Haggis

BY SEAN ROSS

A climbing game for two players.

Object

The object of the game is to be the first player to empty your hand of cards while also trying to capture certain scoring cards during play. Additional points may be earned by betting that you will be first to shed all of your cards.

Components

From a standard pack of 52 playing cards, collect ranks 2 through 10 in four suits, then add any two Jacks, any two Queens, and any two Kings to form a deck of 42 cards. The cards rank, from low to high:

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J, Q, K.

Preparation

Select one of the two players to be dealer. Put **one Jack, one Queen**, and **one King** face-up in front of each player: these are ***wild cards*** and their suits are irrelevant. Shuffle the remaining 36 cards and deal 14 face-down to each player. A player's ***hand*** consists of the **14 dealt cards**, plus the **3 wild cards** which remain face-up on the table until played.

The leftover cards, or the ***Haggis***, are put out of play without looking at them.

Betting

At any time, before you have played any cards, you may place one ***bet*** that you will be **first to shed all of your cards**. You may bet **0 points** (*No Bet*), **15 points** (*Little Bet*), or **30 points** (*Big Bet*)[1]. Either or both players may place bets. The bets do not have to be equal. To place, for example, a little bet, say "*Little Bet*". If your bet is successful, the amount bet will be added to your score at the end of the hand. Otherwise, the amount bet will be added to your *opponent's* score.

Play

Each hand is played over of a number of tricks. The non-dealing player leads to the first trick by playing an opening ***card combination***. A card combination may be a ***set***, a ***sequence***, or a ***bomb***.

SETS

A set is a group of cards of the same rank. Sets may consist of **one to seven** cards (*singles, pairs, triples, etc.*). *For examples of sets, see the Player Aid.*

SEQUENCES

A sequence (*or run*) is a group of **three or more singles**, or **two or more larger sets** (*pairs, triples, etc.*), of **consecutive rank** sharing the **same suit(s)** between sets. *For examples of sequences, see the Player Aid.*

Wild Cards

The **J**, **Q**, or **K** may be used as a ***wild cards*** to stand for any ***lower*** ranked card(s) in a set or sequence. When played as part of a sequence, they may have **whichever suit is required**. Wild cards can be played alone, as singles, and rank as shown previously. When played as part of a larger combination (*set or sequence*), the combination **must contain at least one non-wild card** (*otherwise the combination would be a bomb*).

BOMBS

A bomb is a special combination of ***point cards*** (*see, Scoring)* that will be further explained in the *Trick Play* section (*below*). There are 6 types. Ranked from lowest to highest they are:

- **3-5-7-9** (*these 4 ranks in* **4 different** *suits, no wild cards*)
- **J-Q**
- **J-K**
- **Q-K**
- **J-Q-K**
- **3-5-7-9** (*these 4 ranks in* **one** *suit, no wild cards*).

Trick Play

After a combination of cards is led, the other player has the option of playing a ***higher ranking combination*** or ***passing***. To be higher ranking, the new combination must be of the **exact same type**, have the **exact same number of cards**, and have **higher ranking cards**. *So if a single card is led, only a higher single card can be played; if a pair is led only higher pairs can be played; a three card sequence can only be beaten by a higher three card sequence; and so on.* **Bombs are the only exception to this rule**. A bomb can be played, in turn order, to **beat any combination** except a higher bomb. After a bomb has been played only a higher ranked bomb may beat it.

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[1] Advanced players may consider increasing the Little Bet and Big Bet from 15/30 points to, say, 20/40 or 25/50 points, if they want more of a challenge.

Players continue to play alternately, playing successively higher combinations of the same size and type (*or bombs*) until one of the players ends the trick by ***passing***. A player with a higher combination can choose to pass instead of playing it. A player without a higher combination must pass.

Once a player passes, the other player, *who played the highest combination*, is the ***winner of the trick***. If the highest combination played was a **not a bomb**, the cards played to the trick are captured by the winner. If the trick *was* **won by a bomb**, the cards are ***captured by the opponent***. At the end of the hand, each player will score any point cards that they have captured during trick play. The winner of the trick then leads to start the next trick.

Ending the hand

When a **player sheds the last card** from her hand, the **hand is over**. This player ***wins the hand***. The winner captures all cards played to the final trick (*unless the last combination played was a bomb - see* Trick Play, *above*). The other player does not get to play any more cards.

Scoring

The winner of the hand scores **5 points** for each card in her opponent's hand. Remember, the wild cards count as part of the hand.

All ***point cards*** (*i.e., any* ***3****,* ***5****,* ***7****,* ***9****,* ***J****,* ***Q****, or* ***K***), captured during trick play, are scored by the capturing player. *See SCORING in the Player Aid for details*. Point cards left in the opponent's hand and any point cards found in the Haggis are scored by the player who won the hand.

Additional points for any **successful or unsuccessful bets** are scored as well.

Continuing Play

After scoring, another hand is dealt. The dealer is the leader in points; the trailing player gets the first lead. If both players have the same number of points, the winner of the last hand deals.

Winning

Continue playing hands until an agreed upon score is reached (*or passed*) by at least one player. The player with the **most points wins**. If the scores are tied, continue playing hands until there is a winner.

For a shorter game, **250 points** is suggested. For a longer game, **350 points** is suggested.

Alternatively, you could play a ***Best of Three* match** while scoring each **game** up to **121 points** using a Cribbage board. Count all of a players points, not just up to 121. Start both players at zero points for subsequent games in the match.

CREDITS

Special thanks for play-testing, development, and design ideas: Chris Beaven, William Bekking, Pascal Blais, Mike Forbes, Allison Gibson, Sheridan Hortness, Jonathan Kandell, Andy Kurzen, Larry Levy, Mark McEvoy, Stephen Mills, Angelique & Sheamus Parkes, Kurt Purcell, Denise Ross, Martin Villemaire III. *This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 2.5 Canada License.* *Sean Ross is a member of the Game Artisans of Canada.*

