RECRUITS GAME

Recruits is a popular card game played by the critters in the forests of Wrenwood. It combines elements of strategy, luck, hand management, and blind bidding, making it an exciting and competitive game. It is played in taverns as gamblers wager bets and by travelers wanting to pass the time at night during camp. The game has been around so long that many variations have surfaced.

Components: 52-card deck
Players: 2 to 4 players
Time: 15 to 30 minutes
Age: 10+

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SUMMARY

Players try to outbid each other to draft the best team of Recruits, earning the most points to win. Several Recruits are available to bid on at a time, each with different point values. Players take turns laying down cards in bids for the highest total pair of cards in hopes of claiming the Recruit. With restrictions on what cards can be placed for bidding, players will block other players, stall recruitment, and force others to waste cards, all while carefully managing their hands and planning the next move. When all the bids are placed for a given Recruit, the pile is resolved, and the Recruit goes to the highest bidding player. At the end of the game, the player with the highest point total in Recruits wins.

SETUP

Remove all Jokers. These are not used.

Separate the face cards (J, Q, and K) from the deck and shuffle them together. These are the Recruits. Deal them face down into equal piles:

- 2 or 3 players: use 3 piles of 4 cards each.
- 4 players: use 4 piles of 3 cards each.

Leave plenty of room around each pile for players to place their bids. Flip over the top card of each pile. These are the current Recruits available to bid on.

Shuffle the remaining pile of numbered cards (A to 10) and deal them face down to players.

- 2 or 3 players: hand size is 5 cards.
- 4 players: hand size is 4 cards.

Players may look at their own cards. Keep them a secret from the other players or lie and bluff as you wish.

Put the remaining deck of numbered cards face down within reach of every player. This is the Draw Pile.

A pile next to the Draw Pile is reserved for a Discard Pile.

The player who most recently jumped in a pile of leaves goes first.

Example Setup:
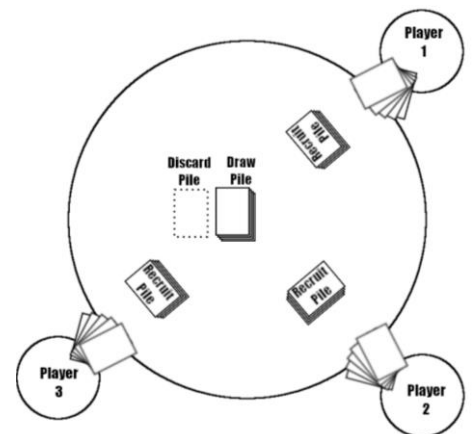
GOAL

The player who earns the most points by acquiring recruits wins. Different point values are earned for each Recruit, for a total of 36 possible points.

K = 4	Q = 3	J = 2

TURNS

On your turn, you will
- **Step 1**: Place Bid
- **Step 2**: Draw a new card.
- **Step 3**: If available, Resolve Bids.

Finally, pass the turn to the person on your left.

Keep all bid piles oriented so that everyone knows whose cards belong to whom.

Step 1: Place Bid
Place a card down next to any Recruit for which you wish to bid on.

The First Card
The first card a player plays in a bid for a recruit is played face-up so all players can see it. This indicates to all players which suit that player is claiming. When the bids are resolved to earn the Recruit (see Resolving Bids), each player may only count cards in the suit they claimed (the suit of the first card they played).

Restrictions - For the first card each player plays on a pile, the suit cannot be the same as the suit of the Recruit being bid on, nor any suit another player has already claimed in their bids for the Recruit.

In a 4-player game, a player will get locked out of bidding for a given recruit because all the suits have been claimed. See "What to do When You Can't Play" below.

The Second Card
The second of your cards in a bid is played face down. This hides your total bid from the other players.

The second card can be a card of ANY suit. However, when resolving bids, only cards that match the player's claimed suit will count toward the player's total bid.
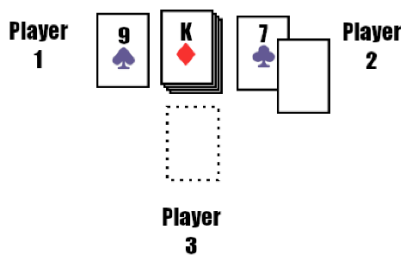
In the above example of a 3-player game, players bid to recruit a King of Diamonds worth 4 points.

Player 1 claimed Spades with the 9 of Spades. Player 2 claimed Clubs with the 7 of Clubs. On a subsequent turn, they then played their second card in their bid (which is played face down to hide the total).
Player 3 can only play a card with the suit of Hearts since all other suits are unavailable.

What to do When You Can't Play
When you cannot play a card because you have no valid suit, reveal your hand to all players. If everyone agrees that you can't play, discard your entire hand and draw a new hand of cards. Continue this until you can play.

If the other players point out a move you could have made, keep your cards, and continue your turn as normal.

Locked Out - When you have no valid place to play, regardless of what suits you may hold, discard your hand, draw a new hand, and skip the rest of your turn.

Step 2: Draw a new card.
Take a new card from the Draw Pile so that you always end your hand at your hand size.

Step 3: Resolving Bids
At the end of any player's turn, once each player has played a total of 2 cards in their bid towards a Recruit, pause play to determine which player has successfully earned that Recruit.

Flip over each player's face-down cards and total up the number for the suit that each player has claimed. The player with the highest total gets the Recruit. Aces have a value of 1.

Breaking Ties - If there is a tie for the highest bid, each player will play a card from their hand of any suit. The highest card wins. If this card is also a tie, the one who matches the suit of the Recruit wins. Those players may then draw a new card.

Move all revealed cards to the Discard Pile and flip over the next Recruit on the Recruit Pile.
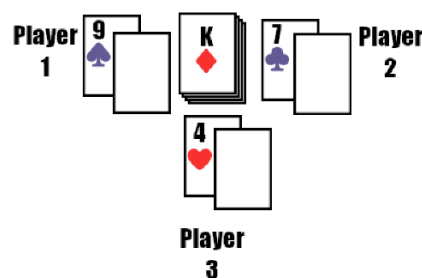
In the above example of a 3-player game, players bid to recruit a King of Diamonds worth 4 points. Player 1 finished their turn, and now all players have played 2 cards in their bid for the K. It is time to resolve the Recruit. Flip over the face-down cards.
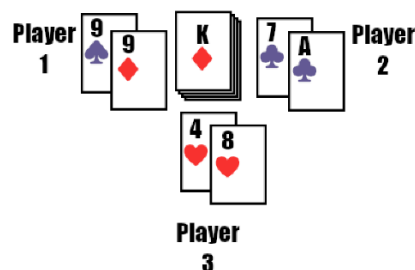
Player 1 has a total of 9. The 9 of Diamonds does not count as it is not a Spade (first card played).
Player 2 has a total of 8.
Player 3 has a total of 12 and takes the King.

Running Out of Cards
If the Draw Pile runs out of cards. Reshuffle the Discard Pile into a new Draw Pile.

GAME END
Once the last Recruit is earned, players add up the points for their Recruits. The player with the most points wins.

K = 4	Q = 3	J = 2

You may choose to end early once a player earns more than half the total possible points (18) since no other player can win.

VARIATIONS
This game is so popular and played so often that many variations have developed across the forest. Players should agree on the variant rules before playing.

Quick Game - End the game when the first Recruit Pile is depleted.

Blind Recruit - Designate one pile of Recruits to always be played face down. No player knows the value of the Recruit until it is earned.

Random Tiebreaker - When ties are encountered, cards from the deck are drawn for tiebreakers. The first card drawn that matches the player's claimed suit determines the winner.

Up for Grabs - When a tie occurs, players not tied for the highest can earn the Recruit if they play a higher card from their hand. Can also be combined with the Random Tiebreaker rule.

Pairs - Cards of the same value but different suits can be counted toward earning the Recruit. In the example above, Player 1 would have a value of 18 and win the King.

Powered Ace - Aces typically have a value of 1. In this variant, an ace will have no value but instead will cancel out the highest card of another player. In the example above, Player 2's Ace will cancel out the 8 from Player 3. This causes player 3 to go from having 12 to 4. Player 1 will take the King instead.