

OHELL IRISH CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

OH HELL is played with 5 players using a standard 52-card deck, with ace (A) being the highest rank, two (2) the lowest. A game consists of 10 hands (rounds), 10 cards to each player for round one, the last round being just one card each. During a hand, each player bids for a number of tricks, then attempts to take exactly that many tricks during the hand. The trump for each round is predetermined and goes from 10 to 1 in the order: Hearts (10), Clubs (9), Spades(8), Diamonds(7), No-Trump(6) and repeats a second time.

The dealer is determined by dealing a face up card to all and the highest card becoming dealer, if two cards match, they draw a second card. The dealer deals out the cards one by one, starting with the player to his left, in a clockwise direction, until the required number of cards has been dealt.

Each player now bids for the number of tricks he/she believes they can win. The player to the left of the dealer bids first. Bidding is restricted (the screw the dealer rule) for the first five rounds where the number of tricks bid cannot equal the number available. That is, every deal must in total be either overbid or underbid. For example, if six cards are dealt, and the first four bids are two, zero, zero and two, then the dealer may not bid two. This rule is not used from 5 cards down.

When every player has made a bid, the player to the left of the dealer makes the opening lead. Play then proceeds as usual in a trick-taking game, with each player in turn playing one card. Players must follow suit, unless they have no cards of the led suit, in which case they may play any card. The highest card of the led suit wins the trick unless ruffed/ trumped, when the highest trump card wins. The player who wins the trick leads to the next trick.

A scorer is picked at the start, who scores the entire game. Each player scores 1 point for each trick he/she takes. A player that wins the exact number of tricks bid, receives an additional 10 points for making the contract. The scorer adds the scores cumulatively after every round so that there is a running total of the scores. The game starts on 10 cards per player and finishes at the last round of one card per player when the totals are read out. Here is an example of what a score sheet might look like at the end.

There are 4 matches – all four scores are aggregated, and the winner has the top cumulative score.

Specific Rules:

- After the bidding has ended and the cards are being played, players cannot refer to the bidding or ask others what they bid.
- Once you play a card you cannot take it back except where you play the wrong suit in error
- No speech play about cards in your hand or speculating about other players hands that may accidentally help another player e.g. “that must mean you are out of hearts”
- Slow play is to be avoided, as it is important the all tables are approximately playing at the same pace.