Combiner the Card Game: Rules (physical version)

Overview

In this game the deck of **36** cards (ranging from six to ace) is used. The order of cards in each suit from high to low: **A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6**. Two or more players can participate[1].

Each player gets **four** cards for the starting hand, then the *trump card* (see below) is revealed. Regardless of the game situation, a player cannot have more than **seven** cards in hand at a time. The card distribution is performed clockwise, one card at a time given to every player.

The *trump card* is the next card of the pack after the cards have been dealt to the players. This card is placed face up sideways under the rest of the pack, which is stacked face down on top of it. The suit of this card is the trump suit for the match, and the trump card is considered as the last card of the pack, which is drawn after all the face down cards have gone.

A *round* is a player's move (attack) plus an opponent's beat (defense) or passing a beat. The details of these two phases are described in the "Moves and Beats" section. A *match* encompasses the game period from the general card distribution and trump revelation until the moment when one of the players does not have any cards left in hand in the end of a round and there are no cards in the pack. A *game* means one or more sequential matches resulting in finding the winner – the player who has the highest score (the starting score usually equals 100). The rules for the game of two players are described further. The additional rules concerning the game of three or more players are described separately in the “More Players” section.

Game Process

If a new game starts or the players finished the last match together, the right to move first belongs to the player who has the lowest trump[2] (it has to be revealed to the opponent); otherwise, the player who finished the last match moves first in the new match. A player can play a single card or use certain combinations of cards (combos).

There are 25 combos in total and they are divided into five categories (blocks, rows, queues, optimae, artifacts), each of them having five combos in it. Combos can be used when attacking as well as when defending. It is possible to attack with or to defend with several combos at once (in such a case they can be considered a complex combo). One and the same card cannot be used within multiple combos at once. The total number of cards used for an attack cannot be higher than the current number of cards in the opponent's hand. A combo can be revealed part by part while the opponent has not started to beat it, but revealing the whole combo at once is considered much better practice. The full list of combos is shown below.

Combo Name	Score	Description
Block		*Several cards of equal ranks.*
Pair	3	Two cards.
Trey	6	Three cards.
Lesser Force Attack / Force Beat	12 (4)	Four cards of equal ranks ranging from 6 to 10. Even if this combo is beaten, the defending player's score is decreased by the value given in brackets.
Court Force Attack / Force Beat	15 (6)	Four cards of equal ranks ranging from J to K. Even if this combo is beaten, the defending player's score is decreased by the value given in brackets.
Ultimate Force Attack / Force Beat	20 (10)	Four aces. Even if this combo is beaten, the defending player's score is decreased by the value given in brackets.
Row		*Three or more cards of the same suit.*
Small	3	Three cards.
Medium	5	Four cards.
Great	8	Five cards.
Epic	12	Six cards.
Legendary	17	Seven cards.
Queue		*Three or more cards of consecutive ranks.*
Small	3	Three cards.
Medium	5	Four cards.
Great	8	Five cards.
Epic	12	Six cards.
Legendary	17	Seven cards.

Optima		*Three or more cards of consecutive ranks and of the same suit.*
Small	6	Three cards.
Medium	12	Four cards.
Great	18	Five cards.
Epic	24	Six cards.
Legendary	30	Seven cards.
Artifact		*Into this category fall the combos without a strict classification and with special conditions of usage.*
Reset	0	Once per match, a player can attack using all the cards in hand (the value of the cards does not matter). This combo can only be used if at least one card is remaining in the pack. It is necessary to declare this combo before using it.
Marriage	4 (0)	A queen and a king of any suits. This combo can be valued only once per match for each player.
Assembly	6	Four cards of strictly different suits. Even if this combo is beaten, the defending player's score is decreased by the specified value. This combo can only be used via *custom* (see below). It is necessary to declare this combo before using it.
Jackpot	25	If a player beats with his or her last card in a match and that card is a *six of spades*, it can beat any opponent's card. This combo does not reduce the defending player's score but increases the attacking player's score instead.
Overhit	40	Finishing a match with a *force attack* (if the opponent does not beat it) or with a *force beat*.

Moves and Beats

The player who is to move has a choice between moving with a chosen single card or a combo and passing the move. If the player passes, he or she has to take one card from the top of the pack (unless it is empty or the player already has maximum allowed number of cards), and the right to move (attack) passes to the opponent.

On the contrary, if the player (attacker) makes a move, the opponent (defender) also has a choice between:
a) beating **all** the cards at stake;
b) passing the beat.
To beat a card, one has to play a higher card of the same suit or, if the card to be beaten is not a trump, it can be beaten by a trump of any rank. In order to beat all the cards at stake the defender has to play the same number of cards and beat each card of the move separately. It is not necessary for the cards used to beat to form any kind of combo.

If the defender has managed to beat all the stake cards, he or she gets the right to attack in the next round. And the score of the attacker decreases by:
1) total value of the combos used by the defender on the current beat (the attacker's combos which have been beaten by the defender do not have any value, except for a *force-attack* and an *assembly*);
2) 1 point per every jack, queen or king and 2 points per every ace that the defender has beaten with.
When all these actions have been performed, all the cards at stake are considered beaten and do not take active part in the current match any more[3].

If the defender decides to pass the beat, his or her score decreases by the total value of the combos used by the attacker, and all the cards at stake are also considered beaten. In this case the defender has the additional opportunity of taking one card from those the attacker has moved with and using it later. However, the attacker then not only saves the value of the used combos but also gets a significant compensation meaning that his or her next combo used when attacking cannot be beaten. This bonus can accumulate[4]. To make the process of registering unbeatable combos easier, the player should keep one closed card from the pool of beaten cards nearby until the moment of using the combo.

If the player has beaten a card with a trump of the same rank, he or she gets a prize: from now on, **before attacking**, the player has the right to claim a *custom* card/combo. Customs fall into three categories:
a) Protected. The defender cannot beat it.
b) Amplified. If the defender does not beat it, his or her score decreases not only by the value of the combo itself but also by the bonus of court cards and aces used by the attacker, like in the similar situation when defending.
c) Assembly. Provides the attacker with the opportunity of using this combo (pl. ref. to the combo list).

Customs can accumulate but only within the scope of the current match. This bonus can be gained, as well as applied, only once per

round[5] and only if the pack is not empty. To make the process of registering customs easier, the player should keep two cards which have helped him or her to gain a custom nearby (of course, these cards cannot be actively used) until the moment of applying the custom or no cards remaining in the pack.

If there are still some cards in the pack, after finishing the round players have to maintain the certain number of cards in their hands, which is **four**, taking some cards from the pack if necessary. The defender takes cards from the pack last.

Game Ending

The *match* ends when in the end of a round one of the players does not have any cards left and there are no cards in the pack. In this case the opponent receives a penalty for the cards left in his or her hand: -1 point per every jack/queen/king and -2 points per every ace. The *match* also ends when:
a) there are no cards in the pack and both players pass a move one after another;
b) both players have **seven** cards and pass a move one after another.
In the mentioned cases both players receive penalties depending on their cards.

The *game* ends as soon as the score of any player drops to or below zero. Such a player is considered lost. If both players lose their remaining score points simultaneously[6], the game is considered drawn.

More Players

If three or more players take part in the game, the rules are slightly changed:

1) The attack is performed for the next player in circle, clockwise.

2) If the defender passes, the right to attack in the next round belongs to the player who is next in circle to the defender.

3) One cannot use the Reset combo.

4) The player who has the highest score in the end of the game is considered won while all the other players are considered lost.

All the other rules remain the same taking into account minor corrections concerning the number of players when necessary.

Millionaire Mode

The game can be played in more complicated mode: for the course of the game each player strives to sequentially use some predefined combos (shown in the table below) when attacking or defending, thus proceeding from one stage to another. The required combos are considered successful only if they are not beaten by the defender. The use of other combos is not restricted. Players can advance only one stage per round. As a result of the game, the winner's final gain equals the value of a single score point agreed on before the game (e.g. 1 cent) multiplied by the starting score (e.g. 100) and multiplied by the modifier which depends on the stage the winner has managed to pass.

Stage	Combo	Score Modifier
15	Legendary Optima / Jackpot / Overhit	1000x
14	Optima Epic or better / Ultimate Force Beat / Overhit	500x
13	Ultimate Force Attack* / Overhit	250x
12	Optima Large or better	125x
11	Force Attack* Court or better	64x
10	Optima Medium or better	32x
9	Force Attack*	16x
8	Row Large of better / Queue Large or better	8x
7	Optima	4x
6	Trey / Force Attack*	2x
5	Row Medium or better / Queue Medium or better	1x
4	Assembly / Trey	0.5x
3	Marriage	0.3x
2	Row / Queue	0.2x
1	Pair / Trey / Force Attack*	0.1x

* – also includes Force Beat

Footnotes

1 – Up to nine players can participate (in such a case all the cards from the pack are distributed between the players), but it is recommended that no more than four

players play one particular game.

2 – If no players have any trumps, the player who sits next to the card dealer moves first.

3 – Thus, beating with a combo of court cards (J, Q, K) or aces deals more damage than attacking with it. For example, when beating with a pair of jacks, queens or kings, the total damage will be 5 points; when beating with a pair of aces, it will be 7 points; when beating with a small queue of J, Q, K of different suits, the damage will be 6 points; and so on.

4 – For example, if the defender has taken cards in two rounds, he or she cannot beat the next two attacker's combos, regardless of whether the defender can potentially do that. However, this rule works only within the scope of the current match.

5 – For example, if on the same move the defender has beaten a queen with the trump queen and a king with the trump king, he or she will gain only one custom nevertheless.

6 – This happens very rarely, for example, if both players have the score close to zero and a *failed force attack* or an *assembly* is performed; or if the match is drawn and both players receive enough penalties to lose the game.

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