q5 : [8. Goal Card Details] For the Special Effect of ⑤ "Play the Lowest Rank," does it matter whether the card followed the suit led by the lead player?
- A5 : No. Whether or not the card followed suit does not matter. Compare only the ranks (numbers) of the cards played.

- Q6 : [8. Goal Card Details] Can the lead player fulfill this condition? "Play a Card 3 or More Ranks Lower than the Previous Player"
- A6 : No. The lead player can never fulfill this Goal Card's condition. Only players who play after another player during the same trick compare their card with the card played immediately before theirs.
- Q7 : [8. Goal Card Details] If I win both "Helmet [1]" and "Pickaxe [1]," does my Player Marker move back 1 space for each card?
- A7 : Yes. Move your Player Marker back 1 space for each applicable card. However, 0 is the minimum. Your Player Marker can never move below 0. For example, if your marker is already at 0, moving it back 1 space has no additional effect. If you later fulfill a condition that moves it forward 1 space, it moves normally from 0 to 1.
- Q8 : [8. Goal Card Details] If a Special Effect moves my Player Marker back 1 space, can I go from Achieved back to Not Achieved?
- A8 : Yes. If moving your Player Marker back causes it to fall below the Target Value, that goal becomes Not Achieved again. Even if you fulfilled that goal's condition again after already achieving it, those extra fulfillments are not stored as additional progress. As explained above, once a goal is achieved, fulfilling its condition again does not move your Player Marker farther forward. Therefore, if a Special Effect later moves the marker back below the Target Value, the goal immediately returns to Not Achieved.



*When playing with close friends,
it's fun to banter a bit like saying,
"Hey, let's achieve this goal together!"
(Of course, betraying them later is totally fine, hehe)*

Please check our website before playing the game for the most updated rules and errata.



11. Postface/Credits

This game began with a simple question: Could I develop the "Lieutenant" element from the classic trick-taking game Napoleon into something new? With a simple foundation, must follow suit and no trump suit, I believe I created a game where every trick presents an interesting decision.

During playtesting, I also realized that I wanted players who were new to trick-taking games to enjoy it too. At first, I worried there might be too much to think about, but one comment changed my perspective:

"It's easier than bidding how many tricks you'll win at the start, and it's fun adjusting your position as the round goes on!"

That was a real eye-opener for me. Helping more people discover the appeal of trick-taking games has always been one of my goals, so I hope experienced players will enjoy introducing this game to newcomers as well.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank MATSUDA98, whose wonderful illustrations brought the world of this game to life far beyond what I could have imagined.

And, as usual, I ask one thing from the veteran gamers. Please don't tell another player "this is the best move in this situation!" (Sorry for whom those of you who have read this message before.)

I strongly believe that being able to "find" the best move by yourself is one of the "fun" in playing a game. (Of course, how you enjoy a game is up to you and shouldn't be forced by others)

Please enjoy the game and aha moments!
I wish you a wonderful game life.

Good Luck and Have Fun!!

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Game Design : Fukutarou (福夕郎)

Illustration : MATSUDA98

Publisher : Fukuroudou (臬老堂)

English Rulebook Translator: Dan Kobayashi (Ninja Star Games)

Website : <https://fukuroudou.info> X (旧 Twitter) : @Fukuroudou_8

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[Special Thanks]

Everyone who played the prototype with me.
Dan、かゆかゆ、無二得、Rustycan、Wangli、脳筋、なごみん

And more than anything, everyone who enjoys this game!

Please check our website before playing the game for the most updated rules and errata.
Also please send us your questions and comments. We love hearing from you!

