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## Widow Pitch - Version 1.0

Widow Pitch is a card game played against the computer (I call him "Puter"). It is somewhat like "Spades" in that you bid, capture tricks, must follow suit, and can trump if unable to follow suit. Unlike Spades, however, the number of tricks you capture does not determine your score; how many "points" you capture does. Also unlike Spades, trump is not always spades; it is set by the high bidder each hand. Widow Pitch is played with a deck of 52 cards, plus two Jokers.

### Points

There are 7 points possible in Widow Pitch. They are: High, Low, 4 Jacks, and Game. These are defined as follows:

High is the highest trump played (Ace being high).

Low is the lowest trump played.

The 4 Jacks are:

Highest Jack is the Jack of the trump suit

Next Highest Jack is the Jack of the same color suit as trump

Third Highest Jack is the Red Joker (Look for the red question mark)

Lowest Jack is the Black Joker

Example: If clubs were named trump, the 4 Jacks would be as shown below:



Note that in the above example, with clubs as trumps, the Jack of Spades would no longer be considered a spade, but would instead be a trump (or club, if you will). The two Jokers are always trumps.

The last point is Game. The Game point is determined by the total game value you have captured. Game value is given for the following cards, regardless of suit:

Card	Game value
Ten	10
Jack	1
Queen	2
King	3
Ace	4

Whoever captures the most game value is awarded the Game point.

### Starting a Game

## **Starting a Game**

To start a new game, from the menu, select "Game", then "New Game". When you first start Widow Pitch, Puter will deal the first hand. After that, the deal alternates between you and Puter.

## **Dealing the hand**

When you start a new game, the first hand is dealt. Then, after each hand is played and scored, the next hand is automatically dealt. To start each hand, 7 cards are dealt to Puter, 7 cards to you, and 7 cards to the Widow. The cards in the Widow will be claimed by the highest bidder.

## **The Main Window Layout**

Puter's hand is dealt to the upper left part of the window, yours to the lower left. The Widow is dealt to the center left. Cards are played to the squares with the green "O". Cards are captured to the squares with the red "X". The right center of the window is a status area which shows the game score and status information. When it is your turn to bid, a group of buttons will appear in the lower center of the window. Click one of these buttons to bid.

## **Playing a hand**

The stages of a hand are:

1. Bidding
2. Discarding and naming trump
3. Playing the hand
4. Scoring the hand

Bidding, Discarding, and Playing the Hand

## **Bidding, Discarding, and Playing the Hand**

### **Bidding**

The non-dealer bids first. The status area in the right center of the window will inform you how much Puter bids. To bid, click one of the buttons in the lower center of the window. 3 is the minimum bid. If you think you can capture all 7 points, you can bid either 7 or "Shoot it!". "Shoot it!" will get you 21 points if you capture all 7 points, or cost you 21 if you don't. If either player bids "Shoot it!", the bidding is over (There is no double "Shooting" in Widow Pitch). After the first bid is made, all further bids must be at least one higher than the previous. Click "Pass" if you don't want to bid. If you bid the same as or less than Puter's last bid, that is considered a Pass. If the non-dealer passes with his first bid, the dealer must bid at least 3.

### **Discarding and naming trump**

After bidding is complete, the discard window is shown. The lower half of the window is the "keep" area, the upper half the "discard" area. To move a card to the discard area, simply click it. If you change your mind, clicking a card in the discard area will move it back to the keep area. Click "OK" when you are finished discarding.

If you were the high bidder, you will have 14 cards in the keep area (your hand and the Widow). You may keep 7 or less. After you discard, you will be prompted to name trump.

If Puter was the high bidder, the seven cards from your hand will be the only cards in the keep area. The icon at the right of the keep area will inform you what suit Puter named trump. The window's title bar will also tell you what suit is trump, as well as how much Puter bid.

In either case, after you click "OK" in the discard window, you will be dealt enough cards to bring your total back to seven.

### **Playing the hand**

The high bidder leads. After that, whoever captures the trick, then leads. To play a card, simply click it. You must follow suit if possible. The suit which led will capture the trick, unless it is trumped. Trump captures all other suits. If you cannot follow suit, you may play either trump or another suit.

### **Scoring**

After the hand is complete, a dialog box will show that hand's score, the game score, and a scoring summary for that hand (showing who got which points). If the high bidder captured fewer points than bid, the bid is subtracted from his score. The non-bidder receives whatever points he captured. A score of 21 wins the game. A score of -21 loses.

### Settings

## Settings

To modify Widow Pitch's settings, from the menu choose "Settings", then "Preferences". You can turn sound on or off and choose five different background colors and six different cardback designs. Sound changes will become effective immediately. Color and cardback settings will not become effective until you exit, then restart Widow Pitch.



## Tips

## **Tips**

Here are some tips to help you get started. Widow Pitch's rules may sound daunting, but the game is not that difficult once you start playing.

Don't be afraid to bid. You will usually get some help from the Widow and draw. Getting the seven Widow cards and being able to name trump is a huge advantage.

Don't forget that the same-color-as-trump Jack is also a trump, and, in fact, the second highest Jack. Accidentally discarding it is easy to do, and a lost point.

If you have the two of trump, the only way to save it is to trump another suit. Don't pass up a chance to do so.

Jacks are the key to the game. High trump cannot be lost, Low trump is difficult to keep, Game is iffy, so how you play the Jacks will decide how you fare in Widow Pitch. Do everything you can to capture or keep Jacks.

It's usually best to discard everything but trump. Trump cards which are not points can be used to pull Queens, Kings, and Aces out of the opponent's hand so you can save your Jacks.

Don't waste trump capturing tricks which have no value. If Puter leads a non-trump card which has no game value (lower than a ten), and you also have such a card, play it.

If Puter falls far behind, he becomes bolder with his bidding (just as you should). Don't blow a big lead by needlessly trying to outbid him.

Bid "Shoot it!" only if you have a dynamite hand, or as a last ditch desperation effort. All four Jacks must be dealt for you to have a chance at seven points. Your opponent need only discard a Jack to set you, and Puter will do exactly that!

### About Widow Pitch

## **About Widow Pitch**

Widow Pitch was created by Bud Baker with Microsoft Visual C++ 4.0. Special thanks to Stephen Murphy for QCard32.dll.

If you like Widow Pitch, a \$10.00 registration donation to the author will get you the newest version (and get rid of the nag screen). Even if you don't register, send your suggestions or comments. The latest version of Widow Pitch can be obtained from my shareware page: <http://www.flash.net/~castman/sharware.htm>

Send donations (and any other good stuff) to:

Bud Baker  
618 Lemons  
Cedar Hill, Tx 75104

Email me at: [castman@flash.net](mailto:castman@flash.net)

