



Rules of Black Maria

Players

Black Maria can be played 3, 4 or 5 players.

Object

The object is to avoid scoring points. The game is ended by someone reaching or going over 100 points, and the winner is the player with the lowest score at this point. Alternatively, a set number of deals can be played.

Deal

A standard 52 card pack is used, with no jokers. For 3 players the 2 of diamonds is removed and for 5 players the 2 of diamonds and the 2 of clubs are removed from the pack.

The cards in each suit rank from ace (high) down to two (low). There are no trumps. All the cards are dealt out starting to the left of the dealer and then proceeding clockwise. Players take it in turn to deal, with the player to the left of the previous dealer becoming the dealer of the next trick.

Passing Cards

After every deal, each player passes a card face-down to the player on their left. Once a player has passed on their card, they may pick up the card passed to them which is then added to their hand. Once all players have passed on a card play of the hand can commence.

The Play of the Hand

The player to the left of the dealer leads the first trick, and can lead any card. The other players, in clockwise order, play a card following the suit of the card lead if they can. If they cannot follow suit, they may play any card. The person who played the highest card of the suit led wins the trick and leads the next trick.

Scoring

Normally, each player scores points for penalty cards in the tricks which they won. Each heart scores one point, the queen of spades 13 points, the king of spades 10 points and the ace of spades is 7 points. However, if a player wins all the scoring cards (which is known as a slam or shooting the moon), they score nothing for that round but all other players' scores are increased by 43 points.