

Classic Nap

Napoleon, "a very spirited and interesting game" burst onto the scene in England in 1875 and soon became a national game. It is still played in Strathclyde and southern England (Phillips, 1939)

52-card French pack, 2-8 players, clockwise



Possible Nap hand

Aim. To make your bid number of tricks or prevent the declarer making his.

Cards. Cards rank in Whist order: A-K-Q-J-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2.

The Deal. Dealer shuffles and youngest hand (to his right) cuts. Deal 5 cards each, clockwise, singly and face down. Thereafter the deal rotates left.

Auction. Bidding is clockwise and eldest hand opens. A player gets one chance to speak and may "pass" or bid the number of tricks he hopes to make. Later players, in turn, must overcall the last bid or pass.

Bids. Two < Three < Misère < Four < Nap < Wellington.

"Nap" is a bid to take all 5 tricks (hence "going Nap"). "Wellington" may only be bid if Nap has already been called; it is the same as Nap, but worth more.

A player with a weak hand may bid "Misère", an undertaking to play at no trump and lose all five tricks.

If all pass, the cards are thrown in and the next dealer deals.

Play. The winning bidder leads any card to the first trick; this card fixes the trump suit for the hand. Thereafter Whist rules of play apply.

Winning. To win the bidder must achieve his bid; otherwise he has lost.

Settlement. If the bidder wins, each opponent pays him 1 counter for each trick bid. He is not paid for overtricks since play stops when he achieves his bid. If the bidder loses, he pays each opponent 1 counter per trick bid.

A Misère is paid at a rate of 3 counters.

If Nap is bid, the bidder receives 10 counters from each opponent if he wins, but only pays out 6 if he loses. Bridge expert Hubert Phillips said, "the Wellington stakes, as patriotism demands, are double the stakes at Napoleon."

Historically it was often played for a penny a trick, whence "Penny Nap".

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Dorset Nap

This local version of Peep Nap was played in rural Dorset at Christmas time and features a "floater".

(Ken Short at pagat.com, 2011)

52-card French pack, 3-7 players, clockwise



Solid Nap hand

Aim. To make your bid number of tricks or prevent the declarer making his.

Cards. Cards rank in Whist order: A-K-Q-J-10-9-8-7-6.

If three play, shorten the pack to 20 cards, if four, 24, five 28, six 32 and if seven play to 36 cards. In each case remove the lowest cards.

Stakes. Each player antes 1 counter to the pool before each deal.

Deal. Dealer shuffles and youngest hand cuts. Deal 5 cards each, clockwise, singly and face down, then one card face down on the table as the *floater*. Thereafter the deal rotates left.

Auction. Bidding is clockwise and eldest opens. A player gets one chance to speak and may "pass" or bid for the tricks he hopes to make. Before bidding a player may "peep" at the floater on payment of 1 counter to the kitty. Whether he peeps or not, he may still bid "with" or without the floater. If the winning bid is "with", the bidder picks up the floater and discards a card, unseen. If all pass, the cards are thrown in and the next dealer deals.

Bids. Three with < Three < Four with < Four < Nap.

Play. The winning bidder leads any card to the first trick, *but note*: this card fixes the trump suit for the hand. Thereafter Whist rules of play apply.

Winning. To win the bidder must achieve his bid; whereupon play ends.

Settlement. If the bidder wins he earns from each opponent 1 counter for a *Three* or *Three with*; or 2 for a *Four* or *Four with*. If he loses, he pays to the kitty what he would have earned if he'd won, e.g. with 5 players; if he loses a *Three* he pays $4 \times 1 = 4$ counters to the kitty; if he loses a *Four* he pays $4 \times 2 = 8$ counters to the kitty.

If the bidder wins a Nap, he wins whatever is in the kitty plus 5 counters from each opponent. If he loses, he pays 5 counters per opponent to the kitty.

Note: the source does not give payments for this variant, but it is known that it was played for ha'pennies.

Dorset Nap

This local version of Peep Nap was played in rural Dorset at Christmas time and features a "floater".

(Ken Short at pagat.com, 2011)

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