



Rules of Hearts

Players

Hearts is always played by 4 players. For 3 or 5 players try Black Maria instead.

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. 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 the first deal, each player passes any three cards face-down to the player on their left. Once a player has passed on their three cards, they may pick up the cards passed to them which are then added to their hand.

On the second hand each player passes three cards to the player to their right, in the same way. On the third hand each player passes three cards to the player sitting opposite. On the fourth hand no cards are passed at all. The cycle then repeats until the end of the game.

The Play of the Hand

The person who holds the 2 of clubs always leads the first trick, and must play the 2 of clubs. 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.

It is not permitted to lead a heart until after a heart has been discarded in a previous trick, unless the player's hand contains only hearts. Discarding a heart, thus allowing hearts to be led in future, is called breaking hearts. A player whose hand has only hearts may lead any heart, thereby breaking hearts.

Scoring

Normally, each player scores penalty points for cards in the tricks which they won. Each heart scores one point, and the queen of spades scores 13 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 26 points.