

Canasta Team Play – House Rules

(ver 090926)

General House Rules

All cell phones must be in silent mode only and should **not** be used during play. If you need to make or take a call, please excuse yourself from the table **during a break in the game** (conclusion of a game where shuffling and dealing occurs) and return as promptly as possible to the game.

Please, no food or drinks on the playing table. Side tables are provided. Drinks should be in closed containers and not placed directly on the game table.

Show respect and courtesy to your partner and opponents. No open verbal or non-verbal criticism of your partner or others at the table will be tolerated and it may be cause for ejection from the game by the organizer. Any rule disputes which cannot be resolved at the table should be brought to the attention of the organizer in charge of the game.

Introduction

Canasta is one of the few card games that does not have standardized rules but does rely on house rules. It's not uncommon to hear ***"That's not the way we play"***.

Canasta Teams has established House Rules to create a standard set of rules that we all play by, including points for special hands (splashes).

The only time you can discard a wild card is if they are the only cards left in your hand. When this happens, the wildcard is placed sideways across the pack, effectively blocking the pack. If the pack is to be picked, then **ONLY** cards above and not including the wildcard may be picked.

You may only ask your partner once if you can go out before you display your cards.

Going out with one pair and a wildcard is permitted, however, not with **Aces, 7's, or dead cards**.

You may only look back at **ONE** card in the discard pile.

If you pick up a 3 after the turn card, you can place it on the table and pick up another card.

A pair in your hand matching the discard, allows you to pick the pack. If you also have a 3 in your hand, you can only exchange that 3 on the next hand.

You cannot pick the pack and the top card from the pile.

Once a canasta has been completed by a team, the opponents may not add a card of the same number to an existing meld on the table.

MELDING

When you **MELD**, and you forget to pick your 4 or 3 cards, you forfeit them.

If the next player has picked a card you're done for that hand.

In a **MELD**, one initial pure is required. A **PURE** is 3 or more cards of the same kind, **no wildcards.**

If you **MELD** with the incorrect count, take your cards back and your next meld is +10 points.

However, if you put down an incorrect meld (either not enough points, or one of your melds contain cards that are already a closed canasta) you may rearrange your hand to make the necessary points. Even tho you have placed your cards on the table, your turn is not over until you discard.

If you are going to pick the pack, you must first lay down 2 cards matching the top card, then place the top card onto your **MELD**. Then you can use the pile. You then continue to play your hand. If you do not follow this order, you forfeit your turn and keep all the cards in your hand until the next turn comes your way. You do not discard. You must show the table your 2 cards.

If you **MELD** after the turn card, you do not get to pick a Talon card.

If you are **MELDING** with the score needed in your hand, and you would like to pick the pack instead of the top card, the 2 matching cards to pick the pack can be on the table in your **MELD**.

MELDING WITH ACES

If you meld with 2 or more Aces and a Wildcard, the Canasta does not need to be completed. There is no penalty for a dirty Canasta of Aces on the table.

*You cannot pick the pack if an Ace is discarded EXCEPT if part of your meld is **PURE ACES**. If you meld with pure Aces and an Ace is discarded, you can pick the pack and add the Aces to your meld. You must complete all 7 Aces as a PURE before you can go out. If you do not complete these Aces, you are penalized 2500 points for an incomplete Canasta.*

With any other combination of 2 or more cards and a Wild, you can pick the pack and add the top card to your meld.

At no time can the top card in the discard pile be used to make up the points for a MELD.

Melding Clarification:

You have not yet melded. You have 13 cards in your hand. You pick 1 card.

You now have enough points to meld.

You can MELD with a maximum of 13 cards – **you always have to have 1 card to discard.**

You can now pick up your 4 or 3 cards from the Talon and play on.

You **cannot** pick up any cards past the turn card.

You may pick up any cards before and including the Turn Card.

If you are past the turn-card, you **cannot** meld and be left with no cards in your hand.

Assists:

If you MELD with wildcards, and the wildcards do not add up to your meld points, it is permitted to meld with a pure at the same time to make up your points.

Picking the Pack:

If you pick the pack (*the discard pile is empty*) and you begin laying out your cards - when you are done and need to choose a discard, (***you cannot discard and Ace or 7 or any dead card closed canasta***) onto the empty pack, you will need to take back the last card you played (including closed canastas) in the order you laid them down, and then discard one of those cards.

If the **last cards you laid down** were PURE Aces or 7's, you would need to take back those cards in the order you laid them down. So, if you laid down the Aces or 7's last, then you would need to take all of them back until you pick up a "legal" discard. ***TIP: Lay down your pure Aces and/or 7's first, and then the other melds.***

The Issue:

When picking up a large discard pack, some players have been laying cards face-up on the table to sort through them. Cards must **never** be exposed to other players at any time, and playing cards face-up causes confusion about what has been melded.

Handling Cards and Exposed Hands:

All cards in a player's hand—including large packs just picked up—***must remain concealed*** until legally melded or discarded. If you need assistance holding or sorting large hands, please use a card rack.

- **Face-Up Means Played:** Any card placed face-up on the table is committed to play and cannot be retracted, provided it forms or adds to a legal meld.
Improperly Exposed Cards: Laying unplayed cards face-up to sort them is strictly prohibited. Any exposed cards that cannot immediately form a legal meld must be returned to the player's hand. If for example, you lay out cards and for some reason you decide not to play them, they are considered played.

A card laid is a card played. The player forfeits the rest of their turn and must discard immediately.

SPLASHES or SPECIAL HANDS AND 3's:

If a player at the table SPLASHES (which concludes the hand) the partners score 2,500 or 3,000 points (depending on the Splash). The other side does not score their points.

Example of our splashes:

SPECIAL HANDS (ends the game) POINTS

PAIRS	7 Pairs (Can have 2 Ace's &/or 2 7's)	2500
	7 Pairs (With 2 Ace's & 2 7's)	2500
	7 Pairs (2 Ace's, 2 7's &/or 2 Jokers, or 2 Wilds)	2500
	7 Pairs (2 Ace's, 2 7's, 2 Jokers, 2 Wilds)	2500
dream hands 5-4-5		3000
dups 4-4-3-3		2500
zip 4-3-3-2-2		2500
quads 4-4-4-2		2500
blast off 5-4-3-2		2500
triples 3-3-3-3 & 2 Deuces or 2 Jokers		2500
wilds Wild Canasta mixed		2000
wilds Wild Canasta w/7 Deuces or 3 D & 4 J's		3000
garbage One of each card Athru Joker		2500
concealed Concealed Canasta pick 1 Game Continues		2500


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Scoring at the End of the Game

One 3	100
Two 3's (SameColor)	300
Three 3's (SameColor)	500
Four 3's (SameColor)	1000
Cutting the pack evenly	100
Going out	200
Red or Pure Canasta	500
Black or Dirty Canasta	300
CANASTA of A's or 7's	2500

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	7 Pairs (2 Ace's, 2 7's, 2 Jokers, 2 Wilds)	2500
dream hands 5-4-5		3000
dups 4-4-3-3		2500
zip 4-3-3-2-2		2500
quads 4-4-4-2		2500
blast off 5-4-3-2		2500
triples 3-3-3-3 & 2 Deuces or 2 Jokers		2500
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See the Splash Card for the latest update.

If the last card picked up is a 3, then you keep that 3 in your hand and score 5 points. You do NOT discard if the 3 was the last card played. The game ends.

If you make a **SPLASH**, you must display that **SPLASH** on the table for the other players to review and check for accuracy.

Dead cards are allowed in special hands.

The **ONLY** time a Special Hand may be completed from the tray is when the player to your right discards your splash card into an empty tray.

You have **ONE** time (your immediate next turn) to declare a Special Hand after your partner has melded, as a courtesy.

Scoring a Special Hand:

A special hand is a Canasta of **PURE 7's, Pure A's or 7 Wildcards**.

When you score these Canasta's, you get 2,500 or 3,000 points for the special hand.

You also get to **ADD** these cards into your total.

It is possible that the same team could each be penalized for 7's and A's in their hand.

Concealed Canasta:

A Concealed Canasta is melding with 7 of a kind (pure) from your hand. It is **ONLY** valid if the player draws 1 card from the pack, or 1 card from the pile, and can be played at any time so long as the 7 cards are played from the hand. Once the player has picked the pile, it is no longer a Concealed Canasta.

Going out:

Here is a unique going out play.

The team has melded and the player to your right discards a card of which you have 2 of the same in your hand. You pick the pack.

You are able to use all the cards you picked, and you are left with 3 or more of the same cards in your hand (e.g. 4 8's) and a 7. The pack is empty.

The rules state you cannot discard a 7 or A or closed Canasta's on an empty pack.

What do you do and can you go out?

The answer is **yes** – because when you go out **you can discard face down**, so you can use any card. If you discard face up, the table can challenge you.

This is the only time you can discard a “dead” card on an empty pack.

Canasta Team Play:

In our Canasta Team Play:

We are attempting to get 2 games into the allotted 3 hours of play. At the end on 1 ½ hours we will ask you to stop playing, you can count your score if you wish. You and your partner will now move to another table and play the next game with a new team.

End of Play at 90 minutes:

Players must be aware of the clock and the 90-minute allotted time.

When the timer sounds at 90 minutes, you must prepare to finish your hand, as you will move to another table with your partner

At the end of play, if any players have more than **2 7's or 2 A's** in their hand, they each incur a penalty of - 1,500 points.

Canasta "Teams"

Players sign up in **pairs** or **teams**. These teams play together for the Team Event.

If a single person signs up, we can assign a partner from the list of sign-ups.

When the players arrive at the venue, they will be assigned tables for the first and second games. Teams can choose any seat opposite each other.

We play a regular Canasta game till one team scores 8500 or more points.

We are allowing **90 minutes** for this first game. We will then break, and teams will move to new tables for the second game. If a team finishes their game in less than 90 minutes, they may choose to play another game or 2 hands of 125-155-180 till the 90-minute buzzer sounds.

Physical Mechanics of Holding your Cards:

It has been brought to our attention that there were questions regarding how players hold or display their cards during play. To ensure everyone is on the same page, we have researched common "house rules" and etiquette.

Our games are meant to be FUN, and we ask that all players address one another with COURTESY. While there are no strict official rules on the physical mechanics of holding cards, the following norms ensure fair play and strategic integrity:

- **The "Hidden Hand" Rule:** Cards must be held so they are invisible to all other players, including your partner. It is also standard etiquette that you should never look at another player's hand, even if they are holding it poorly.

Hand Size Transparency: While faces are hidden, you must be honest about the quantity of cards you hold. If an opponent asks, you must answer truthfully or hold your hand so the cards can be easily counted.

The "Warning" Rule: To prevent "surprise" endings, many groups require a player to announce when they have only one or two cards left. This gives others a final chance to meld their points. You may only ask once during a game.

House Variation: Some groups allow you to fan your cards out at all times so the count is visible, while others allow you to keep them "squared up" until asked.

Card Holders: To reduce physical strain and help with organization, the use of any and all types of card holders is permitted in our SOS Canasta games without restriction.

Final Thought:

We ask players to arrive 15 minutes early so we can start on time.

Canasta Team Play is how friends come to play and enjoy their time socializing with others via the SOS Canasta program. It is not a competition, and there are players of all ages and skill levels. We do not condone “Un-sportsman like conduct.”

We are hoping you enjoy the Canasta offering of Smile On Seniors and will help us in the future - to ensure our space and game is played with respect for others, and patience as well.

Our goal of Smile On Seniors is to create a welcoming and thriving community of older adults and seniors.

Thank you for understanding and enjoying playing.