

Back Alley Bridge Rules

1. Start each player (4 total played with partners) getting thirteen cards. This will leave two cards left over (you use the jokers as the big and little bloopers).
2. Turn over 53rd card and it will be trump.
3. Each player bids as to how many tricks he can take. Each team of partners is totaled; i.e, North bids 5, East bids 2, South bids 3, and West bids 2. That totals 12 of a possible 13 tricks.
4. Highest bidder leads with anything he wants except trump, which was previously determined by last card.
5. Each player must follow suit if able to. If he can't, he can trump and thereby normally take the trick or he can throw another card (usually low) of another suit because that way he cannot take the trick.
6. You MUST follow suit, if you do not, it is a re-neg and you and your partner lose the hand. Once trump is broken you can throw either trump or other suit.
7. Normally, a hand is started with the Ace of some other suit than trump. The big blooper is the most powerful card when thrown, you must follow with your largest trump card (don't screw your partner early on unless trump tight) the little blooper is second and if lead you must give up your lowest trump card.
8. Each hand is dealt with one less card i.e., 13, 12, 11, etc. NO signals, twitches etc that's cheating! No " come back partner stuff either."
9. I believe scoring is 5 points per trick. Bid five and get them, you got 25 points. If you and your partner bid a combined of 9 tricks out of say 11 or more and get them you get 45 points, but miss the mark by so much as one and you get set! You go nugatory (2531 in me) 45 points.
10. If you bid and take all the tricks, easier done at say 6 cards and less, there is a bonus - but I forget how much. Blow it (set) and you go negative that many.
11. It's a great game and we played many hours of it! Enjoy Bro!

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After reviewing the Back Alley Bridge rules, a reader remembered a few additional steps.

1. After dealing and before bidding one player would pass three cards to his partner. It mattered not which player passed first but this pass would be used to pass a message as to how to play. If you passed all bad cards it meant "I want your good cards as I have a good hand." Or by passing all good cards you would be telling your partner you have nothing and for him to take the lead.
2. Play is started by the person who bid the highest amount of tricks he would take. Thus he would have the lead which can be important if in trying to take all the tricks.
3. If you bid to take all the tricks it is called bidding Board, and rather than the 5 points per trick bid your score is doubled. If another team bids board and your team also believes you can take all the tricks you can bid double board. That would double your points again if you actually take them all.
4. Probably the most important rule (at least in the bush) was CHEAT. This was most commonly done by passing more than the allowed three cards to your partner, but any manner is permitted (if you are not caught) in Okinawan Back Alley Bridge.

Ahhh The memories.

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*This is an archive copy of a post from Sgt. Grit's US Marine Corps stories, formerly at
<http://www.grunt.com/Stories/BackAlleyBridgeRules.htm>
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