



The ultimate game of canine chicken.

2–6 players · Ages 8+ · About 20 minutes

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The Idea

Wagaroo is a family card game of nerve and timing, based on the beloved card classic Scopa — with all the maths swept away. The dog park is filling up with little pups, and everyone is hiding a big dog, waiting for the one perfect moment to send it strutting in to clear the whole pack. But you get only one capture — one “Wagaroo!” — each round, so you must pick your moment. Strike too soon and you’ll scoop a thin pile; wait too long and a rival’s bigger dog beats you to it.

How a Game Is Structured

Wagaroo nests three things — rounds, decks, and the game:

- **A round** is a single hand of four cards. You get **one Wagaroo (capture) per round**, but you still play out all four of your cards.
- **A deck** is played over several rounds, until all 45 cards have been played — then you score. **The Park carries over from round to round** within a deck.
- **The game** is played over several decks. Keep your puppy tokens between decks; the first player to reach **11 puppy tokens** wins.

Components

- **45 dog cards** (numbered 1–9)
- **A supply of puppy tokens** (for scoring)

The Deck — a Pyramid

A card’s number tells you everything: the number is also how many copies of it exist. There is one 1, two 2s, three 3s ... up to nine 9s — 45 cards in all. The number is the dog, too: the 1 is the single biggest Top Dog, and the dogs get smaller (and more common) as the number climbs to the swarm of little pups at the top. So

low cards are the rare, powerful big dogs; high cards are the common little yappers.

The four 4s are the Blue Heelers — a special herding family (see “The Blue Heelers” below).

Setup (start of each deck)

1. Shuffle all 45 cards.
2. Deal **3 cards face-up** to the centre of the table — this is the **Park**. It stays on the table, growing and shrinking, until the deck is used up.
3. Deal **4 cards** to each player as a secret hand — these four are all you get for this round.
4. Place the rest face-down as a **draw pile**. You’ll deal four more from it to everyone at the start of each new round.

On Your Turn

Play passes clockwise. On your turn, play exactly one card from your hand, face-up. Then choose what it does:

- **Seed (the default)** — leave the card in the Park. You capture nothing. This is what you do with your bait while you wait for your moment.
- **Wagaroo! (your one capture)** — instead of seeding, your card captures. Call “Wagaroo!” and pick one method:
 - **Match** — take every card in the Park of the **same value** as your card, and take your played card too.
 - **Sweep** — take every card in the Park of a **higher value** than your card. Your played card stays in the Park.

Put captured cards face-down in your Kennel (your score pile).

The Blue Heelers (the 4s)

The four 4s are herding dogs — and a Heeler can herd the pack either way. When you Wagaroo with a 4, your Sweep may go up OR down:

- **Sweep up** — take every card higher than 4.
- **Sweep down** — take every card lower than 4 (the only way to round up the rare big dogs, including the lone Top Dog).

As with any Sweep, the 4 you played stays in the Park, so you don’t capture it — you give up its points to use it as a tool. (A 4 may instead Match, rounding up the other 4s and keeping its own.)

One Wagaroo per Round

You may Wagaroo only once per round. After that you keep playing cards as normal, but you can’t capture again this round — so the order you play your remaining cards still matters, because you’re seeding bait for everyone else. Strike early for a small, safe pile, or hold your nerve for a fatter Park and risk a rival beating you to it.

If a Wagaroo clears every single card from the Park, immediately take 1 puppy token.

The Next Round (within a deck)

A round ends when everyone has played all four of their cards. The Park stays exactly as it is — nothing is

discarded. Deal everyone 4 more cards from the draw pile, pass the lead one seat clockwise, and play another round. Keep going, round after round, until the draw pile is empty and all 45 cards have been played.

End of the Deck — Scoring

Once the whole deck has been played out, score the deck and award puppy tokens:

- **Most cards** — the player with the most cards in their Kennel scores **4 puppies**.
- **Blue Heelers** — each 4 in your Kennel scores **1 puppy**.
- **Cleared Parks** — already banked at **1 puppy** each, the moment you cleared the Park during play.

(If players tie for most cards, the 4 puppies are not awarded that deck.)

A New Deck

Clear the Park and set everything aside. Shuffle all 45 cards and set up a fresh deck, then play it through exactly as before. Players keep the puppy tokens they have won. Play deck after deck until someone wins.

Winning

Keep your puppy tokens in front of you — they are your running score. The first player to reach 11 puppy tokens wins! (If two players reach 11 in the same deck, the one who captured the most cards that deck.)

Quick Reference

Structure	Round = 4 cards · Deck = all 45, then score · Game = first to 11
Setup	Park 3 · Deal 4
Wagaroo!	Same value (Match) · Higher value (Sweep) · the 4 can do either
Scoring	Most cards 4 · each 4-card 1 · clear the Park 1 (live)
Winner	First to 11 puppy tokens