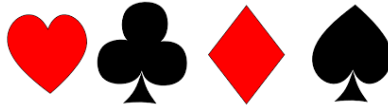


MODERN AMERICAN CANASTA



Canasta is a game played with four people (two teams/fixed partnerships) and uses two decks of cards including jokers (108 cards). Partners sit opposite each other. Traditionally a special tray is used to hold the Stock and Discard Pile. You will need to play several rounds to complete a game and points are cumulative (See last page for scoring information.)

BASIC INFORMATION

Types of Cards:

Wild cards: Twos and Jokers

Natural cards: from Four up to Ace

Threes are bonus cards (explanation below in play)

Sevens and Aces are subject to some special rules and restrictions

Suits not important just # and ranks which means picture cards

Card Values

4 thru 7 = 5 points

8,9,10,J,Q,K = 10 points

Ace = 20 points

Jokers = 50 points

Twos = 20 points

} Wild

The Shuffle and Cut - The dealer can be determined by drawing cards – highest wins. Thereafter the turn to deal rotates clockwise (left of the dealer). Any player, who wishes, may shuffle the deck, and the dealer has the right to shuffle last. After the shuffle, the deck is cut by the opponent on the right.

The Deal - The dealer gives 13 cards face down to each player, one at a time, clockwise, beginning with the opponent on his left and ending with him/herself. An opponent from the other team who cut the cards meanwhile takes the other half of the cut deck and counts out eight cards from the bottom and puts them on the table or tray. The ninth card from the bottom of the Stock is turned at a right angle to the pile. This is known as the "Turn Card". The player who draws this card must announce it so that all players are alerted that there are only eight cards remaining and that play is coming to an end.

Stock - The un-dealt, remainder of the pack is placed face down in the center of the table (or in the tray), on top of the Turn Card becoming the Stock.

Play - Starts to left of the dealer, then continues clockwise. A turn begins by drawing the top card of stock and throwing out a card or picking the discard pile (see rules below) and then throwing out card. *If the Discard Pile is empty (called an Empty Tray), you can't discard an Ace, Seven, or card from a closed Canasta.*

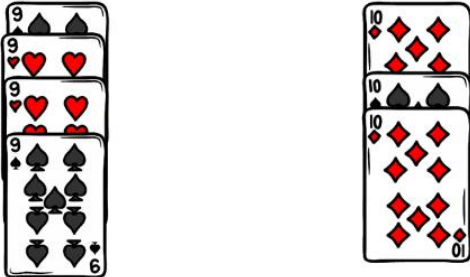
Discarding a Wild Card is not permitted, except in the following cases:

1. You may discard a Wild Card as your final discard, when going out since it is laid face down and ends the game.
2. In rare cases, you may reach a situation where your hand consists entirely of Wild Cards. If so, you may discard a Wild Card of your choice laying it perpendicular to the cards beneath. The next player is not allowed to take the pile (since there are no Natural Cards that can match your discard). If requested by an opponent, you must show your hand to prove that you had only Wild Cards.
3. If a wild card is discarded, and a player wants to pick the discard pile after other discards, only the cards above the Wild Card are taken.

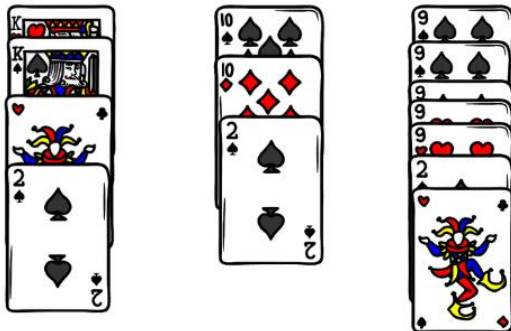
Note: Players should try to avoid leaving themselves with only Wild Cards. This may force them to keep cards in hand rather than melding them.

Melds - A meld is a combination of three or more cards of the same number or picture card with or w/o wild cards that is laid face up on the table in front of the player. A meld must include at least two pure cards and a maximum of two Wild Cards. Each team can only have one meld per number and picture. There are special rules for Sevens and Aces*

Examples of Pure Melds



Examples of Mixed Melds



Note: Above diagrams are replicated from *Modern American Canasta: The Complete Guide*

CANASTA - is a meld of Seven cards

Types of Canastas:

- 1 - Pure is all natural, matching cards of same number or picture.
- 2 - Mixed is with a minimum of five natural, matching, cards and no more than two Wild Cards
- 3 - Wild Card Canastas consists of Twos and Jokers; penalty if not completed

Note: There is no meld beyond Seven cards. Once a Canasta is made the picture or number can't be melded. These cards are "Dead" or safe cards to throw.

OPENING: Is melds that equal the total points needed to open (“Required Point Count”) which goes according to your team’s score. Also, one meld must be “Pure” (without Wild Cards). Only one person per team needs to do this. All melds with their requirements must be laid down all at once.

Provided Opening happens prior to the last eight cards remaining in the Stock, you must have one card in hand after melding to discard. After discarding your Talon will give you cards in hand. If a player melds incorrectly, there is a ten - point penalty, i.e., the team adds ten points to what is needed to Open on a subsequent turn.

A player must announce to others they hold three cards or less.

TWO OTHER WAYS TO “OPEN”

1- Wild Cards (Twos and Jokers) can be used as the to Open if they satisfy the opening points needed. In this case, it can be used alone without other melds.

Once begun it must be completed before a team can use wild cards on any other meld. There is a penalty if it’s not completed. Other melds can be added if needed.

2- If a player has a natural Canasta (no Wild Cards) in his/her hand, it automatically meets the Required Point Count and overrides the traditional Opening requirements detailed above.

TALONS – The person who “Opens” first, then discards and after that draws four cards from the Stock. The second person draws three cards. If a Three is picked at this time, it is/must be exchanged on the next turn.

SEVENS AND ACES

***Sevens** – are melded only without Wild Cards. There is a penalty if a 7s Canasta is not completed and if 3 or more are in a player’s hand at end of game. Try to keep two in hand at all times, but not three (strategy*). **Never use three sevens as your Pure meld!**

***Aces** – Two types:

1- Mixed: Can be mixed/ melded with wild cards only when, Opening.

2- Pure: meld of seven Aces. Note: if fewer than seven aces melded on table there is a penalty at the end of the game. Try to keep 2 in hand (but not 3) if Aces haven’t been melded by either team (see below strategy*). Penalty if 3 or more are in hand at end of game.

THREES

Red & Black Threes - A player finding a red or black three in his hand must, on his/her first turn, put it face up on the table and draw a replacement from the stock. A player who draws a red or black three from the stock also lays it on the table face up and draws a replacement. They can't be discarded. Each three has a bonus value of 100 points and more for multiples (see scoring) with certain conditions: The value of the threes is credited to a side who has made at least two Canastas, deducted if no Canastas, and neither +, or – if one Canasta.

Replacements are not taken on the last eight cards, the three is still laid on table.

PICKING THE PACK

Rules for Picking the Pack/ Discard Pile after Opening:

Instead of drawing from the Stock, a player can take all the cards on the discard pile. To do so:

- 1 - It must be on your turn and you must have two identical matching cards of same # /picture as card on top of pile (no Wild Cards can be used.)
- 2- You or your partner must have either previously "Opened".
- 3 - If this top card matches a meld previously laid down, that meld must have less than five cards as melds with more than seven cards aren't allowed. The pair must be shown/laid down and then the card from top of pack added. Other cards in pack can be put in hand or melded on table.

Rules for Picking the Pack/ Discard Pile when Opening:

Instead of drawing from the Stock, a player may take all the cards in the Discard Pile. To do so:

1. The top card of the Discard Pile is **never** used to satisfy the Required Point Count or the requirement of a Pure Meld.
2. For the Required Point Count, if only two identical cards are used to pick the pack, the points for this entire meld are not counted unless an additional identical card or Wild Card is added. Even in this case, though, the top card is still not counted. For the Pure Meld requirement, a player must have a Pure Meld of at least three identical cards in hand, not including the top card.

END OF PLAY

The play ends when a player “Goes Out” or the Stock becomes depleted. You can “Go Out” if you can satisfy the following conditions:

1. Your team has completed two Canastas.
2. You are able to meld all but one of your cards and discard your last card. **You must have a card to discard at the end of your turn.** This final discard is laid face-down, and this is the only case in which a wild card or three can be discarded.
3. It is customary to ask you partner if you can do so and you can ask only once. You must do this before beginning to lay down any cards when you begin “Going Out”.

SCORING

The first team to score 8,500 points wins the game. If play ends before 8,500 points is reached, the team with the most points wins. Any player can act as scorekeeper and should announce the score after tabulating. The goal of the game is to score as many points as possible and to prevent your competitors from getting points.

<u>Cumulative score</u>	<u>Minimum Required Point</u>
less than 2995 125 points
3000 to 4995 155 points
5000 or more 180 points

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**Donna Miller-Small, co-author with Dara Collins:
*Modern American Canasta: The Complete Guide***

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