

HERRLOF

CONTENTS



Scandinavia during the Viking age, from roughly 800 until 1050 AD, is characterised by powerful magnates (or chieftains) and kings. The title of king is not inherited, you fight for it. The leading magnate is recognised by the others as "first among equals".

Four magnates now battle for Herrlof: the victory and praise gained in war. Who will become the next Viking king?



Game overview

In this trick taking game your goal is to be the first player to reach 50 points or more, the player with the most points wins. Scoring points can be done through winning tricks and gaining bonuses. The game is played in a maximum of 10 rounds, although most often players will easily reach 50 points before that.

Preparation

Each player receives one sheet from the score pad to keep track of their predictions and score. For the first round you randomly pick one player as the dealer, this alternates for the following rounds.

Gameplay

Herrlof is played in rounds. Each round consists of:

1) Deal 15 cards 2) Set the trump 3) Predict your score 4) Battle for tricks 5) Reveal predictions and determine your score.

Every round consists of 15 tricks, a trick consists of one played card from both players.

1) Dealing cards & 2) setting the trump

The dealer deals 15 cards to both players, the remaining 12 cards form a facedown deck. The dealer then turns the top card of the deck face up, the colour of this card is the trump colour for this round. If this is a ♠ or a N, there is no trump colour.

If both played cards are the same colour, the player with the higher card wins the trick. If Ben played a different colour than Anna, then Anna wins the trick (regardless of the number on the card) unless Ben played a trump card. If Ben played a trump card (while Anna played another colour), Ben wins the trick regardless of the number on his card.

The winner of the trick takes both cards, places them on top of each other and puts them to the side of the table. Every following trick won by that player is put there in such a way that both players can at any time see how many tricks each player has won. You are only allowed to review the most recent trick, you cannot check any previous tricks for which cards were played. The winner of a trick starts the next trick, unless a card with a special ability changes this.

5) Reveal predictions and determine your score

When each player's hand is empty, each player reveals their prediction. You receive one point for each trick you won. If you won the exact number of tricks you predicted, you receive 10 bonus points. If you only won three or four tricks, you receive 5 bonus points (even if this was not your prediction).

3 – If you play this card, you may choose to take the top (facedown) card from the deck to your hand and discard a card from your hand to the bottom of the deck. You may discard the card you just received. This special ability is regardless of who wins the trick.

6 – If you win the trick with this card, you may choose to blindly steal one card from the hand of the other player. You may add this card to your hand and return a different card to the other player, or may hand back the same card you just stole.

9 – If you win the trick with this card, your opponent starts the next trick.

All numbered cards that have a special ability are recognisable by the K rune (Perthro) on the card.

Three player alternative

It is possible (and enjoyable) to play the game with three players. Simply deal 11 cards to each player per round. When a card with a special ability indicates "the other player", substitute this with "another player". With the 9, the player left of the winner starts the next trick. Note that the five bonus points for 3 or 4 tricks is cancelled for three players. You are also recommended to put the scoring goal at 40 points, rather than 50.

3) Predict your score

You take your dealt cards to form your hand and predict how many tricks you think you will win. You then write this on your sheet and keep it concealed. You are not allowed to alter your prediction in a round, and you cannot show your prediction to the other player.

4) Battle for tricks

The player next to the dealer starts the first trick by playing one card, let's call this player Anna. The card played by Anna indicates which colour card the other player (Ben) must play if Ben has that same colour. If Ben does not have a card in that colour, he may play any card he wants. You are always allowed to play a ♠ or a N instead of matching the colour. If a player starts a trick with a ♠ or a N, the other player may play any card.

Examples - Trump: blue

– Anna plays a green 7, Ben doesn't have green cards and therefore can play any card he wants. Ben plays a red 8. Anna wins the trick.

– Anna plays a green 7, Ben doesn't have green cards and therefore can play any card he wants. Ben plays a blue 3. Ben wins the trick since blue is the trump colour.

End of the game

The game ends when, after scoring a round, one or both players have reached 50 points. The player with the most points wins. In case of a tie, the player that most often received the prediction bonus wins. If there still is a tie, the player with the most tricks in the final round wins. If there still is a tie, play again!

Cards with special abilities

♠ – (Valknut) Destroys the trick in which it is played. This means that both cards played in this trick are removed from the game for this round, lowering the total number of tricks that can be won this round. The same player that started the trick starts the next trick. If two ♠'s are played in one trick, a new trump colour is immediately turned face up from the deck (replacing the existing trump).

N – (Hagalaz) This card is lower than all other cards. The loser of this trick starts the next trick. However, if two N's are played, the first one wins the trick.

1 – If you win the trick with this card, you may choose to steal a trick from the other player. Note that this is a trick the other player won in an earlier round.

Examples - Trump: red

– Anna plays a red 5, Ben plays a ♠. The trick is destroyed, Anna starts the next trick.

– Anna plays a blue 1, Ben plays a N. Anna wins the trick and takes one additional trick from Ben, so Anna wins two tricks. Ben starts the next trick.

– Anna plays a red 3, takes the top face down card from the deck and discards another card. Ben plays a red 6. Ben wins the trick and steals one card from Anna's hand and returns a different card from his own hand. Ben starts the next trick.

– Anna plays a green 9, Ben plays a yellow 4. Anna wins the trick, Ben starts the next trick.

CREDITS

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