

## **Two-Handed Pinochle Rules (with Bidding)**

Pinochle is a classic two-player game developed in the United States, and it is still one of the country's most popular games. The basic game of Pinochle is Two-Hand Pinochle, which derives from the European game Bezique. Enthusiastic players of Pinochle have since created many interesting variations, including versions for three players, four players (with partners, some including bidding subtleties incorporated from Bridge), and more. The rules given herein describe an alternative version of Two-Handed Pinochle by **Robert & Ramona Fletcher**, which incorporates player bidding, handicaps, penalties, melds, and trick points.

1. **Number of Players**

Two people can play.

2. **The Pack and Rank of Cards**

A 48-card Pinochle pack is used. It consists of: A (high), 10, K, Q, J, 9 (low) in each of the four suits, with two of each card.

3. **The Shuffle and Cut**

The Players agree beforehand, who is to tabulate the ongoing scoring of the game. From a shuffled pack spread face down, each player draws a card. The person with the *lowest* card deals first and has his choice of seats. If both players draw cards of the same rank, they cut again. The Dealer shuffles, then the non-dealer cuts, leaving at least five cards in each portion of the pack (stock). The dealer completes the cut.

4. **The Deal**

The dealer gives 12 cards to each player; non-dealer first, dealt three cards at a time. The next card is turned up and placed on the table. The remainder of the pack forms the *stock* and is placed face down so as to cover half of the turned up card. Upon completion of the hand, the non-dealer player becomes the next dealer. Each deal constitutes a hand. There are usually several hands played per game.

5. **Object of the Game**

There are two phases of the game: Meld Play, and Trick Play. The goal is to meld certain combinations of cards having values as much as possible during the Meld Play, and to score as much as possible during the Trick Play by the value of counting cards taken on tricks. Values of meld and cards taken on tricks follow. The player who reaches 150 points first at any time during the play of a hand wins the game. If the player claiming 150 points also has a contract bid to make, the opposing player may require that he prove that he can make his contract. If not, play continues until he makes his contract. **Be sure to avoid a *Penalty*, which can erase your meld, erase your trick points, give bonus points to your opponent, and cost you the game.**

6. **Point Counting**

a. The values of the meld during the Meld Play:

A, 10, K, Q, J of trump (Run) 15 (for every K or Q added to Run, 2 points)	
Double Run (all trump except nines of trump suit) 150	
K & Q of trump (marriage of trump) 4	
K & Q of any other suit (marriage) 2	
A♠, A♥, A♦, A♣ (Aces) 10	(with all As, 100 points)
K♠, K♥, K♦, K♣ (kings) 8	(with all Ks, 80 points)
Q♠, Q♥, Q♦, Q♣ (queens) 6	(with all Qs, 60 points)
J♠, J♥, J♦, J♣ (jacks) 4	(with all Js, 40 points)
Q♠, J♦ (pinochle) 4	(with double pinochle, 30 points)
9 of Trump 1	

b. The values of cards taken during the Trick Play phase:

Each ace	1
Each king	1
Each ten	1
Each queen	0
Each jack	0
Each nine	0
Last trick	1

7. **Bidding**

a. Before the start of the Meld Play, the Dealer makes the first Bid of the count she/he expects to win for the hand. The bidding opens at twenty. The highest Bid wins the contract. The players continue bidding in turn until one player passes. If the Dealer passes without making a bid, the opposing player may accept the bid at 20, or also pass.

b. If both players decide to pass, the Dealer must deal again, and must open the bidding at twenty. Exception to above, if a Player has 5 nines and no meld, or 6 nines with or without meld, that Player may choose to call the hand dead. The hand is dealt again with no penalty.

8. **Prior to Meld Play**

The winning bidder shall write down the trump suit. The other player has the option of guessing the trump suit. If the other player is correct in guessing, he is awarded 5 points; if incorrect, the winning bidder is awarded 5 points.

9. **Meld Play**

a. The player who did not take the Bid contract leads first. Players are not required to follow suit during the Meld Play, but the winning card takes trick, **however, board is the play and cannot be withdrawn**. Play continues until all cards are drawn from the stock.

- b. Each trick consists of a lead and a play. The non-dealer leads; thereafter the winner of each trick play leads next. When a trump is led, it wins the trick unless the opponent plays a higher trump. When any other suit is led, the card led wins unless the opponent plays a higher card of the same suit or a trump. The leader may lead any card, and the opponent may play any card. It is not necessary to follow suit.
- c. After each trick, each player draws a card from the top of the stock to restore his hand to 12 cards; the trick taker draws first and is first to lead again. When a player wins the trick, the player has the option of placing a meld on the table face up and recording the points associated with the meld. Only one meld may be placed per trick. Any meld card from the table may be played on a trick.
- d. A player must declare possession of a nine of trump before either player leads the last trick. If a player wishes to play the nine of trump on a trick during the playing of the hand, he must have *already* declared it before either player plays on the trick. For each nine of trump that is declared, the player receives one meld point.
- e. When a Player takes a trick, the Player may draw the stock face up card by replacing it with a previously declared nine of trump from his hand. This action may occur only once during the Meld Play. If a player takes the stock face up card during the Meld Play, that is a nine of trump, and replaces it with a nine of trump from his hand, the taken nine of trump is *automatically declared* and is counted as a meld of 1 point and placed in the Player's hand.
- f. **The Penalty for not declaring a nine of trump in your hand before playing the nine on a trick, or before taking the stock face up card, or before the last trick is led, is a lost of your entire meld and trick points for the hand.**
- g. When the last trick is taken, the player may meld upon taking the trick, and then again following the drawing of the last card (either the face up card or from the stock). The last trick taker has the option of drawing either the last stock card or the stock face up card. The other player must draw the other remaining card. If a Player draws the stock face up card, and it is the nine of trump previously placed there by him, the value of meld is 0 for picking the nine.
- h. If the last stock card drawn (stock card or the face up card originally dealt) is a nine, the player drawing it receives 10 points. If the stock card or the stock face up card is the nine of trump, the player who draws it as the last draw, receives 11 points. If the stock card or the stock face up card is the Jack of Clubs, the player who draws it as the last draw, receives 5 points.

10. **Drawing Penalty**

- a. At the beginning of each hand dealt, players are responsible for assuring that they have twelve cards. It is the responsibility of each player to draw a card prior to playing a trick unless in possession of more than 12 cards.
- b. If, at any time during the play, **it is determined by a player that the other Player has too few or too many cards (because they forgot to draw or drew twice), the opponent shall receive 5 Penalty points. If a player's hand is short or over by more than one card, the other Player shall receive 5 Penalty points for each additional card in error. If a player leads a card before drawing from the stock, the other player receives 5 Penalty points.**
- c. If Player is short by one card, the card will be drawn from the top of the stock. If Player is short by more than one card, the cards will be drawn from within the stock rather than from the top of the stock. A Player shall compensate for card overage by not drawing until correct amount is held. The Player must indicate that he is "*pretending*" to draw when it is his turn to draw.
- d. **The Player with the incorrect number of cards in his hand must correct his hand by the end of the next Trick Play; and if the hand is not corrected, the opponent shall again receive 5 Penalty points for each card in error.**

11. **Trick Play**

- a. When all cards are played from the stock and the last meld is made, meld is placed back in each player's hand. Each Player should have 12 cards. The Player who took the last trick leads a card and the other player plays a card in response. The winner of the trick is the first to lead again. The rule of the play is as follows: each player must follow suit to the card led if possible, and must try to win by playing a higher ranked card, and the **board is the play and cannot be withdrawn**. A player who cannot follow suit must play a trump if he has trump. If, in response, a player is void in both the suit led and in trump, any card may be played.
- b. In this manner the last 12 tricks are played, after which the players count and score the points they won in their tricks, 1 point for each for Ace, Ten, and King. The last trick taken is worth 1 extra point to the taker. The total point count for each player is the sum of the Meld Play together with points from the Trick Play.
- c. **If it is determined by your opponent (before you see your error and correct the play) that you did not follow suit when possible, play a higher card when possible, or trump if necessary, the Penalty is forfeiture of all Trick and Meld Play points for the hand.**

- d. If the bidder's contract is not made from the Meld Play and Trick Play points, the ***Penalty*** is that the player's total points revert back to his original point count before the hand commenced. The non-Bidder Player still receives his Meld and Trick Play points made.
- e. If a Player is unable to make any trick points during the Trick Play, the ***Penalty*** is losing all his Meld Play points for the hand.

12. ***Scoring***

- a. The score must be kept with pencil and paper and clearly legible for the other player to view and question as necessary.
- b. Melds are scored when they are made during the Meld Play. Scores for cards taken in tricks are added after the Trick Play is completed and the card points are counted. Every deal constitutes a hand.

13. ***Game Over***

The first player to reach 150 points declares that he has won if he has won a trick with point count before the cards are counted. The opposing Player may challenge the win as to whether he can make his Bid Contract and therefore not reach 150 points. In case of a challenge, the Trick Play will continue until the bidder makes his Bid contract and subsequently wins the game.

14. ***Handicap***

- a. The Handicap Score is the Player's starting point count for the next game. At the start of a game, only one Player can have a Handicap Score. Handicap Scores are only relative handicaps between two specific players and are not transferable to other player combinations.
- b. The losing Player of each game receives 4 points added to his Handicap Score, or 4 points are subtracted from the other Player's Handicap Score. Handicap scores are always zero or greater than zero.
- c. If the losing Player is unable to reach at least 75 points before his opponent reaches 150 points, the losing Player receives 8 points added to his Handicap Score (not 4), or 8 points are subtracted from the other Player's Handicap Score.
- d. For example, if a Player starts a game with a Handicap Score of 8 points, and again losses the game, he receives additional 4 points handicap added to his already 8 points to equal 12 points Handicap Score to start the next game. His opponent will have a zero Handicap Score to start the next game.

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