

## **Gin Rummy Rules**

Gin Rummy is a two-player card and has enjoyed widespread popularity as both a social and a gambling game, especially during the mid twentieth century, and remains today one of the most widely played two-player card games.

### **Deck:**

Gin Rummy is played using a standard deck of 52 cards. The ranking from high to low is King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, Ace.

### **Objective:**

The objective in Gin Rummy is to be the first to reach an agreed-upon score, usually 100 points. The basic game strategy is to improve one's hand by melds and eliminating deadwood. Gin has two types of meld: Sets of three or four cards sharing the same rank, e.g. 8♥ 8♦ 8♣; and runs or sequences of three or more cards in the same suit, such as 3♥ 4♥ 5♥ or more. Deadwood cards are those not in any meld.

Aces are considered low—they can form a set with other aces but only the low end of runs (A♠ 2♠ 3♠ is a legal run but Q♠ K♠ A♠ is not). A player can form any combination of melds within their hand; all sets, all runs, or some sets and some runs.

### **Deal:**

Dealership alternates from round to round, with the first dealer chosen by any agreed upon method. The dealer deals ten cards to each player one at a time starting with their opponent, and then places the next card in the deck face up. This begins the discard pile. The face down pile is known as the stock pile.

### **Play:**

On the first turn of the round, the non-dealer has the first option of taking the upcard on the discard pile or passing. If the non-dealer takes the upcard, they must then discard a different card to the discard pile. The player acting second can take the top card from the pile of their choice. However, if the non-dealer passes the upcard, the dealer is given the opportunity to take the upcard or pass. If the dealer also passes, the non-dealer must draw from the stock pile, then the next turn and after, players can draw from the pile of their choice.

On each subsequent turn, a player must draw either the (face-up) top card of the discard pile, or the (face-down) top card from the stock pile, and discard one card from

their hand onto the discard pile. If a player chooses to draw face-up card (from the discard pile) the discarded card cannot be the just drawn card.

Players alternate taking turns until one player ends the round by declaring the hand over (knocking), or until only two cards remain in the stock pile, in which case the round ends in a draw and no points are awarded. The game ends when a player reaches 100 or more points (or another established amount).

### **Knocking:**

In standard Gin, a player with 10 or fewer points of deadwood may knock, immediately ending the hand without giving the opponent a chance to play. Knocking with no deadwood is known as going Gin or having a Gin hand, while knocking with deadwood points is known as going down.

When discarding to end a turn, a player who wishes to knock must clearly indicate their intent; this is generally shown by laying the discard face down, but can also be done through a verbal declaration or by tapping the playing surface. The player then lays out their hand, organized into melds and with any deadwood separated from them. The opponent, or "defending" player, shows their melds and is entitled to *lay off* any deadwood cards that fit into the knocking player's melds, provided that the knocking player does not go Gin. A Gin hand, with one set of four cards and two runs of three cards each.

The deadwood count is the sum of the point values of the deadwood cards. Aces are scored at one point, face cards at 10, and others according to their numerical values. Intersecting melds are not allowed; if a player has a three-card set and a three-card run sharing a common card, only one of the melds counts, and the other two cards count as deadwood. For example; within the five cards 7♣ 7♠ 7♦ 8♦ 9♦, the seven of diamonds can be included in the set (7♣ 7♠ 7♦) or included in the run (7♦ 8♦ 9♦), but it cannot be included in both.

For example, suppose that the knocking player has a meld of three Kings. If the defending player is holding the fourth King as deadwood, they may lay it off by adding it to the meld and thus reduce their deadwood count by 10. The difference in the two players' deadwood counts determines the score for the hand as follows.

If the knocking player has the lower count, they score points equal to the difference. The defending player can undercut the knocking player by having a lower or equal count. In this case, the defending player scores the difference plus a bonus (usually 25 points,

sometimes 15 or 10). An undercut may occur either before or after the defending player has laid off any deadwood. The knocking player can never lay off their deadwood into the defending player's melds. A player who goes Gin (i.e. has no deadwood) gets a bonus (25 points).

### **Big Gin:**

A player holding a Gin hand may also choose to continue the round instead of revealing it, in hopes of attaining an 11-card Big Gin hand as follows. If a player draws or takes a card that can be used to form melds with the 10 cards already held, the player declares Big Gin and the hand ends. That player scores a Big Gin bonus (typically 31 points) plus the defending player's deadwood count; that player may not lay off any cards.

### **Scoring:**

Aces are scored at 1 point, face cards at 10, and all other cards are scored at their numerical values.

### **Knock points:**

After a player knocks, and the layoffs are made, the knocking player receives a score equal to the difference between the two hands. For example, if a player knocks with 8, and the defender has 10 deadwood points in their hand after laying off, the knocking player receives 2 points for the hand. If a player is able to knock before any cards are accepted, it is considered a misdeal.

### **Gin bonus**

After going Gin, a player receives a bonus of 25 points plus the entire count of deadwood in the opponent's hand. There is no chance to lay off when a player goes Gin.

### **Undercut (or underknocking):**

Occurs when the defending player has a deadwood count lower than or equal to that of the knocking player (this can occur either naturally or by laying off after a knock). In this case, the defender scores an undercut bonus of 25 points plus the difference in deadwood

in the knocking player's hand. In other rule sets, the bonus is 20. In early official rules, the bonus was only 10 points, and was not awarded in case of a tie.

### **Game bonus:**

Once a player has acquired 100 points (200, 500 or some other agreed-upon number) the game is over, and that player receives a game bonus of 100 points. Line bonus or

**box bonus** In some variations, this is added at the end of the game. For every hand a player won during the game, 25 points is added to their score.

**Big Gin:**

Prior to knocking, if all 11 cards in a player's hand form a legal Gin, the player can retain the extra card as part of their hand, and is awarded 31 points plus entire count of deadwood in their opponent's hand. (In some rule sets players may be awarded 50 points

or another established amount plus the entire count of deadwood in the opponent's hand)

**Shutout bonus:**

If a game is completed with the winner having won every hand, the points for each hand are doubled before adding the line bonus.

In some variations, if a match ends with one player in the lead by exactly 50 points, that player automatically loses.