

Tock rules

Preparation stage features four persons taking a seat in front of the board, each with their four marbles sitting in their starting area. Tock is either played in a four-players, free-for-all mode, or as double two-players teams, partners sitting in front of one another. Such a cooperative mode implies the latter are to exchange one unknown-to-others card with each other after every hand has been dealt, and that once one has managed to secure all of their marbles home, they are to be aiding their partner to do the same.

The dealer shuffles, then distributes, cards for the round, using a standard, 52-cards, joker-less deck. The first one to receive a club, without others receiving one too, is to be opening rounds, in addition to be receiving the first card on every round. Hands are built through a clockwise distribution. For the first round, 20 cards -- five for each -- are dealt, although for the two next rounds, this number is brought down to 16 -- four for each. For the later round, cards are shuffled back, then redistributed following the same previous-rounds pattern. Each round is to proceed in a clockwise turn-determination manner.

On each turn, players choose one from their set of private cards to either play or -- be they wishing to skip a turn, or simply cannot move -- discard, which is put down, facing up, at the center of the board. Cards move marbles, which, traveling around the board, proceed from the starting area to their home.

One is allowed to move a single marble a number of fields forwards corresponding to the face value of the played card; however, exceptions pertaining to special-function cards have to be taken into account:

- an ace can either be used to move one field forwards, or to activate a dormant marble, which is, as a consequence, displaced from the starting area to the correct neighboring field, indicated by an eighteen;
- a four can but be used to move four fields *backwards*, although it cannot assist home-shortcut abuses;
- a seven permits as much *one-field* forward moves, which can be distributed among multiple marbles;
- a jack allows to move eleven fields forwards, while *black* jacks can instead be used to swap a marble with the one of an opponent; in a similar manner, a queen represents a twelve, although *red* queens can instead be used to cause the ditching of a blind-selected card from the opponent whose turn is coming;
- a king permits either the activation of a dormant marble, or a movement of thirteen forward fields.

Whenever a marble lands on an occupied field, this marble replaces the resting one, which is brought back to its starting area. Furthermore, at home, marbles are not allowed to jump over one another, neither are ever to move a number of fields different than the value the card is referring to.