

# Marriage

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## Introduction

Marriage is a three-pack Rummy game that is popular in Nepal, especially in the Kathmandu valley. It is also played in Bhutan. It is widely played during the two main Hindu festivals Dashain (Dushera) and Tihar (Deewali) and by enthusiasts throughout the year.

## Players and Cards

From two to five people can play. Three standard 52-card packs are used: 156 cards in all. There are no printed jokers, but in each deal a number of wild cards are created and these are sometimes collectively known as "jokers".

Deal and play are clockwise.

## Combinations and Terminology

As in any Rummy game, the object is to collect sets of equal cards and runs of consecutive cards in suit. In Marriage, all these combinations consist of three cards only.

The **tiplu** is a card chosen at random during each game - see [below](#). All cards of the same rank as the tiplu, and those that are immediately above or below it in the same suit, are wild. The card immediately above the tiplu is known as the **poplu** and that immediately below the tiplu is the **jhiplu**. For this purpose the ace is considered to be next above the king, and the two above the ace. The tiplu, poplu and jhiplu are also known as **mal**, and cards of the same rank as the tiplu in the other suits are known as **ordinary jokers**.

For example if the tiplu is the ♣J then:

- the other two ♣J are tiplu;
- the three ♣Q are poplu;
- the three ♣10 are jhiplu;
- there are 12 ordinary jokers: all the ♦J, ♥J and ♠J.

The different types of three-card combination that can be collected are as follows (in the examples we continue to assume that the ♣J is the tiplu):

- A **tunnela** (or tanella) consists of three identical cards - for example ♥6-♥6-♥6.
- A **pure sequence** consists of three consecutive cards of the same suit - for example ♠3-♠4-♠5.
- A **dirty sequence** consists of two cards of the same suit and a joker representing a third card of that suit to form a consecutive sequence - for example ♦6-♣Q-♦8, or any three cards two of which are jokers.
- A **triplet** consists of three cards of the same rank, but all of **different** suits - for example ♠K-♣K-♥K is a triplet. ♠9-♠9-♣9 is **not** a valid combination - the suits must all be different.
- A **dirty triplet** consists of two cards of the same rank and **different** suits plus a joker - for example ♦J-♣2-♥2 - or or any three cards two of which are jokers.

Please note:

- In a sequence an ace can be at either end (Q-K-A or A-2-3) but not in the middle (K-A-2 is not a sequence).
- Two identical cards plus a joker, such as ♦5-♦5-♦J, is **not** a valid combination: a joker cannot be used to make a tunnela, and it's not a triplet because it has two cards in the same suit.
- A pure sequence of three jokers (jhiplu-tiplu-poplu: ♣10-♣J-♣Q) is called a **marriage**, and is one the most valuable combinations in the game.

## The Deal

Any player may deal first. After the play is finished and the hand scored, the turn to deal passes to the left.

The dealer deals 21 cards to each player, [one at a time?], and turns the next card face up to begin the discard pile, and places the remaining cards face down in a stack.

Any player who is dealt a tunnela (three identical cards) can expose these cards immediately, and they may then be worth points at the end of the game. A tunnela that is not exposed at the start, because the owner either acquired it later or chose not to expose it, has no point value.

## The Play

The play begins with the person sitting to the left of the dealer, and players take turns clockwise around the table.

Each player in turn may take either the (unknown) top card of the face down stack or the face up card discarded by the previous player (on the very first turn, the first player may take the card turned up by the dealer). The player must then discard one card face up on the discard pile. Although the discard pile is spread so that players can still see all the cards that have been

discarded previously, players are only allowed to pick up the latest discard. A player who takes the face up card from the discard pile is not allowed to discard the same card.

## The Joker

The first objective is to collect three tunnelas or pure sequences. Any combination of these is acceptable - for example one tunnela plus two pure sequences. The first person who achieves this lays these three combinations face up on the table and then selects a card unseen from the middle of the face down stack, looks at it without showing it to the other players, and replaces it face down under the face-down stack. This card is the **tiplu** and it determines all the jokers for the current hand, as described [above](#).

Each other player who later lays down three combinations that are tunnelas or pure sequences is then allowed to look at the tiplu on the bottom of the stack, thereby finding out which cards are jokers.

Jokers are sometimes discarded, for example by players who have not yet seen the tiplu. When a joker is discarded and the next player has already laid down three combinations and seen the tiplu, this player is **not** allowed to pick up the joker from the discard pile, but must take a card from the face down stack.

## Dublees

Instead of collecting three-card combinations, it is possible collect dublees - pairs of identical cards. Eight dublees are needed to win the game, and a player who has seven dublees can lay them down and look at the tiplu. Nevertheless, jokers cannot be used as wild cards when collecting dublees: all the pairs must consist of two genuinely identical cards.

After looking at the tiplu, a dublee player is not allowed to take a card from the discard pile unless it completes the player's eighth dublee and ends the game.

## Ending the Play

There are two ways in which the play can end.

1. A player who has laid down three combinations that are tunnelas or pure sequences is able after drawing a card to form four more valid three-card combinations. The player lays down these combinations, discards the remaining card, and the play ends.
2. After drawing, a player has eight dublees (pairs of identical cards). The player lays them down and the play ends. Eight dublees use 16 cards, so the player will have five unused cards plus a discard - these can be any cards.

Note that apart from tunnelas at the start of the game and combinations needed to look at the tiplu, completed combinations are not laid down during the play but kept in hand until the play ends.

It is possible for a player, within a single turn, to draw a card, lay down the necessary tunnelas or pure sequences to choose or see the tiplu, discover that this enables four more combinations can be made (using jokers as necessary), lay down these four additional combinations, discard and end

the play.

If at the end of a player's turn there are no cards left in the face-down stack, except for the tiplu that was placed at the bottom, all the cards in the discard pile except for the most recent discard are shuffled and placed face-down on top of the tiplu to form a new stack for drawing, and the game continues as before.

## Scoring

When the play ends, players count their points. Points are scored for '**maal**' (any tiplu, poplu or jhiplu in the player's final hand) and for any tunnelas laid down immediately after the deal. Note that there are extra points for a **marriage**, which consists of one jhiplu, one tiplu and one poplu, and that two or three identical maal cards or marriages score extra points.

	single	double	triple	tunnela
<b>ordinary card</b>	-	-	-	5
<b>ordinary joker</b>	-	-	-	10
<b>toplu or jhiplu</b>	2	5	10	20
<b>tiplu</b>	3	7	-	-
<b>marriage</b>	10	30	-	-

Each card can only be counted towards one item in this table - for example a marriage is worth 10 points **instead of** the 2+2+3 points for the individual cards in it.

Points for tunnelas are only counted if the player exposed the tunnela at the start of the game **and** the player has laid down three combinations to chose or see the tiplu.

For convenience we call the player who ended the game the winner, though fact this player may make a net loss if the other players have many valuable cards. The payments are as follows:

1. The winner is paid 3 points by each opponent who looked at the joker, and 10 points by each opponent who did not look at the joker.
2. If the winner ended the game with 8 dublees, the winner is paid an extra 5 points by each opponent.
3. Each player pays each other player the difference between the number of points they scored for cards.

To streamline this process, it is customary that all payments should be made to and from the winner. The following method of calculation gives the same net result as the individual payments described above.

Suppose that the number of players is  $n$ . Add the scores of all the players together, and let  $T$  be the total. Let  $S$  be the score of an individual player, and let  $w$  be 3 or 10 depending whether this player has seen the joker, plus 5 more if the winner ended with 8 dublees. Then the net amount that the player must pay to the winner is  $T + w - (n \times S)$ . If this amount is negative, then the winner pays the player.

(**Example:** the points scored by the four players are A, B, C and D. The third player wins. The first player has seen the joker. The amount that the first player must pay under the basic method is  $(B-A)$  to the second player,  $(C-A+3)$  to the third player and  $(D-A)$  to the fourth player. Under the streamlined method the first player pays  $(A+B+C+D)+3-(4\times A)$ , which is the same net total amount.)

## Variations and uncertainties

It seems that there are some local variations in scoring. I will add the details here if they are explained to me.

Some sources imply that the game is played anticlockwise, in which case the player to dealer's right (not left) begins, and the turn to deal also passes to the right. However, the software and online games that I have seen play clockwise. Maybe the direction of play varies from region to region?

## Other web sites, software and online games

Here is a [description of Marriage](#) on an American-Nepali blog.

The [Marriage page at Bhoos.com](#) has rules of the game with some additional options, and apps for Android and iOS with which the game can be played.

A [page by Mitesh Pandey](#) with rules of Marriage and a C++ program that plays it.

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