

Canasta

by MeggieSoft Games

User Guide

Canasta

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1 Introduction

Welcome to two-player Canasta by MeggieSoft Games.

This Introduction section contains the following topics:

[MeggieSoft Games Software License](#)
[Other MeggieSoft Games](#)

Following the Introduction section, the remaining sections are organized as follows:

[How to Play Canasta](#)
[Understanding the Interface](#)
[Menus & Preferences](#)
[Online Play](#)
[Online Update](#)
[Useful Things To Know](#)
[Miscellaneous Topics](#)

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- Cribbage by MeggieSoft Games (all versions)
- Euchre & Écarté by MeggieSoft Games (all versions)
- German Whist by MeggieSoft Games (all versions)
- Gin Rummy by MeggieSoft Games (all versions)
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1.2 Other MeggieSoft Games

MeggieSoft Games is committed to the development of quality two-handed card games for the Microsoft Windows environment. We currently offer eight games: [Rummy 500](#) (first released in 1994), [Gin Rummy](#) (1995), [Pinochle & Bezique](#) (1996), [Piquet](#) (2003), [German Whist](#) (2003), [Euchre & Écarté](#) (2003), Canasta (2004), and [Cribbage](#) (2005).

All of the MeggieSoft Games use the same basic Graphical User Interface (GUI) . Thus the display and the use of the mouse is similar in all eight games.

For latest versions, news, etc., visit us on the Worldwide Web at: www.meggiesoftgames.com

1.2.1 Cribbage

Sir John Suckling, a British poet and knight, invented the card game of cribbage about 1635, reportedly as an evolution from an earlier game named Noddy. Cribbage has survived, with no major changes, as one of the most popular games in the English-speaking world.

The more modern Six Card Cribbage has now almost entirely replaced the original Five Card Cribbage game in the USA. However the five card version does still survive in parts of Britain, where it is one of the few games allowed by law to be played in a public house for small stakes.

Cribbage by MeggieSoft Games is the traditional game for two players, and supports the original Five Card game in addition to the later Six and Seven Card derivations.

Cribbage is a game of cunning in which the two players must balance a number of different objectives and remain alert in recognizing scoring combinations. It is a game where experience counts - together with some luck.

The deck is the standard fifty-two cards deck, being the Ace through King of each suit (i.e., Ace is low).

Depending upon the game variation, five, six or seven cards are dealt to each player. The remaining cards cut and the exposed card is placed face up on top of the stock, which is placed to the side of the playing mat. The upturned stock card is termed the "Start". If this is a Jack, the dealer scores two points ("for his heels"). In the Five Card game, non-dealer always scores three points from the deal as compensation for the dealer having the first crib scoring advantage.

There are three phases to a round of Cribbage: the Discard, the Play, and the Show.

Discard

After the deal, the non-dealer selects and discards two cards from their hand, the dealer does likewise. These four cards form the "Crib" for the "Show" phase.

Play

The play starts with the leader (the non-dealer) playing a card to the mat; the other player follows, and play continues until either all the cards have been played, or the cards played total 31 points (or less, if neither player has a card to play which would keep the total below 31).

In the Five Card Game, the play then stops. In the six and seven cards versions, if either player has cards remaining in hand, play continues after resetting the points total to zero; the player of the most recent card scoring "One for Go" (unless 31 points were achieved).

At the end of the Play phase, the player of the last card earns "One for Last", unless 31 points were achieved. (In the Five Card game, there may be a card or cards remaining in either or both players' hands, whereas in the Six and Seven card versions, all cards will be played from the hands.)

As each player plays a card, they will earn points if the card played makes a pair, a sequence, a total of fifteen, or a total of thirty. There are other scoreable points, as described in the Points Scoring section.

Show

When play has completed, the cards played are returned to their respective players, who then score for combinations of cards in their hand together with the Start (the upturned stock card). Non-dealer shows first, then the dealer. The scoring combinations are pairs, sequences, a flush (all the cards are of the same suit, including or excluding the Start), and groups of fifteen points. If the Start is not a Jack and a player holds the Jack, they score an extra point. After the players have scored the points from their hands, the dealer takes the crib and scores points for the same combination types therein (together with the Start), with the exception that a flush must be five cards (i.e., including the Start).

Repeated rounds are played until one of the players has reached a total of 61, 121, or 181 for the five, six and seven card games respectively.

1.2.2 Euchre & Écarté

Euchre & Écarté is a dual-mode game which can be set to play either two-player Euchre or Écarté (or a hybrid from selected rules of each)

Euchre

Euchre dates from the 19th century, possibly from a common root with Écarté, possibly from Écarté itself. In any case, it became very popular in the USA at that time, and may have originated with the Pennsylvania Dutch.

The standard Euchre deck for the two-person game comprises twenty-four cards, being the Nine through Ace, of each suit.

Five cards are dealt to each player. The remaining cards are placed face down by the mat as the stock, of which the top card of the stock is turned face up. The suit of this "upcard" defines the starting point for defining the trump suit for the round.

The play starts with the leader (the non-dealer) deciding whether to accept or reject the trump suit as indicated by the upcard. The process of defining the trump suit may result in acceptance of the upcard suit, the choice of another suit, or a void round if both player's pass on each step of the process.

When the trump suit is "made", the Jack of the trump suit and the Jack of the other suit of the same color are promoted to become the Right and Left Bowers and are both now part of the trump suit, ranking higher than the Ace. It is important to remember that the "other" Jack is no longer part of its original suit.

The upcard is transferred to the dealer's hand, and the dealer will then discard a card in return. (There is an available rule preference that this does not occur, in which case the upcard remains with the stock.)

Trick play then starts with non-maker playing a card to the mat to which the other player follows. This forms the first trick. (There is an available rule preference that non-dealer always leads, even if non-dealer is the maker.)

The leader of a trick is the winner unless the follower plays a higher card of the same suit, or plays a card of the trump suit. The follower must play a card of the suit led if they are able. If they cannot follow suit, they may either play a card of the trump suit (and win the trick) or play a card of another suit (and lose the trick).

A round ends after the five tricks have been played. If the maker wins the most tricks they score one point (two for all five tricks), otherwise the maker is said to have been "euchred" and the other player scores two points. The first player to accumulate 10 points wins the game.

Écarté

Écarté is a two-handed game which originated in 19th century France. The word Écarté means "to discard"..

The standard Écarté deck comprises thirty-two cards, being the Seven through King, plus the Ace, of each suit. The King is the highest card of each suit, and the Ace ranks between the Ten and the Jack.

Five cards are dealt to each player. The remaining cards are placed face down by the mat as the stock, of which the top card of the stock is turned face up and placed under the stock. The suit of this card defines the trump suit for the round.

The play starts with the leader (the non-dealer) deciding whether to play or propose. If the non-dealer elects to propose, and the dealer accepts the proposal, the non-dealer may exchange any or all of their cards with fresh cards from the stock. The dealer then does likewise. Another proposal may then be made, and so forth until either the stock is exhausted (the trump card is not exchangeable), or the non-dealer elects to play.

When the non-dealer decides (or is forced) to play a card to the mat; the other player follows. This forms the first trick.

The leader of a trick is the winner unless the follower plays a higher card of the same suit, or plays a card of the trump suit. The follower must play a card of the suit led if they are able. If they cannot follow suit, they may either play a card of the trump suit (and win the trick) or play a card of another suit (and lose the trick).

A round ends after the five tricks have been played. The player with the most points from winning a majority of the tricks and from bonus points wins the round. The first player to accumulate 5 points wins the game.

1.2.3 German Whist

German Whist is a two-handed version of Whist which was created in England, not Germany. Why it is named German Whist is not known.

The deck is the standard fifty-two cards, being the Two through Ace of each suit (i.e., Ace is high).

Thirteen cards are dealt to each player. The remaining cards are placed face down by the mat as the stock. The top card of the stock is turned face up. The suit of this card defines the trump suit for the round.

The play starts with the leader (the non-dealer) playing a card to the mat; the other player follows. This forms the first trick.

The winner of a trick is the leader unless the follower plays a higher card of the same suit, or plays a card of the trump suit. The follower must play a card of the suit led if they are able. If they cannot follow suit, they may either play a card of the trump suit (and win the trick) or play a card of another suit (and lose the trick).

During the first phase, while there are still cards in the stock, the winner of the trick takes the top (visible) card from the stock, and the loser takes the next (unseen) stock card. The purpose of winning tricks in this phase is therefore to improve your hand as much as possible.

When all the stock cards have been taken, the second phase is played. In this phase, the winner of each trick earns one point.

A round ends after the thirteen tricks of the second phase have been played. The player with the most points wins the round. The first player to win three rounds or accumulate 50 points (depending on the [scoring preference](#)) wins the game.

1.2.4 Gin Rummy

Whereas Canasta is oriented towards building the highest possible score from creating melds, Gin Rummy is oriented towards who goes out (knocks) first and who has the lesser amount of unmeldable points remaining in their hand.

A round of Gin Rummy starts with each player being dealt ten cards. As the round progresses, each player picks up and discards similarly to Canasta, with the following differences:

- Only the last discard may be picked up as alternative to taking a new card from the stock
- Melds are only played when a player knocks. A player must have ten or less points of deadwood in order to knock. The knocking player then lays down their melds, and the other player follows by laying down their meldable cards. This ends the round.
- The points scored are based upon the difference in deadwood points between the players; plus bonuses for knocking, undercutting (having less deadwood than the knocker), and winning a game (100 points).

Gin Rummy supports all well documented variations including: Hollywood Scoring, Oklahoma Gin, and 11 Card Gins.

1.2.5 Pinochle & Bezique

Pinochle & Bezique is configurable to play Pinochle, Binokel, or Bezique, or even a hybrid combination.

Bezique is the older game, having originated in France where it was evolved from games dating back to the sixteenth century. Bezique then reportedly evolved into two-player Binokel in Southern Germany and Switzerland, which, after crossing the Atlantic via German immigrants, further evolved into two-handed Pinochle and then further into the four-player version. The MeggieSoft Games implementations of Pinochle, Binokel, and Bezique are of the original two-deck, two-player games. (The six-deck version of Bezique is reported as having been Winston Churchill's favorite game.)

These games combines elements of the Rummy and Whist families of games insofar as they involve trick taking and melding. Each round is comprised of two phases of trick taking and follows the following cycle:

- The cards are dealt and are played as tricks. The higher card of each trick wins the trick. Players may declare a meld only after winning a trick.
- There is no requirement to follow suit during the first phase
- Melded cards remain part of the player's hand, and may be further melded (subject to certain restrictions) or played just as other cards from the players' hands.
- After each trick (and meld if there is one), each player takes a card from the stock. The next trick is then played.
- When the stock is depleted, the round moves into the second phase.
- During the second phase, the remaining cards are played out as tricks. Players must follow suit, and must win the trick if possible.

Pinochle & Bezique supports all widely documented rule and scoring variations of the three game types.

1.2.6 Piquet

Piquet dates from the 15th century and is therefore one of the oldest existing card games for two players. It is also generally regarded as one of the best.

There are three phases to a round:

- After the cards are dealt, the players may exchange a number of cards from their hands with undealt cards from the stock (called the talon in Piquet). The object being to improve their respective hands for the remaining phases of the round.
- Declarations are then made, starting with the non-dealer, of particular card combinations. The three categories of declaration are: Point (the longest suit), sequences (runs of three cards or more of the same suit), and sets (three or four cards of the same face value). Points are accumulated for successful declarations, but not for those which are equalled or bettered.
- The cards are then played as tricks, with no trump suit. Points are accumulated for leading and capturing tricks.

Other bonuses apply for other features such as Carte Blanche (no face cards in dealt hand), Pique/Repique (scoring 30 points before the other player scores any), and for winning the most tricks.

1.2.7 Rummy 500

Rummy 500 is oriented towards building the highest possible score from creating melds.

A round of Rummy 500 starts with each player being dealt thirteen cards. As the round progresses, each player picks up from the stock or the discard pile, melds if desired, and discards a card. The following are the major features of the game:

- Any number of cards from the discard pile may be taken, provided the earliest discarded of them is melded immediately. The remainder are added to the player's hand.
- Players may lay down melds, or add to each other's melds, at any time that it is their turn. Melding scores

points and reduces the liability of points in a player's hand, but gives the opponent a greater chance of scoring points from melding some of their cards.

- A round ends when one of the players has melded or discarded their last card, or when the stock is exhausted. There is no lay-off of deadwood; what the other player holds when the round ends counts against them.
- The first player to score 500 points wins the game.

2 How to Play Canasta

After the cards for a round have been dealt, the following is the sequence of each of player's turn, until one of the players melds or discards the last card from their hand or no more cards remain in the stock:

- Take two cards* from the stock, or all of the cards from the discard pile
- Meld cards from your hand to the mat, as and if possible
- Discard one of the cards from those in your hand.

* The standard rule for four-player Canasta is to take one stock card, but for two-player Canasta the standard rule is two cards. This may be altered via the corresponding [rule preference](#).

Select a topic:

[Canasta Overview](#)
[Terminology](#)
[The Deal](#)
[Taking From The Stock](#)
[Taking The Discard Pile](#)
[Melding Cards To The Mat](#)
[Initial Meld Thresholds](#)
[Discarding](#)
[Meld Scoring](#)
[Bonuses & Penalties](#)
[Getting Started](#)
[Watching a Game Being Played](#)
[Strategies - Classic Canasta](#)
[Strategies - Modern American Canasta](#)
[Tournament Play & Replays](#)

2.1 Canasta Overview

Canasta adheres to the rules of "Classic Canasta" as documented in Hoyle's Rules Of Games, and other sources. A set of [dealing](#), [rule](#), and [scoring](#) preferences corresponding to the rules of "Modern American Canasta" are provided for those who prefer the Modern American variation, or who wish to enhance the Classic Canasta rules.

The Canasta deck of cards is comprised of 108 cards, being two normal 52-card decks plus four Jokers.

Fifteen cards are dealt to each player. The remaining cards are placed face down by the mat as the stock. The top card is turned face up on the mat to begin the discard pile. If the top card is a red three, another card is turned over on top of it (repeatedly, if necessary).

If either player has been dealt any red threes, these are placed on the mat and replaced from the stock (repeatedly, if necessary). These red threes, and any others subsequently placed on the mat, will count towards a bonus at the end of the round. They do not however form a meld.

Play starts with the non-dealer taking the first turn. Each player starts their turn by taking either the top two cards from the stock, or all of the cards from the discard pile. There are limitations that affect when you may

[take the discard pile](#).

You continue your turn by playing melds to the mat, if you are able to and wish to. A meld is a number of cards or the same rank (e.g., three Tens) and may include a limited number of wild cards (Jokers or Twos). You conclude your turn by discarding one of the cards in your hand, unless you have melded them all.

A round ends when: (i) a player has discarded or melded their last card or (ii) there are no cards in the stock and the player whose turn it is elects not to take from the discard pile. Cards remaining in hand are deducted from the round score, and other bonuses and penalties earned are applied.

The game ends when a player reaches 5000 points, or 8500 points if the higher thresholds [scoring preference](#) is selected.

2.2 Terminology

The following are the main terms associated with playing Canasta:

Classic Canasta: The original game and associated rules.

Modern American Canasta: A subsequently modified version of the game, created in the United States, with significant differences to rules and scoring conventions. These may be selected individually via the [dealing preferences](#), [rule preferences](#) and [scoring preferences](#); or in total via the one-click button in the rule preferences.

Wild card: A Two or a Joker.

Natural card: A card that is not a wild card.

Rank: The face value of the card, i.e., King or Eight. (A Joker is nominally ranked as a Two, together with the actual Twos.)

Meld: A collection of three or more cards of the same rank, which may include wild cards. The number of wild cards in a meld may not exceed the number of natural cards, nor may the number of wild cards exceed three (two in Modern American Canasta).

Initial Meld: The meld or melds that meet the minimum opening points requirement. A player may not start melding until this requirement can be met.

Canasta: A meld of seven cards (or more in Classic Canasta).

Pure Canasta: A Canasta which is comprised solely of natural cards.

Mixed Canasta: A Canasta which includes one or more wild cards in addition to natural cards.

Wild Canasta: A Canasta which is comprised solely of wild cards.

Discard Pile: The pile of cards discarded by the players. This may be taken by a player if they possess required matching cards in their hand or melds. The top card must always be melded if the discard pile is taken.

Frozen Discard Pile: In Classic Canasta, a discard pile which contains a wild card or a red Three. The discard pile is also frozen to a player who has not yet melded any cards. In Modern American Canasta, the discard pile is always frozen (wild cards and black Threes are not discardable under Modern American Canasta rules). A frozen discard pile may only be taken if the player possesses, within their hand, two natural cards of the same rank as the top discard.

Blocked Discard Pile: In Classic Canasta, a discard pile topped by a black Three or wild card. A blocked discard pile may never be taken. (In Modern American Canasta, black Threes do not have this separate function and wild cards may not be discarded. Thus the concept of a blocked discard pile does not apply.)

Talons: In Modern American Canasta, two sets of four cards and three cards respectively are dealt after dealing the players' hands. These remain face-down until the players make their respective initial melds. The first to meld receives the four-card talon after discarding; the second to meld receives the three-card talon after discarding.

Going Out: Discarding your last card, provided you have melded sufficient Canastas (one under Classic rules, two under Modern American rules) to do so. You may not go out if you have melded insufficient Canastas during the current round. There is, however, one circumstance when you can discard your last card with insufficient Canastas; this occurs if you have only one card in hand and take Red Threes from stock. This leaves you with the same single card, which must be discarded to end the round.

2.3 The Deal

The first round is dealt automatically after you confirm that you will start the first round, or after the cut for deal (if this option is selected).

The deal is fifteen cards each, dealt singly. For Classic Canasta, the thirty-first card is placed face up as the first card of the discard pile. If this card is a Three or a [wild](#) card, the next stock card is placed face up on top of it; if this is also a Three, the next stock card is turned over, and so on. (There is no discard pile created by the standard Modern American Canasta deal.)

Immediately after the deal, any red Threes in the non-dealer's hand will be placed on the mat and replaced from the stock. If any of these replacements is a red Three, this process is repeated. The process is then performed for the dealer, if they were dealt any red Threes.

After the end of each round, Canasta will shuffle and deal the cards for the next round.

At the end of each game, you will be asked if you want to proceed with the next game. If you select "Yes", Canasta will shuffle and deal the cards.

At any time, you may select "[Replay Game](#)" from the [Game Menu](#). In this case, the current game is abandoned, and the cards are redealt. Alternatively, you can select "[Replay Round](#)", in which case the current round is restarted. In both "replay" cases, the cards are dealt as before, without reshuffling. If you wish to restart a game with a fresh shuffle of the cards, select "[Restart Fresh Game](#)" from the Game Menu.

If "[AutoMouse Cards](#)" is enabled, the mouse pointer will be moved automatically to the deck after the cards have been dealt.

Previous deals may be replicated via the "[Replicate Game](#)" option of the [Game Menu](#), or via "[Game Scores](#)" under the [View Menu](#). Also, deal sequences may be fixed for a whole series of games via the "Tournament" option under Dealing Preferences. This permits multiple players to play the same series of deals.

2.4 Taking From The Stock

You start your turn by taking the top two cards from the stock, or by taking the entire discard pile if you wish to and are able to.

To take the cards from the stock, position the mouse pointer over the face down card on top of the stock. (In [AutoMouse](#) mode, the mouse will have been automatically positioned over the stock after you discarded the previous card.)

Click down with the left mouse button on the card.

The two cards will then be displayed face up for you to see them. When you release the mouse button, the stock cards will be removed from the stock and added to your hand, which will immediately be sorted.

If either of the cards taken is a red Three, it will be placed on the mat and replaced from the stock.

The cards in your hand that were taken from the stock will be shown with a color tint until you move the mousepointer across the cards in your hand, select a card, or discard. (The tinting may be suppressed via the [Player Preferences](#); the tint color may be changed via [Color Preferences](#).)

(You may select a [rule preference](#) if you prefer that only one stock card is to be taken on each turn.)

2.5 Taking The Discard Pile

If the top card of the discard pile is a black Three or a wild card, it is "blocked" and cannot be taken on this turn. Otherwise, you may take the discard pile, as an alternative to taking from the stock, provided that you have matching cards in your hand or your existing melds. If the discard deck is blocked, the top card will be tinted dark grey; if it is frozen, it will be tinted light grey. This tinting may be suppressed via the [card preferences](#).

The ways in which you may meld the top discard depend upon whether the discard pile is currently frozen.

Taking a Frozen Discard Pile

The discard pile is frozen if either:

- it contains a wild card or a red Three (from the initial deal)
- you have not yet melded any cards (i.e., you are not yet open).

If the discard pile is frozen, you may only take it if you can meld it with two natural cards of the same rank (i.e., not including wild cards) from your hand. All three cards (the top discard and the two natural cards in hand) must then be melded as a new meld, or added to an existing meld.

Taking an Unfrozen Discard Pile

If the discard pile is not frozen, you may take it if the top discard can be melded in any way - either as a new meld with cards from your hand (which may include a wild card), or by adding it to an existing meld of that rank. (There is a selectable [rule preference](#) which prohibits adding it to an existing Canasta, per the normal Modern American Canasta rules.)

To take the discard pile, position the mouse pointer over the discard pile, and click and release the left mouse button. You may also click and drag the discard pile to your hand.

When the discard pile is taken, the cards from the discard pile will be added to your hand. Unless AutoMeld (via the [Player Preferences](#)) is disabled, the top card will be melded automatically. This automatic melding will be performed as follows:

- If the discard pile was frozen, or if you have two or more matching cards and no wild cards and have not yet melded that rank, the automatic melding will include two matching natural cards from your hand,
- Otherwise, if you have not yet melded that rank and only have one matching natural card, the automatic melding will include the one matching natural card plus one wild card (Joker preferred over Two),
- Otherwise, if you have not yet melded that rank and have two or more matching natural cards and one or more wild cards, the automatic melding will only include one natural card from your hand. (The third card of the meld could be either a natural or a wild card, which you will select and meld separately - *see note below),
- Otherwise, the top card will be added to the existing meld of its rank.

If AutoMeld is disabled, the top card taken will be highlighted, ready for melding. If the discard pile was frozen or if you have not yet melded that rank, other card(s) in your hand will also be highlighted, according to the above AutoMeld definitions, as they must be melded with the top discard. Highlighted cards may not be de-highlighted or discarded; they must be melded immediately.

All of the other cards from the discard pile will be placed to the right-side of your hand and tinted in grey, since these cards may not be used until you are "open". When you have melded the highlighted card(s), and completed your opening melds if you are not yet open, this restriction is satisfied and the added cards will be combined into your hand. You may continue your turn by melding these cards as you wish.

If you take the discard pile and find that you cannot or do not wish to use it (for example, if you are unable to reach the opening melding threshold), you will need to [undo](#) the action from the Player menu or via the [shortcut button](#). In this case, a 50 point penalty is applied for taking from the stock having returned the discard pile.

* When you have the choice of completing the meld with either another natural card or a wild card, only one (natural) card from your hand is AutoMelded or automatically highlighted along with the top discard taken. There are circumstances when you might prefer not to meld the second natural card from your hand. Such situations could include the case when you have a number of wild cards in your hand and you wish to retain two natural cards in hand (in order to potentially capture a subsequent frozen discard pile).

Note: In the case where a red Three was initially dealt to the discard pile, and is taken into your hand when you take the discard pile, it will be automatically placed on the mat. However, it will not be replaced (as is the case when a red Three is taken from the stock).

2.6 Melding Cards To The Mat

A meld comprises three or more cards which are of the same rank (or value). There may be only one meld of a given rank, to which cards may subsequently be added. Wild cards (Jokers and Twos) may be used within a meld provided that:

- The number of wild cards per meld does not exceed the number of natural cards
- The number of wild cards per meld does not exceed three (two if the corresponding Modern American Canasta [rule preference](#) is active).

If the rule preference restricting pure melds is enabled, a wild card may never be a part of a meld of Sevens and may not be added to a meld of Aces (but the initial melded Aces may include a wild card). If the rule preference permitting wild card melds is enabled, you may meld wild cards together as a separate meld.

When making your first melds of a round, the total points from these must meet or exceed the required [initial meld threshold](#).

If you have selected the "Splash" rule preference and your opening meld is a natural Canasta, the threshold requirement is ignored.

Threes are not meldable and are not scored as a meld, with one exception. When going out, and only when going out, you may meld a set of three or more black Threes as the very last action before discarding. This special meld may not include wild cards.

Subject to the above restrictions on meld combinations and opening thresholds, you may either create a new meld, or you may add one or more cards to one of your existing melds displayed on the mat.

When a meld contains seven cards, it becomes a Pure Canasta (no wild cards), a Mixed Canasta (including wild cards), or a Wild Canasta (all wild cards, if the rule preference permitting wild Canastas is active.) 300 bonus points are applied for a Mixed Canasta, 500 points for a Pure Canasta, and 2000 points for a Wild Canasta. You may extend a Canasta by adding more cards, unless you have selected the rule preference that limits Canastas to seven cards.

You meld a card by clicking on it (it will then be highlighted, click on it again if you wish to deselect it), and then clicking on the meld area. Or you may drag the card directly to the meld area. Alternatively, you may double-click on a card in your hand to meld it in one action (it will be added to the correct rank meld, or added to the last melding if it is a wild card).

To create a new meld, click (place the card) on an exposed part of the mat. To add to an existing meld, click anywhere on the melded cards. You may not create more than one meld of a given rank. Thus if you already have a meld of eights and attempt to create a new meld of eights by clicking elsewhere, the latter will be added to the former. (When forming a meld of black Threes to go out, these are melded by clicking on the pile of red Threes).

Multiple cards may be melded in a group (select each first by clicking on it), or singly. You must complete each meld before starting another or discarding. Use the "[Undo Last Action](#)" feature if you make an error.

You may double-click on a card to select and meld it in one action. If a meld for that rank has been started, it will be added to that meld, otherwise a new meld will be started. If you double-click on a wild card, it will be

added to the last non-wild meld to which a card was melded in the current turn. If any other cards are selected for melding when double-clicking on a card, the selected cards together with the card acted upon will be melded as a group.

You may also select and meld a group of cards in one simple [drag-and-drop](#) action, via the "MultiSelect" and "AutoMeld" capabilities. Unless disabled under the [Player Preferences](#), "MultiSelect" is effected by dragging across the cards with the right mouse button down, and AutoMeld is effected when the mouse button is released. See "[Using The Mouse](#)" for further information.

You may meld as many times in a turn as you wish, until you end your turn by discarding, or you have melded all your cards.

2.7 Initial Meld Thresholds

The initial meld threshold is the number of points each player must earn from their first meld, or set of melds, within a round. Bonuses do not count towards meeting the threshold requirement.

You may start the turn in which you "open" (i.e., meld enough points to satisfy the initial meld threshold) by taking from the discard pile, or from the stock. If you start by taking the discard pile, the following conditions apply:

- The opening melds must be made from your hand, plus the visible discard. Before opening, the discard pile is frozen to you and therefore you must have two natural cards in your hand which match the visible discard in order to take it.
- You may only meld other cards taken as part of the discard pile after you have passed the initial meld threshold.
- Provided that the "Initial Melds From Hand Only" [rule preference](#) is not selected, the top discard taken and melded will contribute towards meeting the requirement.
- Under the normal rules for Modern American Canasta, "Initial Melds From Hand Only" applies. This means that the top discard does not contribute. If this card is melded with two cards from your hand, these do not contribute either, since the melds existence depends upon the taken discard. However, if the taken discard is melded with three or more cards from your hand, these other cards do contribute since they form a meld in their own right.

As you meld your opening cards, the "Open:" counter in the status bar will be updated to show the remaining points requirement.

If you fail to meet or exceed the threshold, you will be unable to discard and must return the discard pile (by using the "[undo](#)" facility). Because there is a 50 point penalty for taking and returning the discard pile (unless inhibited via the corresponding [scoring preference](#)), it is wise to be sure that you can reach the threshold before taking the discard pile.

The threshold level depends upon your total score from previous rounds or the current game, and upon whether you have the higher (normal for Modern American Canasta) threshold levels selected in your [scoring preferences](#).

Classic Canasta Thresholds

- If your total from previous rounds is negative: **15 points** (any meld will achieve this)
- If your total from previous rounds is less than 1500 points: **50 points**
- If your total from previous rounds is less than 3000 points: **90 points**
- If your total from previous rounds is 3000 points or more: **120 points**

Modern American Canasta Thresholds (higher levels selected as scoring preference):

- If your total from previous rounds is less than 3000 points: **125 points**
- If your total from previous rounds is less than 5000 points: **155 points**
- If your total from previous rounds is 5000 points or more: **180 points**

2.8 Discarding

You end your turn by discarding one of the cards in your hand. The only exception being that if you can meld all the cards in your hand you may do so, unless the [Rule Preference](#) specifying "Must Discard" is selected, in which case the round is ended. There may be restrictions on what cards may be discarded if you have enabled one or more of the Modern American Canasta rules.

To discard a card, position the mouse pointer over the card and click the RIGHT mouse button. Alternatively, you may click the LEFT mouse button with the ALT key depressed. Alternatively, you may drag and drop a card directly from your hand to the discard pile.

If you have selected "Discard Protect" under [Player Preferences](#), a confirming pop-up menu will appear when you click on the right mouse button.

Note that you cannot discard while multiple cards are highlighted -- but you can discard a single selected card. You must deselect other highlighted cards before discarding. If you started your turn by taking cards from the discard pile, any card which was automatically highlighted must be melded and cannot be deselected.

2.9 Meld Scoring

Points are earned for each card melded to the table. The running meld score totals for a round are displayed in italics as the penultimate line of the scoresheet.

The points values are:

- 5 Points:** Each Seven, Six, Five, Four, or black Three
- 10 Points:** Each King, Queen, Jack, Ten, Nine, or Eight
- 20 Points:** Each Ace or Two
- 50 Points:** Each Joker

At the end of a round, any points remaining in the other player's hand are deducted from their score and penalty and bonus points are applied. A player may therefore realize a negative score for a round.

2.10 Bonuses & Penalties

Bonus and penalty points are awarded at the end of the round. The bonus/penalty totals currently applicable during a round are displayed in italics as the last line of the scoresheet. (The opponent's total does not include the optional penalties regarding Aces and Sevens in hand, since this would unfairly provide unknown information.)

The bonuses for melding Canastas are:

- 300 Points:** Each Mixed Canasta
- 500 Points:** Each Pure Canasta
- 2000 Points:** Each Wild Canasta (when the Wild Canasta [rule preference](#) is active)

Under Classic Canasta scoring, bonus points are awarded for going out (i.e., having no cards remaining in hand), provided you have melded sufficient Canastas. The awarding of these points may be suppressed via the [scoring preferences](#). (Note: the only circumstance when you can discard your last card with insufficient Canastas occurs if you have only one card in hand and take Red Threes from stock. This leaves you with the same single card, which must be discarded to end the round. There is no bonus in this situation.)

- 100 Points:** For going out
- +100 Points:** For going out concealed (when the entire hand is melded on one turn, making 200 points total).

For Threes, the bonuses or penalties depend upon whether the "All 3s Are Equal" rule preference is selected. If this is not selected, the Classic Canasta scoring convention applies to red Threes, and black Threes are meldable (and scoreable) as the final melding action of going out. If the "All 3s Are Equal" preference is selected, the Modern American Canasta scoring convention applies to all Threes.

Under Classic Canasta scoring, the points total for red Threes is applied as a bonus if the player has made at least one meld, but as a penalty if they have melded no cards.

- 100 Points:** For a single red Three
- 200 Points:** For two red Threes
- 300 Points:** For three red Threes
- 800 Points:** For four red Threes

Under Modern American Canasta scoring, the points totals for Threes are applied as bonuses if the player has made two or more Canastas, are ignored if the player has made one Canasta, and are applied as a penalties if the player has scored no Canastas. Note that these delineations are the number of completed Canastas, not the number of melds.

- 100 Points:** For a single Three of either color
 - 300 Points:** For two Threes of the same color
 - 500 Points:** For three Threes of the same color
 - 1000 Points:** For four Threes of the same color
- (For example: two red Threes plus three black Threes would score 800 points, two red plus two black would score 600 points.)

The following additional bonuses and penalties apply if the corresponding scoring preference has been selected. These are normally selected for Modern American Canasta:

The "Special Canasta" bonuses are:

- +2000 Points:** For each Pure Canasta of Aces or Sevens (making 2500 points total)
- +1000 Points:** For a Pure Canasta of Twos (making 3000 points total)
- +500 Points:** For a Pure Canasta of Jokers (four Jokers plus two Twos, making 2500 points total)

The "Incomplete Pure Canasta" penalties are:

- 2500 Points:** For each Pure Meld of Aces or Sevens which did not become a Canasta
- 2000 Points:** For a Wild Meld which did not become a Canasta
- 1500 Points:** If three or more Aces remain in hand
- 1500 Points:** If three or more Sevens remain in hand

The following bonuses apply if the corresponding "Special Melds" rule preferences are selected. These are normally selected for Modern American Canasta:

The "Special Meld" bonuses are:

- 3000 Points:** For a "Straight" hand (one card of each rank)
- 2500 Points:** For seven pairs (without Twos)
- 2000 Points:** For seven pairs, with Twos, Sevens, and Aces)
- 2000 Points:** For a "Garbage" hand (two sets of four of a kind, plus two sets of three of a kind, and no wild cards)

2.11 Getting Started

When you first start Canasta, you will see a "Start" button in the status bar. If you wish to make any menu option changes before starting, now is a good time to do this. Then click on the start button.

The first round of the first game starts with your turn, which you make by either taking new cards from the stock, or by taking the discard pile. The lead alternates on each successive round.

If you elect to take new cards from the stock, you click down on the top of the stock. The top two cards will then be turned face up for you to see, and, when you release the mouse button, will be automatically added to your hand. Alternatively, if you want to take the discard pile, click on it.

If you are able to, and wish to, you may meld some of your cards at this time.

End your turn by discarding a card from your hand by clicking on it with the RIGHT mouse button.

Your opponent (the computer) will then play its turn, and so on.

At any time you can get assistance on what to do next by clicking on the leftmost button in the status bar.

2.12 Watching A Game Being Played

If this is your first experience of Canasta, you might benefit from a guided walk through of a game being played before launching into reading the help information in detail.

Canasta incorporates a tutorial facility for this purpose. The game is played fully automatically, and you are provided with an explanation of what is taking place at each step.

To use the tutorial, select [Tutorial](#) from the [Assist Menu](#). The operation of the tutorial will be self-explanatory.

2.13 Strategies - Classic Canasta

At the start of the round, the primary goal of each player is to be the first to meld. Once a player has made their opening meld by taking the first discard pile, they have three distinct advantages:

1. The ability to meld further cards without meeting a threshold requirement
2. The ability to take an unfrozen discard pile without having two matching natural cards in hand. (The discard pile is always frozen to a player who has not yet played their initial meld.
3. More cards in hand than the other player, increasing the probability of being able to meld and thus take the discard pile again.

The only disadvantage to opening first is that the opponent will see what cards you have been collecting, which may enable them to adjust their strategy accordingly. For this reason, it is usually wise to open by melding the minimum number of cards possible.

Once one of the players has made their opening meld, the players will generally adopt different stances: the opening player playing offensively and the other player playing defensively.

Early Play (before either player has opened the melding)

Discard cards of ranks in which you have three or more cards, unless to do would damage your ability to meet the initial meld threshold. By attempting to hold pairs of as many ranks as possible, you will increase your probability of being to meld with whatever becomes the top card of the discard pile on your next turn. Also, such discards make it harder for the opponent to guess what cards you are holding.

Offensive Play

Having won the first discard pile, you have an increased ability to win the next one, and so on. As in early play, favor discarding from longer ranks in order to maintain a wide variety of ranks in your hand. Whenever possible, maintain sets of pairs in order to be able to take a frozen discard pile.

When melding, the offensive player should pay attention to achieving the bonuses awarded for Canastas. If you have, say, five Tens and meld all five in one turn, you will not have a capturing card in hand for when the discard pile is next displaying a Ten. If you retain two of these Tens in order to capture a frozen discard pile, you will increase your chances of adding more Tens to your hand - and therefore to the meld.

Defensive Play

If the other player captured the first discard pile, and thus made the opening meld(s), your best strategy will usually be to play to go out as swiftly as possible. This means adopting the opposite stance from the offensive player by discarding cards from your shortest ranks and building length in your longer ranks, with particular emphasis on being sure that you can achieve the required opening threshold for when you place your first meld(s).

Discarding

Ideally, you would discard a card of a rank which:

- does not deprive you of holding a pair in your hand (needed in order to take a frozen discard pile)

- does not match an existing meld of your opponent (unless the pile is frozen)
- does not match a pair that your opponent may likely be holding
- does not match a number of other cards already in the discard pile (thus permitting an easy meld, or even Canasta, for your opponent)

Discarding a "blocker" (black three or wild card) should be done only when there is a strong defensive reason to do so. These cards should not be discarded merely because you can find no other obvious candidate to discard.

Freezing The Discard Pile

It is unwise to discard a wild card or black Three merely because you have little else that you wish to discard. The best strategy is to freeze the discard pile when it is to your advantage so to do. If you are in an offensive position, your opponent has already played their opening meld(s), and you hold the majority of the cards, you possess the higher probability of next taking the discard pile, and will freeze it quite frequently in order to prevent your opponent being to take it. If your opponent has not yet played their opening meld(s), the discard pile is frozen to them in any case - so there would be no value to you from freezing it.

Wild Cards

Wild cards are best restricted to played in order to:

- Make the initial meld(s),
- Make a Canasta,
- Go out

Short Discard Piles

Taking a discard pile of a small number of cards may be less desirable to taking from the stock. The opponent will know what cards in the discard pile, but not what is in stock. This is particularly important if you are more likely than your opponent to next capture the discard pile in any case.

2.14 Strategies - Modern American Canasta

Compared with Classic Canasta, the strategies for Modern American Canasta differ in the following ways:

Taking The Discard Pile

The discard pile is always frozen, and you cannot score the top card when opening your melding. However, you may take the discard pile and open on the same turn if you have sufficient meldable points in your hand. If you haven't yet opened, it is usually worth taking the discard pile, if possible, on the turn in which you open. Thus you deny it to your opponent while increasing the number of cards in your hand.

Whether or not to take the discard pile becomes a decision of whether you would get more value from it than your opponent would, whether the opponent might have more pairs in hand and therefore be more likely to be able to take it if you don't, whether taking it could be a liability (see Sevens and Aces, below), how strong or weak your hand is with respect to being able to capture it later, and whether you would get more value from it than from taking a card from the stock. In general, it is usually advisable to take it whenever possible - unless there is only one card in it which is of little value to you.

Opening The Melding

There is less advantage in opening the melding than is the case with Classic Canasta because the discard pile is always frozen. Unless you need to take the talon in order to broaden the scope of your hand, you might delay as long as possible. Doing so will reduce your need to use wild cards with respect to the initial melding, and will permit you to build strength. Also, you might have the potential to build towards a "special hand" meld - this possibility is removed once you have opened. However, if the discard pile becomes highly attractive to you (or is likely to be highly attractive to your opponent), you should take it and open. On the other hand, a large discard pile can be a liability if it contains a number of Sevens and Aces which could cost you penalty points if you are unable to meld them or discard them before the end of the round.

Sevens and Aces (Pure Melds)

These ranks must be carefully managed as you will be penalised if you start a meld without completing a Canasta in the rank, or if you have three or more cards of one or either of these ranks at the end of the round. Ideally, you would not want to meld any until you can meld a Canasta - otherwise your opponent will know to deny you the cards that you need.

You should therefore reduce your holding to two or less cards of these suits if you fear that you will not be able to meld them before the end of the round. If you retain two cards, you are safe from the penalties and you will prevent your opponent from obtaining seven cards of the rank. Be cautious in taking a discard pile which will add a number of Sevens and/or Aces to your hand which you may not be able to meld or deplete swiftly. A few hundred points gained from melding the other cards taken from the discard pile can easily be subsumed by a thousand or more penalty points.

Note that if you start a meld of Sevens or Aces, the opponent will be less likely to discard one of these cards in order that they might force a penalty upon you if you fail to convert it into a Canasta. It is best not to meld any Sevens or Aces until you can meld a Canasta - the uncompleted Canasta penalty is larger than the penalty for having an excess of these cards in hand at the end of the round.

Wild Melds

As with Classic Canasta, a good strategy is not to meld wild cards unless you have good reason; this is more important in Modern American Canasta because the opportunity to play a wild meld is increased if you retain and accumulate the wild cards. Because there is a penalty for not completing a wild Canasta, and because you can not meld them elsewhere once you have started a wild meld, the wild cards are best retained until you can meld the Canasta on one turn. On the other hand, if you are not likely to make a wild Canasta swiftly, you should use one or two of them to open (particular if you can capture the discard pile) so that you do not get stuck with a thirteen-card hand with strongly reduced discarding potential. There is no direct penalty for having wild cards in hand at the end of the round, but there is an opportunity cost from not having used them to add to your melding score and possibly create more Canastas.

2.15 Tournament Play and Replays

When the Tournament option is enabled (under [Dealing Preferences](#)), Canasta deals a prescribed set of cards to each player's hand for a given game number and round number. Thus a player would always get the same cards for, say, Game 2 Round 4.

This feature permits two different players to play the same sequence of hands against the computer in a competition method of play. Alternatively, you might establish two or more player names for yourself and repeat the same sequences of dealt hands as a method of self-training.

To permit variety, you may select a tournament sequence number from 1 to 100. The deal sequences for each tournament number are different. The hand dealt for, say, Game 1 Round 5 of Tournament 2 will be different from the hand dealt for Game 1 Round 5 of Tournament 3.

Replays

The [Game Menu](#) permits you to restart games and rounds (hands) with the same deal(s). You may either restart the current round or current game from the beginning, or you can replicate the deal sequences of the previous game. You may also replicate the deals of any previous game played under version 8.0 or later via the [Game Scores](#) entry of the [View Menu](#). Additionally, you will get the option to replay a round when the results of a completed round are displayed.

3 Understanding the Interface

The stock is shown face down to the left of the mat, with the discard pile arranged face up on the center left side of the mat. The opponent's cards are displayed face down above the mat, and the player's cards are displayed face up below the mat. Melds are displayed on the mat, below the discard pile. Details of how the melds are displayed are described in the next section ("The Meld Layout").

The scoresheet is displayed to the right of the mat. If you have rule or [scoring](#) preferences selected, these will be shown to the left of the mat, under the stock. The status bar along the bottom of the window displays information about the game in progress as well as providing [shortcut buttons](#) to facilitate hand adjustments and obtaining hints.

Select a topic:

[The Meld Layout](#)
[Using the Mouse](#)
[Drag and Drop](#)
[Point and Click](#)
[Arranging Your Cards](#)
[Card Interleaving](#)
[Mousepointer Icons](#)
[The Scoresheet](#)
[Status Bar Counters](#)
[Shortcut Buttons](#)
[The Toolbar](#)
[Visual and Sound Effects](#)

3.1 The Meld Layout

Threes are displayed under the discard pile. (The Threes are not considered to be a meld, unless and until black 3s are melded as the last action before going out.)

The melds for the other card ranks may be arranged in one of four different layouts, depending upon the setting in the [card preferences](#):

- [Order Created](#) (the default): The melds are displayed from left to right in the order created
- [Sorted By Rank](#): The melds that have been created are displayed from left to right, and sorted in rank order
- [Sorted By Length](#): The melds that have been created are displayed in order of size. Pure (and Wild) Canastas are leftmost, followed by Mixed Canastas, followed by the other melds in order of decreasing length.
- [In Fixed Rank Columns](#): The melds are displayed in fixed rank positions; i.e., the Eights will always appear roughly in the center of the mat and the Aces to the extreme right, irrespective of what other melds have been played. In this mode, the opponent and player melds of the same rank are always opposite each other.

Melds are displayed as individual cards, slightly below the top of the meld area, until a Canasta is formed. When a Canasta is formed, the cards forming it are grouped into the natural cards (and the wild cards, if any) and displayed at the top of the meld area. The example below (sorted by length) shows a Pure Canasta of Aces, a Mixed Canasta comprised of five Jacks and two wild cards, a pure meld of Sixes, and a mixed meld of Kings. Note that the wild cards are always displayed behind the natural cards when both types are contained within a meld or Canasta.



To further delineate Canasta types, the Canastas are displayed, by default, with a color tinting (green for Pure, yellow for Mixed) - this may be suppressed via the [card preferences](#).

Extended Canastas (when permitted according to the corresponding rule preference) will display the extra cards individually. The addition of a wild card to a Pure Canasta will transform it to a Mixed Canasta (and the color tint will change accordingly).

If you cannot recall what cards comprise the melded Canastas, you may select "[Canasta Details](#)" from the

[Explore Menu](#). Also, if you have specified that card tinting be suppressed via the card preferences, you may click on the corresponding [shortcut button](#) to temporarily turn it on and off.

3.2 Using The Mouse

Canasta supports both "[Drag and Drop](#)" and "[Point and Click](#)" mouse operations. Point and Click operations are performed by single clicking.

For both methods of mouse operation, actions take effect when the mouse button is released, and are ignored if the mouse button is released in a different area from where it was depressed when the "No Drop" cursor is showing. The only exception is when taking cards from the discard pile or the stock, in these instances the card(s) will move to the player's hand if the mouse button is released under the "No Drop" cursor.

For Point and Click operation:

- The [left mouse](#) button is used for all game operations except that of discarding from your hand.
- The [right mouse](#) button is normally used to discard from your hand, although you may use the "Alt" key with the left button if you prefer. If "[Play Protect](#)" is selected, the PopUp menu displayed over the player's hand will include play confirmation as the first option.

Double-clicking is not supported within Canasta, with the exception that you may double-click on a card in your hand in order to select it and [meld](#) it in one action. If other cards are selected when a card is double-clicked, the selected group is melded.

The MultiSelect and AutoMeld features enable you to select and meld multiple cards in a single action. (These features may be disabled via the [player preference](#) settings if you find that they interfere with your preferred method of mouse operation; disabling AutoMeld removes the ability to perform double-click melding)

To select multiple cards, click down on a card in your hand with the right mouse button and then, with the button down, drag the mouse pointer across your cards sideways. The group of cards traversed will be automatically highlighted as being selected. When you release the mouse button, that group of selected cards will be melded to the mat - provided that it forms a valid meld. You may traverse left and right to select/deselect more of the cards. If you move the mouse off the cards and then release the button, the selection will be cleared.

If the [Opponent Preference](#) setting to permit "Quick Peek" is enabled, you may click down on the opponent's cards to view them face up. When you release the mouse button, the cards will return to be face down.

Right-clicking on the scoresheet is a shortcut to the [Scoring Preference](#) settings, and right-clicking on the rules panel (or under the stock if the rules panel is not displayed) is a shortcut to the [Rules Preference](#) settings. Right-clicking on a melded card will display a tool-tip which describes the card - this is useful if it is partly concealed. Elsewhere, a right-click will display a convenient Pop-Up of common menu options.

The [AutoMouse](#) features may be enabled to move the mouse automatically between the stock and the player area and/or to and from the message and information windows.

3.3 Drag and Drop

"Drag and Drop" mouse operations are performed by clicking down on the mouse button above the card to be moved, dragging the mouse pointer to the destination, and then releasing the mouse button.

Unless the "Suppress Card Animation" [animation preference](#) has been selected, the card will be dragged with the mousepointer - in which case the left side of the card denotes the specific drop position instead of the horizontal position of the mousepointer itself. In order to provide leeway when dragging cards, the overall position of the card within the screen is considered when determining the intended drop area. In order to be sure that the card is in the desired drop area, watch the changing [mousepointer icon](#).

The valid moves are:

- Stock card(s) to: player's hand
- Discard pile to: player's hand
- Player's hand to: discard pile, meld, another part of player's hand

Cards may be melded from the player's hand singly or as a group. To move as a group, select the cards using the point-and-click method and then drag one of the cards in the group to the meld destination. You may meld cards to an existing meld or form a new meld. To form a new meld, drag to an uncovered part of the mat.

Multiple cards may be selected for melding in one action. To select multiple cards, click down on a card in your hand with the right mouse button and then, with the button down, drag the mouse pointer across your cards sideways. The group of cards traversed will be automatically highlighted as being selected. You may traverse left and right to select/deselect more of the cards. If you return to the card from which you started, no cards will be selected. If you have selected cards in this way, they will be melded automatically when you release the mouse button. You may disable this "MultiSelect" facility (and the associated "AutoMeld" facility) via the [Player Preferences](#).

Note: If you wish to use only the Point-and-Click method of mouse operation, and find that you inadvertently initiate unintentional card movements and playing actions when the mouse is moved with the button down, you may turn off the Drag-and-Drop capabilities via the [Mouse Preferences](#).

3.4 Point and Click

"Point and Click" mouse operations are performed by clicking down and releasing the mouse button on the card to be moved and then clicking down and releasing the mouse button on the destination.

The valid moves are:

- Stock card(s) to player's hand
- Discard pile to player's hand
- Player's hand to: discard pile (right-click), or meld

Cards may be melded from the player's hand singly or as a group. To move as a group, select each of the cards and then click on the meld destination. You may meld cards to an existing meld or form a new meld. To form a new meld, click on an uncovered part of the mat.

Note that the stock card is displayed as soon as you click down on it. When the button is released it will move to the player's hand. Discarding is immediate upon a right click, unless "Discard Protect" is selected under [Player Preferences](#).

3.5 Arranging Your Cards

By default, Canasta automatically sorts and resorts the player's cards when dealt, and when new cards are added to it. The sortation is suit within rank. All sorting is performed in the order: Clubs, Diamonds, Spades, Hearts. This improves color differentiation of adjacently displayed suits.

You may specify, via the [Player Preferences](#), that the cards are to be grouped by rank. In this case, a small gap is placed between the groups of adjacent cards of different ranks.

Alternatively, you may chose to arrange the cards yourself by selecting the "No Sorting" option under Player Preferences. In this case, new cards are always added to the right of the hand.

You may [Drag and Drop](#) cards to the left and right within your hand to order them to your liking at any time. If you do not have the "No Sorting" preference selected, this will be a temporary adjustment for the current turn only.

You may also establish a "reserved" set of cards which remains part of your hand, but is maintained separately to the right side of the main hand. The reserved set is never sorted. To start a reserved set, drag a card past the right side of the hand, and drop it. You may move cards between the reserved set and your hand at any time. Cards can be selected, melded and discarded from the reserve just as they can from the main hand.

Remember that if you click on the left mouse button and release the button without moving the card, the card will be selected for [melding](#).

3.6 Card Interleaving

Card interleaving provides the very realistic appearance of cards sliding into and out of the player's hand. However, the additional graphics processing involved with the display of the card interleaving effects may result in jerky movements and disjointed card display on slower systems, or those with other processor-intensive programs running simultaneously. In such cases the capability may be disabled via the [Animation Preferences](#).

What is Card Interleaving?

Single cards added to the player's hand and single cards leaving the player's hand are displayed in a manner that slides the moved card in or out of the hand, underneath the card to the right of it. Unless automatic player hand sorting has been suppressed via the [Player Preferences](#), a single discard or a card from the deck which is dragged to the player's hand will realistically slide into the correct position if it is dropped in the incorrect sorted location.

Dragging a card within the player's hand (rearranging the order) will similarly maintain the display of the moved card in an realistically interleaved manner, subject to the [TrueSlide preference setting](#) in the Animation Preferences.

By default (if TrueSlide is not selected), when a card is dragged within the area of the player's hand, the other cards in the player's hand will automatically jump to the front or back of the moving card such that the dragged card is always positioned between those that are adjacent to its left side (i.e., over those to the left of it, and under those to the right of it).

What Is TrueSlide?

TrueSlide provides perfectly realistic card sliding, in that cards cannot cut through other cards or jump over or under them. However, this will result in the card disappearing if it is slid horizontally to the right (as it would with an actual spread of playing cards in your hand). For this reason, TrueSlide is not active by default lest it causes confusion.

If TrueSlide is enabled, the recommended method of moving a card within the hand (particularly to the right) is to drag it upwards out of the hand (over the mat) and then drag it back into the hand at the required new position. Because the card was completely withdrawn from the hand, its new interleaved position will be at the point of vertical re-entry to the hand. The point of re-entry is defined by the card's leading moving edge - i.e. the right side if it is moving to the right on re-entry, the left side if it is moving to the left.

If TrueSlide is enabled and a card is dragged to the left so that it is completely visible, its new interleaved position at any time will be defined by its right edge (as this would logically slide under the left edge of the card to its immediate right).

During the TrueSlide drag operation, the right mouse button may be clicked (while the left button performing the drag remains down) in order to momentarily override the effect of TrueSlide. This action will therefore pop the dragged card into a visible interleaved state between the adjacent cards at its current horizontal position. You may also press and hold down the right mouse button while continuing to drag with the left button, in which case TrueSlide is overridden until you release the right mouse button.

TrueSlide summary:

- A card cannot slice through other cards, only between them.
- A card moved to the right in the hand will slide behind the cards to the right of it (and then not be visible unless its upper edge is partly over the table or is over an uncovered area of the table within the player's hand area).

- A card moved to the left which is currently visible will remain fully visible as it traverses and covers the cards to the left of it.
- A card moved to the left which is not currently visible (because it is behind the other cards in the hand) will slide on top of the next card to the left which has its right-edge to the left of the card being moved.

3.7 Mousepointer Icons

Canasta uses a set of informative mousepointer icons, which change depending upon where the mouse is located and what [Drag and Drop](#) operation is currently being performed.

The normal pointer is slightly larger than the standard Windows mousepointer and the mousepointers are colored so that they are easier to see when over a card images.

The meaning of each icon is shown below:



Normal pointer. Awaiting your action.



Canasta is working. Please wait.



Your actions are restricted (for example, because your online opponent is thinking). Some menu and shortcut button operations are available.



You may discard the card here. Release the mouse button to do so.



You may drop the card here (player's hand or meld). Release the mouse button to do so.



You are dragging a card from the discard pile. Icon will change to drop when the card is in a valid dropping position.



You may not drop the card here. If you release the mouse button, the card will go to the player's hand



Card selected for shifting within player's hand. Move to required position and release button.

Note the difference between the drop (right facing) and discard (left facing) icons. This facilitates ensuring the mouse is in the correct position for discarding or melding.

If you experience flickering problem when using the special mousepointers, you may disable them via the [Animation Preferences](#).

3.8 The Scoresheet

The information on the scoresheet to the right of the mat is displayed as follows:

The scores for each completed round are added the scoresheet at the end of the round.

Running totals are displayed in italics. The running totals of points melded in the current round, and the running totals of bonus and penalty points accrued are displayed at the bottom of the scoresheet. The upper of these two lines being the meld points and the lower being the bonus/penalty points. (If the "Pure Melds" [rule preference](#) is active, the opponent's bonus points do not include any pending penalties for Aces and Sevens in hand, since this would provide unfair information regarding the cards in the opponent's hand.)

If the scoresheet is about to become full, earlier round scores will be consolidated into a single line, displayed in bold font.

Because the scoresheet is facing the player, it is maintained from the player's perspective - hence the player is "Me" and the opponent is "You".

Select [Round Scores](#) under the [View Menu](#) to see the full details (including date and skill level) of all rounds of the current game. These round scores are always shown individually, even if some have been consolidated on the scoresheet to make more room (see above).

3.9 Status Bar Counters

The following counters are displayed in the status bar:

Stock: The number of card remaining in the stock, plus the number of cards within the discard pile in parentheses. Unless the "Show Who Deal" [Dealing Preference](#) has been deselected, an indicator of who dealt the current round is also displayed as a small green box in the upper (opponent dealt) or lower (player dealt) part of the status display.

Status: Current status, unless the player and opponent game counters (see below) are being displayed in the status bar. Also error messages (click on an error message to dismiss it).

Player (if set in [Screen Preferences](#)): The number of prior games won by the player.

Opponent (if set in Screen Preferences): The opponent skill level and the number of prior games won by the opponent.

Round: The current round number within the current game, plus the turn number within the current round in parentheses.

Open: The threshold number of points required in order to play your initial meld(s), unless the [Player Preference](#) to display the net value has been enabled. You may left-click on this counter display as a shortcut to the "[Opening Scenario](#)" entry of the [Assist Menu](#). You may right-click to temporarily switch between total requirement and net requirement.

If the "Opening Ability Tint" Player Preference is selected, this display will show a highlighted background as follows:

- Green if you currently have sufficient points in hand,
- Yellow if you would have sufficient after taking the discard pile,
- Blue if you can "splash" open with a Canasta, or
- Red if you cannot yet open.

As you lay down each of your initial melds, the counter is reduced accordingly until it reaches zero, whereby it changes to "Melding". Thereafter, if the corresponding "Warning That The Opponent May Go Out" [Player Preference](#) is selected, the background will be tinted yellow

(moderate possibility) or magenta (high possibility) if the logic calculates that the opponent might go out on the next turn. The logic used is the same as that for determining an [opponent hand prediction](#).

Note: If you enable both the "Opening Ability Tint" and the "Warning That The Opponent May Go Out" preferences, the latter tint will appear as a small box at the right side of the "Open:" counter if you have not yet opened.

Hand: The total points value of the cards in your hand, plus the net points value in parentheses. (The net points value is the total points value of the cards in your hand, less the points so far melded in this round, less the net bonus/penalty points accrued. This represents the round score you would achieve if the opponent were to go out on their next turn.)

Goal: The number of points required in order to win a game.

3.10 Shortcut Buttons

The following buttons in the status bar provide shortcuts to certain menu operations.



Query Symbol: Click to get assistance on what you can do at this point of your turn.



Light Bulb: Click to get a hint.



Undo Turn: Click to undo the current round to one of your previous turns. (Equivalent to "Undo Previous Turn" under the [Player Menu](#).)



Undo: Left-click to undo your highlighted cards or your most recent melding action (if no cards are highlighted), or right-click to undo your current turn (including the taking of the discard pile, if applicable) and start over. Note that you cannot undo taking a new card from the stock. This button corresponds to the "[Undo Last Action](#)" and "[Undo Turn](#)" items under the [Player Menu](#).



Cannot Undo: There is nothing to undo at this time.



Cannot Undo: There is nothing to undo at this time. (This version of the icon is shown if the "Undo Turn" facility is disabled in the [Player Preferences](#).)



Group Cards By Rank: Click to display player's cards with a gap between groups of cards of the same rank; right-click to disable automatic sorting.



Do Not Group Cards: Click to display player's cards with no gap spacing; right-click to disable automatic sorting.



Sort Disabled: Right-click to re-enable automatic sorting and revert to the above grouping option buttons. The above correspond to [player preferences](#).



Meld Display Order is "As Played": Left-click for "Sorted By Length".



Meld Display Order is "Sorted By Length": Left-click for "Sorted By Rank".



Meld Display Order is "Sorted By Rank": Left-click for "Fixed Positions".



Meld Display Order is "Fixed Positions": Left-click for "As Played".

The small icon corner indicator shows the current display mode.

You may right-click on this button to bring up a selection box showing all four modes for direct selection.



Tint Canastas and Frozen/Blocked Discard Piles: Click to tint such cards.



Suppress Card Tinting: Click to suppress all card tinting.



Waiting As Host (Online Play): A reminder that you are awaiting a guest connection. Click to disconnect



Chat (Online Play): Click to open the chat window in order to communicate with your online opponent.

An alternative set of shortcut buttons are displayed when [AutoStep](#) is active.

Where a shortcut button is associated with a Preference setting, the change is not saved. You must change the setting via the [preference settings](#) if you wish a change to be saved permanently.

3.11 The Toolbar

The toolbar (enabled or disabled via the [Screen Preferences](#)) may be displayed under the menu bar or on the left side of the main window.

The toolbar buttons provide shortcuts to items within the menus, plus three sound toggle buttons for music, speech and sound effects.

The sound toggles are displayed by default if the corresponding sound type is enabled and permit you to temporarily mute (suppress) and unmute (hear) the corresponding sound type. The effect of the toggle buttons is temporary and does not alter the saved preferences setting (i.e., enabled or not enabled) for that sound type.

The default toolbar contains reduced selection of the more commonly used menu items.

You may also select the use of the "all buttons" screen preference, in which case buttons representing almost all menu items will be displayed (except the Assist and Explore menus and operations accessed via the [Shortcut Buttons](#)). These will usually extend beyond the right-side of the toolbar (or the bottom of the toolbar if "show on left side is selected) unless your window size is sufficiently large to show them all. The extra buttons also include buttons to switch to the other MeggieSoft Games, but only those buttons for the other games which are installed on your computer will be visible .

Selecting the "show on left side" option displays the toolbar on the side, rather than the top, of the window. This might be more convenient for some users, particularly if the ability to use larger card sizes is restricted due to the reduced table and mat heights when the toolbar is at the top .

You may customize the toolbar by double-clicking or right-clicking on it, or by using the "customize toolbar" button. This permits you to remove buttons, change the display sequence of the buttons, and insert and remove separators. If you remove buttons, you may add them back by again customizing the toolbar, or chose "Reset" to re-add all buttons. (The "Help" button in the customization dialog window is intentionally inoperative.)

Customizations of each of the toolbars (with and without extra buttons) are saved separately between sessions. This means that if you have customized either toolbar it will be restored as it was customized when you next select or deselect the "all buttons" preference.

3.12 Visual and Sound Effects

Canasta provides a number of visual effects and sound effects to improve realism and enhance your playing pleasure. These are:

- Rounded card corners
- Customizable color schemes
- "Wallpaper" effects for the main table window and the mat
- Animation and visual card dragging
- Custom card-style [mousepointers](#)
- MIDI, MP3 and WMA music support
- Sound effects

- Synthesized speech output

The above may be selected, customized, and deselected via [preference settings](#).

Note that these effects make intensive use of processor and graphics resources and can reduce responsiveness on slower or less graphics-capable systems. If you find Canasta's interface to be sluggish, you should experiment with disabling some of the visual and sound effects.

4 Menus & Preferences

The following drop-down menus are available:

[Game Menu](#)
[Online Menu](#)
[Player Menu](#)
[Preferences Menu](#)
[View Menu](#)
[Assist Menu](#)
[Admin Menu](#)
[Help Menu](#)

In addition, a Pop-Up menu is provided for easy access to commonly used menu items:

[Pop-Up Menu](#)

4.1 Game Menu

The following selections are available under the Game Menu:

[Restart Round](#)
[Restart Game](#)
[Redeal Fresh Game](#)
[Replicate Game](#)
[Switch To Euchre & Écarté](#)
[Switch To German Whist](#)
[Switch To Gin Rummy](#)
[Switch To Pinochle & Bezique](#)
[Switch To Piquet](#)
[Terminate](#) (if special "On Exit" [Operational Preference](#) is selected)
[Exit](#)

Each of the "Switch To ..." menu items is only shown if the corresponding game is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta. If you use these frequently, you may care to select one of the "On Exit/Sleep" options within the [Operational Preferences](#) for all the games you have installed. In this case, each game will sleep in the background when you switch from it and will re-awaken immediately when you switch back to it (i.e., without the loading delay).

All of the above selections will ask "Are You Sure?" before taking the corresponding action. These confirmation requests may be suppressed by selecting the applicable [Message Preference](#).

4.1.1 Restart Round

Select this menu option to restart the current round. Canasta will abandon the current round and restart it from the beginning, with the cards in the same start order.

4.1.2 Restart Game

Select this menu option to restart the current game with the same deal. Canasta will abandon the current game, reset all counters and scores, and redeal the game (without reshuffling). If you wish to restart the game with a fresh shuffle, select "[Restart Fresh Game](#)" instead of "Replay Game".

This action restarts only the current game. If you want to replicate the deal of the immediately previous game use "[Replicate Game](#)". You may also make a selection under the "[Game Scores](#)" option of the [View Menu](#) to replicate from an even earlier game.

4.1.3 Redeal Fresh Game

Select this menu option to restart the current game with a fresh deal. Canasta will abandon the current game, reset all counters and scores, and shuffle the cards into a different start order before dealing.

This option is not available during tournament play (use [Restart Game](#) instead).

This action redeals only the current game. Thus, if you are currently on game 3, the play will restart at round 1 of game 3.

If you want to start the current game again with the same deal, select "Restart Game".

If you want to start over from the beginning of game 1, select "[Reset Scoreboard](#)".

4.1.4 Replicate Game

Select this menu option to replay your most recent previously completed game, with the same card deal as was used for that game.

Canasta will abandon the current game, reset all counters and scores, and arrange the cards in the order they were at the beginning of the previous game before dealing.

All subsequent rounds of the new game will also be dealt with the deck ordered as it was in the corresponding round of the previous game.

This option is obviously not available during Game 1.

To replicate a game other than the previous game, you may do this via the "[Game Scores](#)" option under the [View Menu](#).

4.1.5 Switch To Euchre & Écarté

Select this menu option to exit Canasta and automatically start Euchre & Écarté for the same player.

If the player name does not currently have a Euchre & Écarté scoreboard file, Euchre & Écarté will automatically create one and inform you that it has done so.

If you switch part way through a round, remember that Canasta only saves the scores of games and rounds completed, unless the "AutoStart - Restore" option is selected under [Operational Preferences](#).

Note: This option is only shown if Euchre & Écarté is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta.

4.1.6 Switch To German Whist

Select this menu option to exit Canasta and automatically start German Whist for the same player.

If the player name does not currently have a German Whist scoreboard file, German Whist will automatically create one and inform you that it has done so.

If you switch part way through a round, remember that Canasta only saves the scores of games and rounds completed, unless the "AutoStart - Restore" option is selected under [Operational Preferences](#).

Note: This option is only shown if German Whist is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta.

4.1.7 Switch To Gin Rummy

Select this menu option to exit Canasta and automatically start Gin Rummy for the same player.

If the player name does not currently have a Gin Rummy scoreboard file, Gin Rummy will automatically create one and inform you that it has done so.

If you switch part way through a round, remember that Canasta only saves the scores of games and rounds completed, unless the "AutoStart - Restore" option is selected under [Operational Preferences](#).

Note: This option is only shown if Gin Rummy is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta.

4.1.8 Switch To Pinochle & Bezique

Select this menu option to exit Canasta and automatically start Pinochle & Bezique for the same player.

If the player name does not currently have a Pinochle & Bezique scoreboard file, Pinochle & Bezique will automatically create one and inform you that it has done so.

If you switch part way through a round, remember that Canasta only saves the scores of games and rounds completed, unless the "AutoStart - Restore" option is selected under [Operational Preferences](#).

Note: This option is only shown if Pinochle & Bezique is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta.

4.1.9 Switch To Piquet

Select this menu option to exit Canasta and automatically start Piquet for the same player.

If the player name does not currently have a Piquet scoreboard file, Piquet will automatically create one and inform you that it has done so.

If you switch part way through a round, remember that Canasta only saves the scores of games and rounds completed, unless the "AutoStart - Restore" option is selected under [Operational Preferences](#).

Note: This option is only shown if Piquet is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta.

4.1.10 Switch To Rummy 500

Select this menu option to exit Canasta and automatically start Rummy 500 for the same player.

If the player name does not currently have a Rummy 500 scoreboard file, Rummy 500 will automatically create

one and inform you that it has done so.

If you switch part way through a round, remember that Canasta only saves the scores of games and rounds completed, unless the "AutoStart - Restore" option is selected under [Operational Preferences](#).

Note: This option is only shown if Rummy 500 is found to be installed in the same filefolder/directory as Canasta.

4.1.11 Terminate

This menu item is shown if you have selected a special "On Exit" [Operational Preference](#) which places Canasta in a background "sleep" state instead of being terminated when it is exited normally.

Select "Terminate" to force Canasta to terminate instead of sleeping as a background process.

4.1.12 Exit

Terminates the session and exits from Canasta.

Canasta automatically saves the scores of games and rounds completed, together with the state of a partially completed round, unless the "AutoRestore" option is deselected under [Operational Preferences](#).

If AutoRestore is deselected then, before exiting, Canasta asks if you want to save the updated scoreboard for the current player, if it has changed since it was last saved.

- If you respond "Yes", Canasta will save the scores of all previous games and the scores of the rounds of the current game (if not yet completed) for the current player. When this player next plays Canasta, this information will be restored automatically and play will proceed from the start of the same game number and round number.
- If you respond "No", the scoreboard information will not be updated and when the current player next plays Canasta, the situation will be as it was previously.

If, when you next play Canasta, you start part way through an unfinished game (e.g., round four) and you wish to restart from round one of the game, use the "[Replay Game](#)" option.

If you have selected a special "On Exit" [Operational Preference](#) which places Canasta in a background "sleep" state instead of being terminated, this menu item is displayed as "Exit (Sleep)".

4.2 Online Menu

The following menu entries support [Online Play](#):

[Online Preferences](#)
[Preference Alignment](#)
[Find A Partner](#)
[Direct Host](#)
[Direct Guest](#)
[Chat](#)
[AutoPilot \(optional\)](#)
[Online Status](#)
[Disconnect](#)

4.2.1 Preference Alignment

There are a number of deal, rule, and scoring preferences that must match those of your online opponent for online play to operate. A description of how the matching process is negotiated is described under "[Online Preference Agreement](#)".

The initial default is that all of the critical online preferences are disabled. Thus when you start an online game, the corresponding preference settings are turned off until you disconnect from the online session.

The preference alignment menu option permits you to define one or more of the critical preferences that you would prefer to enforce for your online games. If your candidate opponent has different preference alignment settings, the negotiation process may, or may not, result in acceptance of these. Therefore, if you were to have many of these preferences enabled, you may find it harder to find an online opponent prepared to agree to them all.

The preference alignment window includes two buttons in addition to the "OK" button. The "Clear" button clears the selection, while the "=Offline" button sets the selection to be the same as your current normal (offline) preference settings.

The same alignment window is shown if you decide to [adjust](#) your alignment preferences for the benefit of a particular negotiation. In this case, any changes made will apply only to the current online session. When in adjustment mode, the differences are displayed in colored boldface; green indicating a preference that the online opponent has selected but you have not, and red indicating a preference that you have selected but the opponent has not. If you wish to fully align the highlighted preferences check the green items and uncheck the red items.

4.2.2 Find A Partner

When you want play online, the first step (after completing the [online preferences](#)) is to connect to an opponent.

If you do not have a pre-arranged opponent for a [direct online session](#), you may seek your opponent via the MeggieSoft Games Online Forum.

The two parties in a session are termed "host" and "guest". A "guest" is a user who connects to a "host" (one who is already online and waiting). Thus the host is the user who prepares to accept a connection which a guest will complete.

When you select "Find A Partner", you will be connected to the forum and a list of waiting hosts will be displayed. Click on one of these and then click on the "Connect" button to inform the host that you are ready to play. The online game will commence as soon as the host accepts your response.

If there are no waiting hosts listed in the forum, you may click the "Be A Host" button to list yourself in the forum as a waiting host. You may then continue to play in local (human versus machine) mode until someone accepts your invitation.

For more detailed information, see "[Forum Pairing](#)".

4.2.3 Direct Host

Click the Direct Host menu option to initiate a [Direct Online Session](#). Your current IP address and port number will be displayed. This information will be needed by the guest for a successful connection to be completed.

When you have dismissed the confirming dialog box (assuming you don't withdraw), your computer will be actively listening for a connection, and a pulsating watch icon will be displayed in the status bar to remind you.

4.2.4 Direct Guest

Click the Direct Guest menu option to connect to a [Direct Online Session](#). The host must already be waiting and have informed you of the IP address and port number to which you are to connect. Enter this information, and click on "Connect".

4.2.5 Chat

At any time during online play either player may contact the other via an online chat window. Select "Chat" under the Online Menu, or click on the chat [shortcut button](#) which will have been added to the status bar. The online chat window will then appear.

To send a message to your opponent, type it in the box at the bottom of the chat window and click on "Send". What you send will be echoed in the conversation history window. You may then wait, or click on "Hide" to hide the online chat window.

If the online chat window is hidden (or you have not yet invoked it), it will automatically appear if your online opponent sends you a message or replies to your message.

4.2.6 AutoPilot

The optional "AutoPilot" menu entry may be enabled via "[Online Preferences](#)". By default it is not visible. If enabled, it is only operable when it is your turn to play.

AutoPilot operates similarly to the offline [AutoPlay](#) feature in that your online moves will be made for you automatically. To turn the AutoPilot off, select the menu entry again (it will be captioned "AutoPilot Off").

The AutoPilot is not intended as a means to cheat on your online opponents, but as a facility you might use to keep the online game running if you are called away for a few minutes.

The AutoPilot was created to facilitate the development and testing of the MeggieSoft Games online features and is included in the released versions for your convenience.

4.2.7 Online Status

This provides an information display of your current online status, including (as applicable): the names and IP addresses of you and your opponent, whether you are disconnected, connected, or waiting as a host, the port number used, and your playing position (host or guest).

4.2.8 Disconnect

This will disconnect you from online activity. If you are currently playing against a remote opponent, the opponent will be immediately informed that you have disconnected.

Abrupt disconnection may deter the opponent from choosing you as a partner in the future. Good protocol is to disconnect only after the end of a game, or by using the chat facility to advise the opponent of your intention to disconnect. Alternatively, you might [chat](#) at the beginning of the session to agree upon the number of games that will be played.

4.3 Player Menu

The following selections are available under the Player Menu:

[Change Name](#)
[Add/Remove Player](#)
[Save Scoreboard](#)
[Reset Scoreboard](#)
[Undo Last Action](#)
[Undo Turn](#)
[Undo Previous Turn](#)

In addition, if more than one player name has been created using "Add Player" , the menu will contain a "Switch to..." selection for each of the other players. This facilitates one-click switching between players.

4.3.1 Change Name

Select this menu option to change your player name.

Initially, the player name is "Player". You may choose any name that it is legitimate to add, as described under [Add/Switch Player](#). Generally this would be your first name or a one word nickname.

When you change your name, all scoreboard, game history and preferences settings are preserved under the new name.

4.3.2 Add/Remove Player

Select this menu option to add a new player, to switch to another player, or to remove a player.

Add: When you first use Canasta, the only player is "Player". Use the "Add" button to add more players. When you select the "Add" button, a sub-window will appear, into which you will enter the name for the new player. Press "OK" to create a scoreboard for the new player. Enter players' names as 1-8 letters and numbers. Spaces, punctuation marks, and special characters are not permitted. Irrespective of how you specify upper and lower case, Canasta will always display the player names in lower case with the first letter capitalized. You may have up to 12 named players at any time.

Switch: Select the incoming player name, and press the "Switch" button. You may select any named player except yourself (the current player). When switching players, you will first be asked if the scoreboard for the outgoing player is to be saved, if it has changed since it was last saved.

Remove: Select the player name to be removed, and press the "Remove" button. You may select any named player except yourself (the current player). You will be asked to confirm that the player is to be removed, after which the scoreboard file and the saved options for the player will be permanently deleted from your system.

The Switch facility described above is primarily for switching to a newly added player. The quickest way to switch to another existing player is by selecting the "Switch to <name>" entry in the player menu.

4.3.3 Save Scoreboard

Select this menu option to perform an immediate save of the current scoreboard status (games and rounds) for the current player.

This option is useful if you are enjoying an extended session of Canasta and don't want to wait until you [exit](#) Canasta, or [change players](#), before your updated scoreboard status is safely saved to disk.

4.3.4 Reset Scoreboard

Select this menu option to reset your game scoreboard to zero. The game counter will return to game number 1.

If you are part way through a game, the scores of the previous rounds of the game are not cleared. Thus you can make the current game the first of your new scoreboard.

The previously saved copy of your scoreboard is not erased by this action. You must use the "[Save Scoreboard](#)" option to replace the previous scoreboard with the new one.

If you clear the scoreboard and decide you would have preferred not to have done so, [exit](#) Canasta (or [change players](#)) and respond "No" when asked if the updated scoreboard is to be saved.

4.3.5 Undo Last Action

This option is enabled when you have taken from the discard pile or have started melding cards during your turn.

Select this option to clear the highlighted cards (if any), otherwise to undo the most recent melding action.

You may use "[Undo Turn](#)" to undo your entire current turn; this being all melding actions plus the taking of discards, if applicable.

The [status bar](#) "undo" button (using the left mouse-button) may be used as a shortcut to this action.

4.3.6 Undo Turn

Select this option to undo your current turn and start it again.

This option is only enabled during your turn. You cannot undo the opponent's turn, nor your previous turns. You cannot return a seen card to the stock. Once you have discarded, you cannot turn back. Thus, the undo feature only permits what a reasonable human opponent would permit.

If you started your turn by taking a new card from the stock, that card will not be returned to the stock (because you have already seen it). You will restart your turn from immediately after you took the card.

If you started your turn by taking the discard pile, that card, or those cards, will be returned to the discard pile and you will restart your turn by taking from the stock, or retaking the discard pile. If you take from the stock, you will incur a 50 point penalty (deselectable via the [scoring preferences](#)) for having taken and returned the discard pile.

If you have highlighted cards in your hand, the undo option will deselect them - even if there is nothing else to undo.

If you have started melding cards in the current turn, you may use "[Undo Last Action](#)" to undo just the last melding action.

The [status bar](#) "undo" button (using the right mouse-button) may be used as a shortcut to this action.

4.3.7 Undo Previous Turn

Select this option to undo the current round to one of your previous turns. A selection box is displayed, from which you may choose to return to any of your previous turns.

Once you have returned to a previous turn, you must continue from that point.

This feature is provide as a practice and skill development aid in order to answer the question: "What if I had done something different?"

There is a small overhead in respect of saving the status at each turn. If this overhead is noticeable, or if you wish to disable the "Undo Turn" feature for any other reason, you may do this via the [Player Preferences](#).

4.4 Preferences Menu

You may customize Canasta to your taste by selecting from the Preferences menu. When the preferences panel is visible, you may switch to any of the other sections. If you want your changes to be saved for future sessions, ensure that the "Save Properties" box is checked. Preferences are saved separately for each player.

- [Animation Preferences](#)
- [Card Preferences](#)
- [Card Back Preferences](#)
- [Color Preferences](#)
- [Dealing Preferences](#)
- [Game Preferences](#)
- [Message Preferences](#)
- [Mouse Preferences](#)
- [Music Preferences](#)
- [Online Preferences](#)
- [Opponent Preferences](#)
- [Player Preferences](#)
- [QuickSet Preferences](#)
- [Rule Preferences](#)
- [Scoring Preferences](#)
- [Screen Preferences](#)
- [Sound Preferences](#)
- [Speech Preferences](#)

- [Restore Pre-"Safe Mode" Preferences](#)
- [Reset Default Preferences](#)

The tree-structured selection menu may be replaced by the "radio-button" style of earlier versions by checking the "Button Navigator" option at the lower left of the preferences panel.

Note that right-clicking on the scoresheet is a shortcut to the [Scoring Preference](#) settings, and right-clicking on the rules panel (or under the stock if the rules panel is not displayed) is a shortcut to the [Rule Preference](#) settings.

4.4.1 Animation Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Suppress Card Animation: When selected, a card being moved automatically will disappear from the source and reappear at the destination, instead of floating from the source to the destination.

Suppress Animated Card Twisting: When selected, cards do not twist when floating, but are moved flat.

Constant Travel Time: When selected, the duration of each animated card movement is the same. Otherwise, the duration is distance dependent (i.e., cards move at a constant speed).

Animation Speed: Select the flight time duration for when cards are moved automatically from source to destination.

Suppress Card Display: When Dragging: When selected, a dragged card will not be displayed in motion

under the mousepointer.

Suppress Card Interleaving : When selected, card interleaving is suppressed. In this case a dragged card will always fully appear over the top of the other cards in the players hand until the mouse button is released.

Enable TrueSlide : When selected, interleaving is displayed with true realism in that a card being moved will not automatically leap in front and behind the other cards as it traverses the player's hand. See the [Card Interleaving](#) section for more information regarding TrueSlide.

4.4.2 Card Preferences

If you are familiar with others of the MeggieSoft Games, note that the card sizing is one size smaller in Canasta than in the other games. This is to accommodate the larger number of cards on the display and the fact that the melded cards of each rank must be displayed in a single column. Unlike the other games, both the Small and Regular card sizes are distributed as part of Canasta for this reason. Also, the Extra Large cards which are installed as part of the "Plus Pack" are not useable within Canasta.

Card & Font Size: Depending upon the current main window size, you may select the Small or Regular card size. If the required "Plus Pack" card image file exists in the "Cards" subfolder of the installation filefolder, and the window size is sufficiently large, you may also select the optional Large card size. The font size displayed in the main window and the size of the status bar and [shortcut buttons](#) are adjusted when the Large size is selected.

Apply to Dialog Font Size: When selected, the font size of the text displayed in dialog boxes will also be larger when the card size is larger than the regular size.

When Resizing Main Window:

You may specify how the card and font size is to change when you resize the main window (by maximizing it, by dragging an edge or corner, or edge, or by direct selection via the [Screen Preferences](#)):

Do Not Change : The card size will always be as specified, unless the window size is too small to accommodate the selection - in which case it will be reduced appropriately.

AutoSize Per Window Size: The card and font sizes will adjust to the largest possible for the new window size

Deck Design: By default, the "Standard" design is used. However, if you have installed additional card sets (downloadable from the MeggieSoft Games website), you may also select these. The images in many of these sets have been adapted from artistic card designs which were created by, and are owned by, the respective designers of the original decks.

Index Notation : You may select one of a number of European card index notations as an alternative to the standard Anglo-American notation (AKQJ).

Card Display

Select "**True Corners**" for a more realistic card appearance with rounded instead of square corners. This may result in a performance penalty when cards are displayed.

Select "**Wider Hand Spreads**" to display cards in the player's and the opponent's hands with twice the card separation than the default setting. The default is 25% separation (75% overlap) whereas the wider spread is 50% separation (50% overlap). (Note that card separation is dynamically reduced if the hand currently contains too many cards to display at the full 25% or 50% separation.)

Select "**Suppress Canasta Color Tinting**" to remove the tinting (yellow/green) of [melded cards](#).
 Select "**Suppress Discard Pile Color Tinting**" to remove the tinting (light/dark grey) of the [discard pile](#).
 (The on/off state of both types of card tinting may be temporarily changed via the corresponding [shortcut button](#). If either is currently enabled, both will be disabled, If neither is currently enabled, both will be enabled.)

Meld Display

- In Order Created: The melds are displayed from left to right in the order created
- Sorted By Rank: The melds that have been created are displayed from left to right , and sorted in rank

- order
- **Sorted By Length:** The melds that have been created are displayed in order of size. Pure (and Wild) Canastas are leftmost, followed by Mixed Canastas, followed by the other melds in order of decreasing length.
- **In Fixed Rank Columns:** The melds are displayed in fixed rank positions; i.e., the Eights will always appear roughly in the center of the mat and the Aces to the extreme right, irrespective of what other melds have been played. In this mode, the opponent and player melds of the same rank are always opposite each other.

4.4.3 Card Back Preferences

There are six standard card back designs available for each deck design, plus you may use an image file (jpg, bmp or wmf) of your own design or choosing. Click on the Predefined or Custom button to select the type required.

Predefined Card Backs

Use the drop-down Card Back list for the predefined cards associated with the current deck design.

If you have more than the Standard deck design installed, you may also select the card backs from other installed card decks by first selecting the required Deck Design, and then the required Card Back.

If you do not wish your selected card back to change if you select another deck design via the [Card Preferences](#), ensure that the "Link Deck Design to Card Preferences" box is unchecked. When this box is checked, the predefined card back designs automatically change whenever you change the deck design via the Card Preferences.

Custom Card Backs

Select "Browse" to select a custom card design.

Canasta does not provide graphic design capabilities, so it is assumed that you are able to scan, copy, or design any custom image file(s) you require using other tools. You may also use other appropriately sized bitmap files on your system.

The size of the "regular" card image is 71 by 96 pixels. If the image is larger, the File Selector will reduce it to size and, if the aspect ratio of the image is different from that required for the card, will indicate that the image is horizontally or vertically adjustable. In this case, you may click the mouse down on the image and gently drag it so that a hidden or obscured part of the image becomes part of the image display.

Canasta will automatically resize the card back design when card sizes other than "regular" are selected.

If "With Frame" is selected for the custom card back, a white frame will surround the selected image. This usually creates a more attractive card back.

You do not need to add the card boundary (single pixel black line around the edge) or trim the corners. Canasta will do this automatically when it loads the card back image file, which will override your efforts anyway.

4.4.4 Color Preferences

The color preferences are used to provide on-screen adjustment of the colors displayed by Canasta.

First, in the upper part of the window, select the target area for which you want to change the color. The current color is displayed below the "Target" selection frame. If the target allows you to change both the text and the background colors, select the one desired.

Second, click on the "New Color" button to select the color to which you require to change the target. The

standard Windows color selection window will be displayed. You will return to the color control window after you have made your new selection.

If you wish to preview the effect of the change, click the "Preview" button. The revised color scheme will be dynamically displayed "on-screen" in the main Canasta window. If you cancel the preferences window after previewing, the previous color scheme will be reinstated.

The "Reset" selection frame allows you to set all colors to how they were before you selected "Preferences", or to the Canasta default color scheme.

4.4.5 Dealing Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Cut For Deal: (Not available when Tournament Dealing is selected.) When selected, each new game will start with a cut for deal and the starter option applies only to rounds.

Starter: Select either that the starting player of games and rounds is to alternate, or that the loser of the previous game or round starts the next game or round.

No Initial Discard Pile: When selected, the deal does not deal a card to start the discard pile. Thus the first player must start by taking from the stock. (This is the normal rule for Modern American Canasta.)

Deal 13 Cards: When selected, the deal is thirteen cards to each player instead of the two-player Classic Canasta default of fifteen cards. (Thirteen cards is the normal rule for Modern American Canasta.)

Deal Talons: When selected, the deal also deals two "talons" of four cards and three cards respectively. These remain face-down to the right side of the mat until the players make their initial melds. The first to meld receives the four-card talon after discarding; the second to meld receives the three-card talon after discarding. (This is the normal rule for Modern American Canasta.)

Tournament Dealing: Canasta will always deal the same sequence of cards for a given game number, depending upon the selected sequence number. Thus, two or more player names set to the same sequence number preference can separately play identical hands for each game number as a [tournament](#).

Quick Deal: When selected, cards are dealt as a block instead of individually. This speeds up the display at the start of the game, at the expense of realism.

Quiet Deal: When selected, cards are dealt individually but the Place Card sound effect is inhibited. This speeds up the display.

Show Who Dealt: When selected (the default), the dealer of the current round is indicated in the left side of the status bar as a small green box in the upper (opponent dealt) or lower (player dealt) part of the status display.

4.4.6 Game Preferences

The following preferences are available:

AutoDeal: When selected, the "Deal" button will not appear in the status bar at the start of each round. Note that preference changes before the start of a round may only be made when the "Deal" button is displayed.

AutoResume: When selected (as is the default), Canasta will remember which player was playing when it exits, and will automatically resume for that player when Canasta is next run.

AutoRestore: When selected (as is the default), the state of a game in progress is automatically saved with the scoreboard and is automatically restored when the player next plays Canasta.

AutoStep - Full Cycle Step: By default, [AutoStep](#) plays one turn for either the player or opponent for each click of the step button. When the Full Cycle Step option is selected, each click of the button plays one cycle of player turn followed by opponent turn, ending at the next player turn.

Minimize Window: By default, minimizing the window will follow the normal Windows practice of continuing to show the Window icon and description as a button in the Windows taskbar, from which it may be restored. You may specify alternative behaviors if you wish:

Minimize As Tray Icon: When the main window is minimized, an icon will appear in the Windows tray (the area at the bottom left of the screen which contains the clock). The normal taskbar button is not displayed in this case. Click on the tray icon to restore the Canasta window, or right-click on the tray icon to terminate the program.

Minimize To Background: When the main window is minimized, all visible references to it are removed and Canasta is "sleeping" in the background. To re-awaken, merely run Canasta again as usual, in which case the sleeping process will be re-activated.

On Exit: By default, exiting Canasta (by whatever means, including switching to one on the other MeggieSoft Games) will follow the normal Windows practice of terminating the program execution. You may specify alternative behaviors if you wish:

Sleep As Tray Icon: Instead of terminating, Canasta stays in the background in a sleeping mode and an icon is displayed in the tray. To re-awaken, click on the tray icon, or right-click on the tray icon to terminate the program.

Background Sleep: Instead of terminating, Canasta stays in the background in a sleeping mode and all visible references to it are removed. To re-awaken, merely run Canasta again as usual, in which case the sleeping process will be re-activated.

The "Minimize Window" and "On Exit" preferences are system-wide (they apply to all users of your computer). They provide convenient methods of placing Canasta in the background so that Canasta may be swiftly re-awoken when you want to play again.

- If you "minimize to background" or "exit to background sleep", you will need to re-run Canasta to re-awaken it.
- If you "minimize as tray icon" or "sleep as tray icon", you will need to click on the tray icon to restore/re-awaken Canasta.
- If you "minimize as tray icon" or "sleep as tray icon", you may right-click on the tray icon and select "Terminate" to terminate the process execution completely.
- If you have enabled one of the alternative "On Exit" preferences, a "Terminate" item entry will be shown the [Game Menu](#) in order to bypass the specified "On Exit" behavior.
- The operational difference between minimizing and exiting (whether to tray or background) is that exiting will save the scoreboard and game status (providing AutoRestore is enabled).
- If you use the special "Minimize Window" and "On Exit" preferences, the recommended combination is to minimize as tray icon and exit to background sleep.

4.4.7 Message Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Display Error Box: When selected, error messages displayed by Canasta are shown as dialog boxes (with an "OK" button) instead of in the status bar.

Suppress Tool Tips: When selected, Tool Tips are not displayed when the mouse is positioned over one of the [shortcut buttons](#) in the status bar.

Suppress "Are You Sure?" for Game Menu Items: When selected, these messages are not displayed when games and rounds are to be redealt/restarted/replicated and for Switch/Exit/Terminate. In such cases these [game menu](#) actions are immediate when the menu item, or corresponding toolbar icon, is selected.

Suppress Status Messages: When selected, status messages are not displayed in the status bar during play. Error messages will continue to be displayed as appropriate. Note that opting to have game scores displayed in the status bar automatically suppresses status messages.

No Start Reminders: When selected, the reminder of who starts the next round or game is suppressed.

No Bell: When selected, the bell/beep sound associated with errors is suppressed. It is recommended that the "Display Error Box" option be selected in this situation so that error messages don't go unnoticed.

4.4.8 Mouse Preferences

The following preferences are available:

AutoMouse - Cards: When selected, the mouse pointer automatically moves: (i) to your hand when you take a new card from the stock or you take one or more cards from the discard pile, and (ii) back to the stock after you discard.

AutoMouse - Dialogs: When selected, the mouse pointer automatically moves to any message or information windows which are displayed and, if "AutoMouse - Cards" is also selected, back to the player's hand or the stock after the dialog window is dismissed. Some mouse drivers and add-in utilities also perform this function. Therefore this is a separately selectable option within Canasta.

Use Windows Mouse Pointers: When selected, the standard Windows mouse pointers are used instead of the special MeggieSoft Games [mousepointer icons](#) used by Canasta.

Use MeggieSoft Games Mouse Pointers: When selected, the special MeggieSoft Games [mouse pointers](#) are used.

... **in black & white:** when selected, the MeggieSoft Games mouse pointers are displayed in monochrome instead of in color.

... **without online indicators:** when selected, the offline MeggieSoft Games mouse pointers are always displayed, even when you are online.

Disable Card Drag And Drop: When selected the ability to move cards via [drag-and-drop](#) mouse operation is suppressed. In this case, all mouse operations will be performed by the [point-and-click](#) method. This preference is provided for users who find that the drag-and-drop capabilities are inadvertently interfering with their preferred use of point-and-click if the mouse is moved with the button down.

4.4.9 Music Preferences

This preference panel permits you to enable and disable the playing of MIDI, MP3 and WMA music files and to specify the music file(s) to be played. MeggieSoft Games does not distribute music files, but Canasta will automatically select the first MIDI file found in your windows\media or windows filefolder as the default (if one is found).

If your system has difficulty playing music and other sounds simultaneously, either do not enable the music feature, or do not enable sound and speech features.

When music is playing, you may also select the "[Music Status](#)" option of the [View Menu](#) to display the name of the file being played, to skip to the next music file in the filefolder, or stop the music.

To change the music file from that displayed, press "Browse..." and select the required MIDI, MP3 or WMA music file. (If there is no currently associated file, [none] will be displayed.) To test the music, press "Test". To clear the music file selection, press "Clear".

The available play modes are:

Single - the selected music file will be played once.

Repeat - the selected music file will be played repeatedly

Cycle - the music files in the filefolder will be played in sequence.

Random - the music files in the filefolder will be played in random order.

4.4.10 Online Preferences

Note: The MeggieSoft Games online technology uses your system's Internet Settings for managing network connections. Non-standard specifications (e.g. pertaining to firewalls) must be present in your Internet Settings. If the default IP port number used by MeggieSoft Games conflicts with local network policies or causes unexpected disconnection, this may be changed (see below).

In addition to the following preferences, see [Online Preference Agreement](#) for details of how critical deal, rule and scoring preferences are managed in order to ensure that both players are playing under the same conventions.

Online Name

You may freely choose a name by which you wish to be known within the MeggieSoft Games community. Each time that you register as a waiting host for forum pairing, this name will be displayed to users who are looking to find a partner. Your online name will also be shown to the host when you connect to them as a guest (forum or direct).

The forum does not check for uniqueness of online names, so choosing something a little unusual will more clearly identify you to those seeking partners. Useful examples may be "Dortmund Dieter", "Anna Napolis", or "Disparate Don". If someone else of the same name registers as a waiting host, the worst that will happen is that you may receive partners expecting to play with the other person. In such a case, you might consider changing your online name.

By default, your online name is the computer name defined in your Windows System properties.

Minimal Dialog

The default connection process provides step-by-step confirmations as the host and guest computers acknowledge each other and initialize the game. If this is too much verbosity for your liking, check this box. When checked, the dialog is restricted to the notification to the host that the opponent has accepted the invitation to join. (Note that error conditions will be displayed whether the box is checked or not.)

Enable AutoPilot

Check this box to include the "[AutoPilot](#)" entry in the Online Menu.

Private Forum

The address of the private forum server that you wish to use, if you have access to one that has been created. Advanced users who wish to create a private forum will find instructions on how to do so under "[Establishing A Private Forum](#)".

Use Private Forum

Check this box if you have specified a private forum address and wish to use that forum to seek online partners. The default, when unchecked, is to access the MeggieSoft Games public forum.

Default Direct Host

You may specify a default opponent IP address if you frequently play in [direct online session](#) mode against an opponent who has a fixed IP address. If specified, this address is used as the default in the "[Direct Guest](#)" connection dialog.

IP Port

There is normally no need to change this entry, but there are instances where a different IP Port number may need to be defined. Such instances include satisfying local restrictions (such as firewalls) and avoiding unexpected disconnection due to some other program using the default port number.

The specified port number will be included automatically in your "Be A Host" registration at the "Find A Partner" forum so that guests will respond to the correct port. It will also be the default for a "Direct Guest" connection so that frequent partners who connect directly and encounter connection/disconnection problems with the MeggieSoft Games default (54001) may each choose the same alternative number.

If you are not sure what alternative port number to define, use trial and error on five digit numbers in the vicinity of the MeggieSoft Games default.

4.4.11 Opponent Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Skill Level: Select the skill level required from the six ascending skill levels listed in the drop-down box.

Quick Display: When selected, Canasta does not enact the 400 millisecond pause between each of the opponent's actions.

Suppress Card Highlighting: When selected, suppresses the highlighting of the discard pile or the stock when cards are taken by the opponent.

Show Cards: When selected, shows the opponent's cards face up.

Permit Quick Peek: When selected, you may click the mouse button down on the opponent's cards to show them face up. The cards will return to the face down display when you release the mouse button.

The use of the Show Cards option permits you to test for yourself the assertion that, when unobserved, the majority of people will cheat!

4.4.12 Player Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Discard Protect: When selected, the discard action requires confirmation from the resulting [Pop-Up menu](#).

Meldable Card Warning: When selected, confirmation will be requested if the player is about to discard a card which could be melded.

Do Not Sort: When selected, the player's hand is not automatically sorted as cards are added to it.

Sort High to Low: When selected, the cards in the player's hand are sorted in descending value order (highest card on the left).

Space Between Rank Groups: When selected, the player's cards are displayed with a gap between groups of cards of the same rank. This makes it easier to see potential melds in hand. (This option cannot be selected if the "Do Not Sort" option is selected.)

Disable MultiSelect: When selected, the MultiSelect facility is disabled. (MultiSelect enables multiple cards to be selected in one [drag-and-drop](#) action.)

Disable AutoMeld: When selected, the AutoMeld facility is disabled. (AutoMeld automatically melds when taking from the discard pile, automatically melds MultiSelect selections, and permits double-click melding.)

Disable Undo Turn: The ability to undo turns is removed, together with the small processing overhead associated with providing this facility.

Suppress Card Tinting: When selected, cards taken from the stock will not be tinted when they are added to your hand. (Note that the tint color may be changed via the [Color Preferences](#).)

Opening Ability Tint: When selected, the "Open:" [status bar counter](#) will be highlighted when you have not yet played your opening meld. The highlight is a green background if you currently have sufficient points in hand to play your opening meld(s), yellow if you would have sufficient after taking the discard pile, blue if you can "splash" open with a Canasta, or red if you cannot open yet.

Net Open Requirement: When selected, the opening requirement is shown in the status bar as the net requirement with a +/- sign. The net requirement is the total of the meldable points in your hand less the opening requirement. Thus, if you have insufficient points to open, the prefix will be "-". When this option is not selected, the total requirement is displayed. (You may right-click on the status bar "Open:" indicator to temporarily toggle this setting.)

Warning That Opponent May Go Out: When selected, the "Melding" [status bar counter](#) will be highlighted in yellow when there is a moderate possibility that the opponent could go out on the next turn, or in magenta when the possibility is relatively high.

Note: If you enable both the "Opening Ability Tint" and the "Warning That The Opponent May Go Out" preferences, the latter tint will appear at the right side of the "Open:" counter if you have not yet opened.

4.4.13 QuickSet Preferences

Click on the preference group buttons to facilitate selection and deselection of the following groups of preferences. Finer adjustments may be made via the corresponding preference panels. Changes will take effect when the "Apply" or "OK" button is pressed.

Appearance/All:

- The table and mat image effects are enabled (if the corresponding image files exist)
- 3-D effects are enabled (i.e., if the suppression option is selected, it is deselected)
- The custom card back image effects are enabled (if the corresponding image file exists)
- Cards are displayed with "True Corners"
- The game totals are displayed at the top of the scoresheet and the scoresheet headings are the player/opponent names

Appearance/None:

- If the default font has been altered, it is reset to the default
- If enabled, use of the table, mat, and custom card back images is disabled
- 3-D effects are suppressed.
- Cards are not displayed with "True Corners"
- The game totals are displayed as on-table scoremasts and the scoresheet headings are "You/Me"

Interface/All:

- If card animation has been suppressed, it is re-enabled
- If standard Windows mousepointers have been selected, this option will be deselected in favor of the MeggieSoft Games intelligent mousepointer icons
- AutoMouse will be enabled for cards and dialogs

Interface/None:

- Card animation is suppressed, standard Windows mousepointers are used and AutoMouse is disabled

Audio/All:

- Depending on system capabilities, the sound effect, music and speech options are all enabled

Audio/None:

- Any enabled sound effect, music and speech options are disabled

Operation/All:

- Enables the AutoStart, AutoRestore, and AutoResume features

Operation/None:

- Disables the AutoStart, AutoRestore, and AutoResume features

4.4.14 Rule Preferences

The following rule preferences are available. All except the last pertain to the standard rules for Modern American Canasta. Two buttons are provided for "one-click" setting of the standard rules (and [dealing](#) and [scoring preferences](#)) of Classic Canasta and Modern American Canasta respectively.

(A) Take One Card From Stock: When taking a fresh card from the stock, only one card is taken. (The default rule for two-player Canasta is that two cards are taken.)

(A) Discard Pile Always Frozen: The discard pile is always frozen, requiring a natural pair in hand in order to take it. (The default for Classic Canasta is that it is only frozen by a three or wild card, or until a player's

first meld has been played.)

(A) Cannot Add Top Discard To Canasta: If a player has melded a Canasta in the rank of the top discard, the discard may not be taken to add to that Canasta. However, if the Canasta is mixed and two natural cards of that rank exist in the player's hand, the discard pile may be taken and all three cards added to the Canasta.

(A) All 3s Are Equal: Black threes are treated in the same manner as red threes. They are therefore placed on the mat (and replaced if drawn from the stock) when taken into a player's hand. Thus, the Classic Canasta convention of black 3s being used as discard blockers does not apply. When selected, the [bonus/penalty points](#) awarded for each color are 100 (one card), 300 (two cards), 500 (three cards), or 1000 (all four cards).

(A) Prohibit Wild Discard: A wild card (two or Joker) may not be discarded, except as the final discard when going out.

Note: If all of the cards in a player's hand are wild cards, discarding a wild card is permitted even though the player is unable to make enough Canastas to go out. Such an action blocks the discard pile from being immediately taken by the other player.

(A) Prohibit Ace or Seven Discard To Empty Pile: An Ace or Seven may not be discarded to an empty discard pile (i.e., if the player picks up the discard pile, they may not discard an Ace or Seven on that turn). This preference is enabled only when the "Pure Melds Of Aces and Sevens" rule preference is selected.

(A) Initial Melds From Hand Only: The meld(s) required to attain the opening points threshold must be comprised of cards from the player's hand. However, a player may take and meld the top card of the discard pile if they have the required matching natural cards in hand, but this meld does not count meld towards meeting the threshold if it is part of a meld of three cards. However, if the taken discard is part of a meld of four or more, then only the discard itself does not count, since the other cards were melded from within the player's hand and therefore fully contribute to meeting the threshold.

(A) Splash Initial Meld: If a player has a natural Canasta in hand, this may be melded to achieve the initial melding requirement, irrespective of the currently applicable threshold points requirement for the opening meld(s).

(A) Permit Wild Canasta: A player may meld wild cards together and build towards a Wild Canasta comprised of only 2s and Jokers. (If selected, this preference may not be deselected during a round if a wild meld has been started by either player.)

(A) Prohibit Interim Mixed Melds: After a wild meld has been started, wild cards may not be placed to other melds until the wild meld has become a wild Canasta. (Under documented Classic Canasta rules, this sub-rule is optional when wild Canastas are permitted.)

(A) Only Two Wild Cards Per Meld: Melds may contain a maximum of two wild cards (instead of the default three wild cards for Classic Canasta).

(A) No Extended Canastas: A Canasta may not be extended beyond seven cards in length.

(A) Pure Melds Of Aces and Sevens: The melds of Aces and Sevens have special significance in that they must be Pure Melds (no wildcards). The one exception is when an Ace meld is played as the initial meld, or part of the initial meld, when it may be mixed. In this case, however, no additional wild cards may be added to it in subsequent turns. When this option is selected, so too are the "Prohibit Ace/Seven Discard" rule preference, and the "Special Canasta Bonuses" and the "Uncompleted Canasta Penalties" [scoring preferences](#); but these may then be separately deselected if desired. When this option is not selected, these other three preferences are disabled.

The following "[special melds](#)" require that you have selected the "Deal 13 cards" and "Take one from stock" preferences because they require that fourteen cards are in the player's hand. They may be played, after taking from stock, in order to "go out" provided the player has not yet made any melds (which means that they cannot have taken any discard piles). When played, no discard is required and the round ends immediately. When a player goes out with a special meld, no other points are scored by that player except the special meld bonus.

(A) Special Meld - Straight: Thirteen cards of the fourteen cards are Joker, Two, Four, Five, Six, Seven,

Eight, Nine, Ten, Jack, Queen, King, Ace, and there is at least one Three on the mat (which is considered to have been replaced by the uncounted fourteenth card). 3000 points are scored for this special meld.

(A) Special Meld - Pairs: Seven pairs, excluding Jokers (and excluding Threes, which will have already been played to the mat). There are two forms of this special meld: without Twos (scoring 2500 points), and with Twos, Sevens, and Aces (scoring 2000 points). Note that a player cannot meld a hand including a pair of Twos unless it also contains a pair of Sevens and a pair of Aces.

(A) Special Meld - Garbage: Two sets of four of a kind, plus two sets of three of a kind, and no wild cards. 2000 points are scored for this special meld.

(To play a special meld, you highlight all the cards in your hand and then click on the mat. Provided that the combination is a valid special meld, the round will end immediately.)

(A) Must Discard: A player must discard when going out. When enabled, melding all cards without retaining a card to discard is not permitted.

One Canasta: A player need meld only one Canasta before they are able to go out (the default is two Canastas).

4.4.15 Scoring Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Higher Thresholds: When selected, the points target to win a game is increased from 5000 points to 8500 points. Also, the points requirement for the initial melding for a round is increased to the normal convention for Modern American Canasta. These thresholds are:

125 points if the game total from previous rounds is less than 3000 points

155 points if the game total from previous rounds is greater than 2995 points and less than 5000 points

180 points if the game total from previous rounds is greater than or equal to 5000 points

Disable Discard Return Penalty: When selected, there is no 50 point penalty incurred if a player takes the discard pile and returns it in order to take the top stock card instead.

The following preferences are Modern American Canasta conventions. By default, they are automatically selected when that rule set preference is selected but they may be individually deselected via this preference section. (The bonuses and penalties for special Canastas are enabled only when the "Pure Melds" [rule preference](#) for Aces and Sevens is selected.)

No Going Out Bonus: When selected, there are no bonus points awarded for going out.

Special Canasta Bonuses: When selected, the following pure Canastas score differently from than the standard point awards:

Twos (Wild Canasta of twos only): 3000 points

Jokers (Four Jokers plus three twos): 2500 points

Aces: 2500 points (only when the Pure Melds rule preference is selected)

Sevens: 2500 points (only when the Pure Melds rule preference is selected)

Penalty For Melded Cards When No Canasta: When selected, the points total of melded cards is deducted from the player's score at the end of the round if that player has not made at least one Canasta. When not selected, the points total is always added to the player's score.

Uncompleted Canasta Penalties: When selected, melds of wild cards, sevens or Aces which are not completed when the round ends incur the following penalties:

Twos/Jokers: 2000 points

Sevens: 2500 points

Aces: 2500 points

When selected, penalties of 1500 points are also incurred if three sevens or three Aces remain in a player's hand at the end of the round. (i.e., a total penalty of 3000 points if both conditions exist.)

4.4.16 Screen Preferences

The following preferences are available:

Main Window - Size: Depending upon your monitor resolution setting, up to five window sizes are available, the fifth of which is "Custom". As an alternative to selecting a standard window size via preferences, you may also resize the main window by dragging the lower left corner. The resulting size is held as the Custom setting so that you can return to it later.

Main Window - Font: The default font is the earliest named of the following, depending upon whether each is installed on your system: Tahoma, Arial, MS Sans Serif. (Versions prior to v12.1 were fixed as MS Sans Serif). A change to the font setting affects the status bar, scoresheet and Rules/Scoring panel. The "Font" label to the left of the drop-down list is shown in the currently listed font to facilitate comparison and selection before applying the change.

Remember Position: When selected, the position of the game window within the monitor screen is remembered on exit and is recovered to the same position when the next session is played. Otherwise, the game always starts with the game window centered within the monitor screen.

Scoresheet Headings: The default scoresheet headings are "Me" and "You". Select "You"/"Me" if you wish the computer to be "Me". Select names if you want the player and opponent skill name displayed as the headings. Deselect both for the default of "Me"/"You". If "names" is selected you may also choose to shrink to fit if the current font setting can accommodate such small sizing, otherwise the names may be truncated. Shrink to fit may result in unreadable column headings at smaller [card preference](#) settings.

Scoresheet (Handwritten): Select if you would like the scoresheet entries to be displayed in a handwritten blue font.

Table Effect: Select if you want the main table window to be "wallpapered" with an image file (jpg, bmp or wmf) of your choosing.

Mat Effect: Select if you want the mat to be "wallpapered" with an image file (jpg, bmp or wmf) of your choosing.

Hide Mat Dividers: Select if you want to suppress the display of the light grey lines on the mat which delineate the player and opponent melding areas and the discard pile.

Suppress 3D Effect: Select if you wish to disable the 3D effects in the main window.

Hide Rules/Bonuses: Select if you wish the rules/bonuses panel to not be displayed.

Enable Toolbar: Select if you wish to display the menu [toolbar](#).

...with all buttons: The default menu toolbar is a "short version" corresponding to the more commonly used menu items. Select "all buttons" if you wish to use a "full" toolbar containing almost all menu selections. As all the possible buttons will most likely not fit within the toolbar (depending upon your main window size), you should customize this toolbar to remove those buttons you are less likely to use.

...show on left side: When selected, the toolbar is shown on the left side of the game window instead of at the top.

Game Score Display: Select "Title Bar", "Status Bar" or "Top of Scoresheet" to display game scores elsewhere than the default of in the main window. If you select display in the status bar, error messages will continue be shown in the status bar and will temporarily cover the game score display (unless you have selected the "display error box" option of [Message Preferences](#)).

4.4.17 Sound Preferences

This preference panel permits you to enable and disable sound effects, and to specify the sound effect files to be used. Canasta permits the optional association of a wav file with each of the ten events shown. Note that the Welcome and Goodbye sounds are not used if [Speech](#) is enabled.

If you do not have a sound card, the speak.exe driver is a freely available Microsoft product which uses your PC speaker to play (low quality) sound.

If your system has difficulty playing music and other sounds simultaneously, either do not enable the music feature, or do not enable sound and speech features.

To change a sound effect, select the corresponding button. The name of the currently assigned file name will be displayed. (If there is no associated sound file, [none] will be displayed.) To test the sound, press "Test". To assign or change a sound file, press "Browse...". To break the association between the file and the event, press "Clear".

4.4.18 Speech Preferences

When enabled, Canasta will speak to you if you have a speech engine installed on your system. The spoken phrases will include prompts, error messages, confirmations, points scored, and score summaries.

Host/Opponent: You may set the pitch, speed, and volume of the host and opponent voices to your liking.

Mode: A drop down selection box permits you to define the spoken phrases as "Standard" or "Terse". When "Standard" is selected, various phrases are randomly selected when spoken to reduce monotony.

Speech Engine: Canasta supports three speech engines. All three are available for download from the MeggieSoft Games website. The WinSpeech engine is older and simpler, but represents a smaller download. The more superior engines are Microsoft's Text-To-Speech engines. If more than one speech engine is installed on your computer, the default selection is the highest Microsoft engine installed (v4 or v5.1).

With the Microsoft TTS engines, you can define different host and opponent voices by name, depending on which voices you have installed on your system. With WinSpeech, only a single voice style is supported, but you can define different pitch parameters to differentiate the spoken host and opponent phrases.

Enable: When selected, the speech capability is enabled. Uncheck this selection to disable the speech capability.

Stop Speaking When Interrupted: When selected, the currently spoken information will stop immediately when you exit a dialog box.

4.4.19 Restore Pre-"Safe Mode" Preferences

(This selection is only available if you started the current or previous session in "Safe Mode".)

Select this option to restore your preferences to their most recent settings prior to selecting "Safe Mode" for this, or for the previous, session.

At the end of your next normal session, this menu item will no longer be available as it is assumed that you wish to retain the preference settings that exist at that time.

4.4.20 Reset Preferences To Defaults

Select this menu option to remove all non-default preference settings for the current player from the registry. This facility is provided as a swift method for resetting all preferences. The [Preference](#) facility may then be used to alter your preferences, or the [QuickSet Preferences](#) facility may be used to re-establish preferences to one of the preset configurations.

4.5 View Menu

The following selections are available under the View Menu:

- [Bonus Breakdown](#)
- [Canasta Details](#)
- [Round Scores](#)
- [Game Scores](#)
- [League Table](#)
- [Hall Of Fame](#)
- [Music Status](#)
- [Hide/Show Toolbar](#)
- [Toggle Rules/Bonuses](#)
- [Refresh Display](#)

4.5.1 Bonus Breakdown

Select this option to review how your current bonus/penalty standing is calculated. This total is shown at the very bottom of the scoresheet.

Further information may be found in the [Bonuses & Penalties](#) section regarding how and when bonuses and penalties are earned.

4.5.2 Canasta Details

Select this option to review which cards comprise the Canastas so far played.

The resulting display shows the type and number of cards for both the opponent's and the player's Canastas, including which wild cards are used in Mixed and Wild Canastas.

4.5.3 Round Scores

Displays the winner, and the scores of the player and the opponent, for all previous rounds of the current game.

The display includes the date and opponent skill level for each game. If the player's scoreboard was started with an earlier version of Canasta which did not record dates and skill levels, the scoreboard will be automatically converted to the new format. For these records, the opponent will be displayed as "Unknown" and the date will be displayed as "1/1/94".

The text colors (blue for wins, red for losses) may be changed via [Color Preferences](#).

4.5.4 Game Scores

Displays the winner, and the scores of the player and the opponent, for all previous games played by the currently active player. The display includes the date and opponent skill level for each game. If the player's scoreboard was started with an earlier version of Canasta which did not record dates and skill levels, the opponent will be displayed as "Unknown" and the date will be displayed as "1/1/94".

A selection pad permits the display of the game history against the opponent at a particular skill level. The text colors may be changed via [Color Preferences](#).

Game Replication

Game replication means playing a new game with the cards being arranged for the first deal, and each

subsequent round's deal, exactly as they were for the corresponding round of a previous game. You can select the game to be replicated by clicking on the result in the game scoreboard and then pressing the "Replicate Button".

If you wish to replicate the immediately previous game, you may also do this from the "[Game](#)" menu. Note: Only games played with version 8.0 or later are replicable, otherwise "Replicate" button will not be enabled.

4.5.5 League Table

When selected, Canasta will display the following information for all players for whom a saved scoreboard file exists: Games Won, Games Lost, Points For, Points Against, Average (points for divided by games played).

4.5.6 Hall Of Fame

When selected, Canasta will examine all saved scoreboards and display statistics such as highest and lowest scores for and against, narrowest and widest winning margins, etc.

4.5.7 Music Status

Select this menu option to see what music track is currently playing. You may then choose to skip or stop the current music track if you wish to.

4.5.8 Hide/Show Toolbar

If the menu toolbar option in [Screen Preferences](#) is selected, you may toggle between the toolbar display state via this menu selection.

4.5.9 Toggle Rules Bonuses

When the Rules/Bonuses detail is displayed below the stock, selecting this menu option will toggle between the rules display and the bonus display.

You may also click on the Rules/Bonuses panel itself to achieve the same action.

4.5.10 Refresh Display

Clears and refreshes the display window. This action is rarely necessary unless some strangeness with the display layout is encountered.

4.6 Assist Menu

The following selections are available under the Assist Menu:

[Tutorial](#)
[Explain Options](#)
[Opening Scenario](#)
[Suggest Hint](#)
[AutoStep](#)
[AutoPlay](#)

4.6.1 Tutorial

The tutorial provides a documented walk through of Canasta in action and the operation of the tutorial is self explanatory once it has been started. Each set of moves is explained as they take place, and help is always available.

The tutorial is intended to facilitate learning of the basic game. Therefore, any specific dealing, rule, or scoring preferences that you have enabled will be disabled for the tutorial.

The tutorial restarts the current game and can guide you through as many games as you wish. When it is dismissed, you are returned to the original game state at the point you started the tutorial, with your chosen preference settings if any were disabled for the tutorial.

See also: [Tutorial Operation](#)

4.6.1.1 Tutorial Operation

If your screen size is large enough to accommodate it, the tutorial display will be in an extended panel under the game window. If your screen resolution is 640x480, it is not possible to accommodate the tutorial panel, and feedback will be provided by pop-up dialog boxes.

Tutorial Panel

The game window may be adjusted to accommodate the panel, in which case it will be returned as it was when the tutorial is stopped. The left side of the feedback shows the sequence of current moves by the player or opponent. The right side shows pertinent rule notes (black), or notes regarding Canasta operation (blue). These notes do not reappear once shown until the tutorial is next started.

Dialog PopUps

The upper part of the displayed messages show one or more recent moves and the lower part may show pertinent rule notes, or notes regarding Canasta operation. These notes do not reappear once shown until the tutorial is next started. Every attempt is made to position the popup box in a non-obtrusive position, but if it is in the way, you may move it by dragging its title bar.

To step through the tutorial, press the "Next >>" button each time that it is enabled. To exit the tutorial, press "Stop".

You may hold down the Shift key when pressing the "Next" button in order to advance rapidly to the next rule note, or the end of the round (whichever occurs first). If there are operation notes pending, these will be skipped.

The following links provide useful further information regarding topics covered during the tutorial:

[Melding Cards](#)
[Point Scores](#)
[Understanding The Interface](#)

4.6.2 Explain Options

When selected, the "Assist!" window will appear.

The Assist! window is context sensitive and will describe your alternatives at the current state of play.

You may move the Assist! window by dragging its title bar.

4.6.3 Opening Scenario

Select this menu item to see a description of a possible method of melding an opening scenario, if this is currently possible.

If you are unable to open, the number of meldable points currently in your hand is displayed.

Clicking the "Open:" display in the [status bar](#) is a shortcut to this menu item.

4.6.4 Suggest Hint

When selected, Canasta will examine your hand and display a reasonable series of actions for you to take. (Canasta does not take advantage of this knowledge when determining subsequent turns for the opponent.)

When it is your turn to take a card, the display is a suggestion as to whether you should take from the stock or from the discard pile. If the suggestion is to take a new card from the stock, that will be the entire suggestion. (If you elect to "Do It", then the remaining suggestions will be given after the updated card holding has been taken into account.)

You may select the "Do It" button when the suggestion box is displayed, and Canasta will play the suggestion(s) for you. If you select "Do It" and the first suggestion is to take from the stock, then another suggestion box will be displayed after your hand has been updated.

Note that a hint may not recommend opening the melding, even if you have sufficient cards so to do. Such situations include using an excessive number of wildcards or, for Modern American Canasta rules, taking an Ace or Seven discard and thus forcing it to be melded.

Canasta employs the same logic for providing the suggestion as it does for playing the opponent's hand. The method employed is the "Master" [skill level](#).

4.6.5 AutoStep

AutoStep puts Canasta into an interactive automatic mode whereby both the opponent's and the player's hands are played alternately by the computer. Unlike [AutoPlay](#), AutoStep provides the additional ability to control pausing, stepping and speed control.



The initial buttons include a run button (leftmost) and a step button. If you press the step button, you will see the next turn played by either the player or the opponent (alternately). If you wish a full-cycle mode of operation (player turn and opponent turn in one step), this may be selected via [Operational Preferences](#).

If you press the run button, the step button is replaced by a pause button and the run button is removed.



Then AutoStep will run constantly until it is again paused (for step mode operation), or stopped.

Always visible are the stop button, and buttons to increase (right double chevron) or decrease (left double

chevron) the speed of play in steps of 200 milliseconds. The slowest speed introduces a delay of two seconds between each play. Clicking a chevron symbol using the right-hand mouse button will increase/decrease the speed to the highest/lowest limit. The current speed setting speed is retained between sessions.

AutoStep starts at the current point of the game in progress. At the end of AutoStep, the game may be continued at its current position ("As Is"), or returned to the game position when AutoStep was started ("As Was").

AutoStep always uses the Master [skill level](#) for the player. The opponent will play at the skill level in operation when AutoStep is selected.

4.6.6 AutoPlay

AutoPlay puts Canasta into a fully automatic mode whereby both the opponent's and the player's hands are played alternately by the computer. AutoPlay is used in development testing and is provided for users who might find it useful.

Learners and students of Canasta are recommended to use the [AutoStep](#) facility, which provides interactive control.

You will be asked to define which of the six [skill levels](#) is to be used by the player. The opponent will play at the skill level in operation when AutoPlay is selected. You may also select fast mode and silent mode.

After the player skill level has been selected and you have selected "OK", just sit back and enjoy the view. AutoPlay starts a separate set of games (starting at game 1). When you have seen enough, press the "Stop AutoPlay" button in the middle of the status bar.

Before AutoPlay starts, you may be asked if the updated scoreboard for the current player is to be saved. Respond "yes" if you wish to recover to the current state after AutoPlay has finished, otherwise recovery will be to the point that the scoreboard for the current player was last saved.

When it is stopped, AutoPlay will permit you to display the game scoreboard for the AutoPlay session, if at least one game was completed. After AutoPlay is dismissed, Canasta returns to status of the player's game when AutoPlay was started.

4.7 Explore Menu

The following selections are available under the Explore Menu:

- [Distribution](#)
- [Recall](#)
- [Deduce](#)
- [Recall & Deduce](#)
- [Predict Opponent Hand](#)
- [Doctor Hand](#)
- [Swap Cards](#)

4.7.1 Distribution

Select this option to see a map of all the cards and their current locations (discard pile, melded, seen taken to opponent hand, etc.) The display does not identify the location of cards that the player has not seen which are in the stock or in the opponent's hand.

4.7.2 Recall

The Recall facility is a powerful aid to those who cannot remember which cards have been seen during play. It is not intended to be used frequently as an alternative to concentration, but may help you develop improved powers of recall.

The recalled cards are listed in two parts: those in your hand that the opponent has seen you take from the discard pile, and those that you have seen the opponent take.

4.7.3 Deduce

The Deduce facility lists all those cards which are: not in your hand, not in the discard pile, not melded, and not among those of the opponent's cards that you have seen. They are therefore the content of the stock and the unseen portion of the opponent's hand - but who knows which is where?

4.7.4 Recall & Deduce

Select this menu item to produce a combined report of recalled cards and deduced cards.

4.7.5 Predict Opponent Hand

When you play against the computer opponent, it is constantly predicting what cards are likely to be in your hand based on the cards that it has already seen in play together with its own card holding.

Select this menu item if you wish to apply the logic in reverse and predict what cards are most likely to be in the opponent's hand at the current time.

Frequently, insufficient information is available to make a meaningful prediction (i.e., it is impossible to determine a significance likelihood of one card rank compared with another). These situations most commonly occur when there are a lot of unseen cards in the stock; or when no, or only a few, cards have been melded; or if the opponent has picked up only a few, if any, cards from the discard pile.

However, if a prediction can be made, it will be displayed to you. Note that this is a result based upon statistical probability, and will therefore sometimes be very accurate, and sometimes be quite inaccurate.

Whether or not a prediction may be made, the descriptors of any ranks that the opponent cannot be holding are always shown. The determination of whether or not the opponent might go out on the next turn is also shown (corresponding to the "Open" indicator warning in the [status bar](#)).

4.7.6 Doctor Hand

This facility is provided for learning and experimentation purposes. It permits you to change the cards in your hand.

The option is enabled after a new deal, and is disabled when either player melds a card.

When selected, the mat is cleared and a spread of all the cards available is shown. The ones already in your hand are shaded. To exchange a card in your hand, click on it to highlight it. Then click on an available card on the mat. Wherever that card is currently (the stock, opponent's hand, discard pile), it will be swapped with the card in your hand.

While doctoring is being performed, all menu and status bar actions are inhibited.

When you have finished the doctoring process, click anywhere on the card display with no card selected in your hand.

4.7.7 Swap Cards

Select this menu option if you wish to swap cards with the Opponent. Canasta will then swap the cards currently in the player's hand with those in the opponent's hand.

The purpose of the option is as a learning tool. It is not intended to be used to distort your true scoring ability relative to your peers, as might be reported by the [League Table](#) and the [Hall Of Fame](#).

4.8 Admin Menu

The following selections are available under the Admin Menu:

* **Order Registration Code:** Provides information regarding the registration process for Canasta.

‡ **Enter Registration Code:** Permits you to enter or re-enter your registration number. Should the Canasta options data on your hard disk become missing, or if you move to a new computer, Canasta will return to the unregistered status. In this case, you will need to re-enter your registration details. Note that the validation code shown at the top of the "Enter Registration Code" window must also be copied and entered as security confirmation that the registration information is being entered manually.

Check For Updates: Checks the MeggieSoft Games website to determine if program updates exist. For further information see the [online update](#) section.

Manage Old Install Files: This entry appears only if you have downloaded files stored on your hard disk from the online update process. The menu entry shows the total size of these files. Selecting this menu item will provide you the option to explore (using Windows Explorer) or delete all of these files. See the [Downloaded File Store](#) section for an understanding of what these files' names mean.

Create Diagnostic File. Creates a [diagnostic dump file](#) for analysis by MeggieSoft Games in order to resolve system and program problems. If your email method is using a MAPI-compliant mail client (such as Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Thunderbird, AOL version 7.0 and later, etc.), you will be offered the option to open your email "compose" window automatically with the MeggieSoft Games email address already included and the required file included as an attachment. Otherwise, the email address for MeggieSoft Games will be shown for you to use in other email methods. (For further information, see "[Automatic MAPI Email Creation](#)" under "Miscellaneous Topics".)

Create Preferences Backup. Creates a disk file named "msgprefs.reg" in the MeggieSoft Games installation filefolder. This file contains all the preferences information for all installed MeggieSoft Games. Running it (by clicking on it in Windows Explorer) will apply the saved registry settings for all installed MeggieSoft Games. You would use this feature if you wish to transfer your preference settings to a new computer.

* "Order Registration Code" is only shown during unregistered evaluation.

‡ "Enter Registration Code" is shown during unregistered evaluation. After you have entered your registration information, this item becomes "Re-enter Registration Data". This would be used if you have been sharing a registration code between your computers and you now wish to use them simultaneously for online play. In this case, one of the computers must be registered to a different name than the other and therefore you will need to re-enter newly obtained registration data (under a different registered name) on one of them.

4.9 Help Menu

The following selections are available under the Help Menu:

Show Tip Of The Day: Displays a random "Tip Of The Day". If applicable, clicking the "More Info" button will display the relevant section of the help file, and the "Show How" button will display the corresponding section of the [preference settings](#). Select or deselect the "Show automatically" checkbox to define whether these tips should be shown on start up and at the start of each new game. If deselected, the tips will only be seen via this Help menu entry.

Help Contents: Displays the main Canasta help window.

Help Index: Displays the Canasta topics index window.

User Guide (Printable): The contents of the help file are provided as a printable user guide (with page-numbered contents and index sections). This file is in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) file format, for which you will require the Acrobat Reader (from www.adobe.com/acrobat) if it is not already installed on your system.

Note: The User Guide is formatted for US Letter size (8.5x11.0). Users of other paper sizes, such as A4 (8.3x11.7), will need to select the "Shrink Oversize Pages..." option in the print dialog within the Acrobat Reader. For A4, this will very slightly (2½ percent) reduce the document width and add about ¼ inch of horizontal whitespace to each printed page

Revision History: Displays the READ500.TXT file using the associated txt file program for your system.

ReadMe File: Displays the README.TXT file using the associated txt file program for your system.

MeggieSoft Home Page: Accesses the MeggieSoft Games home page (Provided you have Internet capability and an associated web browser).

Email MeggieSoft Games: If your email method is using a MAPI-compliant mail client (such as Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Thunderbird, AOL version 7.0 and later, etc.), you will be offered the option to open your email "compose" window automatically with the MeggieSoft Games email address already included. Otherwise, the email address for MeggieSoft Games will be shown for you to use in other email methods. (For further information, see "[Automatic MAPI Email Creation](#)" under "Miscellaneous Topics".)

About: Displays information about the version number and author, and the registration confirmation.

Note:

The User Guide is not included as part of the Canasta installation. If you select the User Guide option, and the user guide is not present on your system, you will be asked if you would like to download it from the MeggieSoft Games website.

Also, if your system is unable to display the newer Windows "chm" help files (requires Internet Explorer 4.1 or later), you will be offered the facility to download the alternative, older style, "hlp" file.

In either case, if you elect to download, the file will be retrieved from the website and will be displayed automatically when the retrieval has completed. (The help file size is less than 200K and the user guide size is less than 500K.)

If you select the option to remove older files during a subsequent installation of Canasta, these files (if present) will be removed from your system and you will be able to download the newer versions.

4.10 Pop-Up Menu

The PopUp menu is invoked by right-clicking the mouse on any part of the Canasta window where a right-click has no other meaning. In general, this means anywhere except the melded cards and cards in the player's hand.

The Pop-Up menu offers easy access to the Discard special action (enabled when the Discard Protect [player preference](#) is active), and common menu options, as follows:

[Discard <Card>](#)

[Preferences](#)[Music Status](#) (View Menu)[Explain Options](#) (Assist Menu)[Suggest Hint](#) (Assist Menu)[Undo](#) (Player Menu)[Add/Switch Player](#) (Player Menu)[Change Skill](#) (Preferences/Opponent) This change is only applied for the current session.[Round Scores](#) (View Menu)[Game Scores](#) (View Menu)[Help](#) (Help Menu - Contents)[Exit](#) (Game Menu)

5 Online Play

Canasta supports the ability for two human opponents to play against each other via the Internet or a LAN using TCP/IP protocols.

The user interaction for online play is exactly the same as it is for local human vs. computer play. Each time that you play your turn, coded details of it are transmitted to the online opponent and you will then be waiting for the opponent's response. When the opponent plays their turn, the actions are transmitted to your computer and displayed upon your screen exactly as they would be in human vs. machine play. With the exception of a longer delay waiting for the opponent to play, you will experience no difference compared with local human vs. computer play.

Connections between opponents may be made by private arrangement as a [direct online session](#), or by connecting to the public MeggieSoft Games Online Forum to locate a waiting opponent ("[Find A Partner](#)").

For either connection method, one person will first establish themselves as the "host" and remain in a waiting state (with the "watch" button flashing in the [status bar](#)) until the other person (as the "guest") makes the connection to the host.

For online play to be successful, certain deal, rule and scoring preferences must be adopted in common. For example, if one player had a certain rule enabled and the other did not, it would be impossible for them to play against each other. The [Preference Alignment](#) menu option ensures that each player is able to define these key preferences for online play, and is able to [negotiate](#) with a prospective online opponent who has different online preference alignment settings.

The MeggieSoft Games online technology incorporates a [chat](#) window which either player can invoke at any time if they wish to communicate with the other.

Select a topic:

[The Host and The Guest](#)[Direct Online Session](#)[Forum Pairing](#)[Online Preference Agreement](#)[Establishing A Private Forum](#)

The following help topics are also relevant to online play:

[Online Menu](#)[Online Preferences](#)[Online Play Protocol](#) (for the technically curious)

5.1 The Host and The Guest

For a successful connection, one party must first be established as waiting as the "Host", and the other then connects to them as the "Guest".

The Telephone Analogy

When you make a regular telephone call, one person needs to be waiting near a phone, and the other needs to dial the correct number in order to make the connection.

If there is no-one waiting near the telephone being called, the caller will receive the ringing tone until they decide to give up. If the caller calls the wrong number, they will not connect to the required person (if they indeed connect to any person). If the caller calls when the other person is already making a call, they will receive a busy signal. (if each calls the other simultaneously, they will each receive the busy signal.)

MeggieSoft Games Online Connection

The online connection process is very similar to the telephone analogy. In this case, the caller is termed the "Guest" and the person being called is termed the "Host".

Being the Host:

First the Host must establish themselves as waiting to receive the connection. (Otherwise, the caller will be calling someone that is not there.) This is done as either selecting the [Direct Host](#) option under the Online menu (if you are expecting a specific caller), or by using the [Find A Partner](#) facility and selecting "Be A Host" (if you do not mind who calls you).

After the Host has established themselves as waiting, the Guest may now initiate connection to the Host. If the Host has not completed the "waiting process" or has withdrawn from the waiting state, they will not see a flashing "wristwatch" symbol in the status bar - in which case they are not waiting as a Host, and therefore no Guest will be able to connect to them.

Being the Guest:

If the Host used the Direct Host method, the Guest must use the [Direct Guest](#) method specifying the exact IP address and port number of the Host. (The IP address and port number is akin to a telephone number and extension number - if either is in error, the expected connection to the Host will fail).

If the Guest chooses to connect to anyone who might be waiting as a Host in the Find-A-Partner forum, they do so by selecting the name of the Host and pressing the "Connect" button. (The IP address and Port number of the Host are stored in the forum and are not required to be specified by the Guest).

If the Guest attempts to connect to someone who is not (or no longer) waiting as a Host, no connection will be made.

Reasons For Failure To Connect:

- Each person waits as the Host. (Analogy: two people waiting to receive a call, but neither is making the call.)
- Each person attempts to connect as a Guest. (Analogy: two people telephoning each other simultaneously, neither is able to receive the other's call.)
- The Guest attempts to connect to a party who is not waiting as a Host. (Analogy: There is no-one there to receive the call.)
- The Guest specifies an incorrect IP address and/or port number. (Analogy: Wrong number, or no such number.)
- A firewall setting is preventing communication. (Analogy: Call Blocking.)

5.2 Direct Online Session

A direct session is a private one that has already been agreed between you and your opponent. One of you will be the host, the other the guest.

Whoever is the host will run Canasta, make or ensure connection to the Internet or LAN, and select ["Direct Host"](#) from the Online Menu. The host will, if necessary, make a note of the host IP address and port number shown in the confirmation dialog box before clicking on "OK".

Unless the host has a fixed IP address which is already known to the guest, the host will need to communicate the host IP address and port number to the guest. This might be via local oral conversation, a phone call, an online instant chat facility, or email.

The guest will then run Canasta, make a network connection if necessary, and select "[Direct Guest](#)" from the Online Menu. To complete the connection, the guest will enter the host's IP address and port number and click on "Connect".

The host must remain in Canasta while waiting for the guest to connect, but can continue to play in local (human vs. computer) mode until the connection is made. During the waiting period, a flashing watch will be displayed in the status bar to remind you that you are awaiting a guest connection; you may click on this to stop the waiting process (i.e., to disestablish yourself as a waiting host).

You will be immediately informed when connection occurs. At this point your local game status will be remembered, and will be recovered automatically at the end of your online session.

The alternative to establishing a private session is to take advantage of [Forum Pairing](#), the MeggieSoft Games publicly available player matching facility.

5.3 Forum Pairing

Forum Pairing is the alternative to establishing a [direct online session](#).

Forum pairing supports the situation where a user wishes to play an online game, but does not have a prearranged opponent. In this situation, a central forum server facilitates the pairing of hosts and guests.

Find A Partner

To participate in a forum-arranged game, select the "[Find A Partner](#)" option of the "Online Menu". You will then be connected to the MeggieSoft Games forum server.

The process of finding available hosts takes approximately 15 seconds, after which a list of available playing partners will be displayed. Click on the name of the player you wish to play against, and then click on the connect button.

Be A Host

If no waiting hosts are available, you may register yourself as an available host by clicking the "Be A Host" button. Your connection details will then be recorded in the forum as an available host for the next person seeking a forum pairing to find. The host list will be redisplayed with your entry in gray as confirmation.

After confirming the registration, you must remain in Canasta while waiting for your partner to identify and connect with you, but you can continue to play in local (human vs. computer) mode until the connection is made. During the waiting period, a flashing watch icon will be displayed in the status bar to remind you that you are awaiting a guest connection; you may click on this to stop the waiting process (i.e., to disconnect yourself as a waiting host).

You will be immediately informed when connection occurs, which might even before you have confirmed your registration. At this point your local game status will be remembered, and will be recovered automatically at the end of your online session.

If you exit Canasta before an opponent makes contact, your status as a waiting host in the forum will be removed. You may "Be A Host" again when you next go to "Find A Partner".

5.4 Online Preference Agreement

For the successful operation of online play between two players, a number of the Canasta [deal](#), [rule](#), and [scoring](#) preferences must be in alignment between the two players. The preferences involved may be reviewed by clicking on the [Preference Alignment](#) item under the [Online Menu](#).

The first stage of a guest connection to a waiting host is the exchange of these preference settings. This occurs automatically and invisibly. If the players' settings are found to be the same, the connection process continues. When the game starts, the online preference overrides will be applied to each player's normal

(offline) preferences.

If the online preferences are different, the guest will be informed of the specific differences first. If you are the guest, you then have four alternatives:

Disconnect: You are not interested and wish to withdraw the connection.

Adjust: You intend to issue a counter proposal, but wish to adjust your default alignment preferences before countering. A [preference alignment](#) adjustment window will be displayed with differences between your preferences and the host's preferences highlighted. You may check and uncheck preferences before returning to the notification window. (Any changes made will apply only to this connection.)

Counter: You reject the host's preferences and are countering with your own proposed alignment (which may have been adjusted from your alignment defaults, as described above). If your counter proposal is accepted, your preference alignment settings will be adopted by both players.

Accept: You accept the host's preferences. The host's preference alignment settings will be adopted by both players.

If the guest counters, the host will be informed of the specifics, and requested to accept or decline the connection contingent upon the guest's preference alignment settings being adopted by both players.

If the host declines, the guest will be informed of this and the connection process is terminated. As there is only one opportunity to counter per connection attempt, the guest is best advised to accept the host's conditions if they are acceptable, or minimize the differences in the counter proposal so that the host is more likely to find the counter proposal acceptable.

After the preference alignment is agreed, the online game proceeds with the corresponding overrides applied to each player's normal (offline) preferences.

5.5 Establishing A Private Forum

This section is provided for advanced users who wish to establish a private online forum. Please read all content carefully before acting upon it.

What is a forum?

A forum in the context of MeggieSoft Games is merely a central file area where users can create and access tagfiles as a means to connect with each other.

What is a tagfile?

A tagfile is a very small file with a filename constructed from data which includes the host user name, their IP address and the port number being monitored.

- When a user selects "Find A Partner", the designated forum is accessed and the user names associated with the tagfiles are listed.
- When a user elects to "Be A Host", a new tag file is created.
- When a user connects to a waiting host, the extension of the tagfile is changed until the connection is accepted. If the host accepts, the tagfile is deleted. If the host declines, the tagfile is renamed back to its original extension.
- When a host user disconnects from the forum without accepting a connection, the tagfile is deleted.
- If a connection is attempted to a host to which a connection cannot be made, the tagfile is deleted.

Thus tagfiles provide a simple, self-cleaning, method of connecting parties together.

What is a Private Forum?

By default, users seeking online partners will access the central MeggieSoft Games online forum. An alternative to this forum may be created by anyone who wishes to provide a closed forum for members of an association, a company, or any other grouping. All that is required is a central file area provided by the person establishing the private forum. Once this is ready, other users in the group can specify the address of the private forum and select the "use private forum" checkbox in their [Online Preferences](#).

What is the format of the address?

Private forums may be established as a directory (filefolder) on a file server or an internet (ftp) server.

- If a fileservers is used, the address is simply the full directory name, such as:

"k:\myfiles\meggieserver".

It is the responsibility of the user group to ensure that any required login/password access and file write permission requirements are catered for locally. The MeggieSoft Games will merely open and use this directory.

- If an ftp server is used, the address must be of the form ftp.<site>/<dirpath>:login:pwd, such as:
"ftp.mysite.com/games/forum:onplay:letmein".

Be sure that you are comfortable with the server area being accessible by login and password without compromising security to other areas of the ftp site.

Anything else?

- The server must be able to accommodate reasonably long file names (40-50 characters, typically) as these will include the user name, IP address, port number, plus some delimiting characters.
- Test the forum access yourself, perhaps with one other user, before declaring the forum open
- Check the forum area for debris from time to time. The MeggieSoft Games forum management technology is designed to be self-cleaning but, as with any generally accessible file area, other content may become deposited there.
- MeggieSoft Games does not provide support to users who have problems accessing private forums. Be sure that your user group knows who to contact if they need access support.

6 Online Update

The MeggieSoft Games Online Update feature connects to the MeggieSoft Games website to determine what updates and additional features are available for you to download and install. By using this capability from time to time, you will be able to keep fully up-to-date with the latest releases.

The process is comprised of three steps:

- Connecting to the MeggieSoft Games website
- Downloading the updates and features you select
- Managing the process of installing the updates.

Select a topic:

[The Connection Process](#)

[The Retrieve Process](#)

[The Installation Process](#)

[Downloaded File Store](#)

6.1 The Connection Process

If you are not already connected to the Internet, you will need to press the "Connect" button. This will use your default internet connection method (as defined in your Internet Settings) to connect to the MeggieSoft Games website. If you use a proxy server, this will need to be defined in your Internet Settings (via the Windows Control Panel).

After the connection has been made, or if you were already connected when the Update Manager started, you will need to press the "Start" button. This retrieves the details and file sizes of the latest files available at the website and displays this information. The display indicates the latest version and build numbers available alongside the version you currently have installed (if this is known to the Online Update Manager). A checkbox is placed beside any file that you may wish to download and install. These may be updated versions, or additional files which you are entitled to install but have not yet done so.

If the Update Manager itself has been updated since the version you are using, its own update will take priority and you will be informed of this. After the new installer module and Update Manager have been downloaded, the Update Manager will exit and will be restarted with the updated version.

With respect to speech systems, the default speech system will be Microsoft Text-To-Speech v5 unless you are running Windows 95, in which case Microsoft Text-To-Speech v4 will be the default. If you wish to use another supported speech system (in addition to, or instead of, the default), you will need to download and install it from the MeggieSoft Games website. If you select Text-To-Speech v5 for installation then the MSI file installer will be required if you are using Windows 98 or NT4 and `msiexec.exe` is not already found to be on your system. This will be automatically downloaded and installed if it is required. (Note that `msiexec.exe` is a standard part of Windows Me/XP/2000.)

After you have reviewed the information, click on the check boxes of those items that you wish to install. Then press the "Retrieve" button to start the [retrieve process](#) step.

6.2 The Retrieve Process

The retrieve process downloads the selected files from the MeggieSoft Games website.

As the selected files are downloaded a progress indicator will be displayed. If more than one file is to be downloaded, you may press the "Skip" button to abandon that file and move to the next. Alternatively, you may press the "Stop" button to abandon the entire retrieve function (skipping the downloads of all remaining selected files). You may then alter your selections before restarting the retrieving function, or you may exit the program.

Occasionally, MeggieSoft Games releases a major update which requires that a full base installation be performed instead of a simple update. The Online Update will detect this condition automatically by comparing your currently installed version with the latest version. If a full installation update is required, you will notice a much larger file size for the first game listed.

When the retrieval process has completed, you will be presented with the "Install" button. Press this to start the [installation process](#) step.

6.3 The Installation Process

The installation process runs each of the selected installation files in turn.

If one of the MeggieSoft Games to be updated is running, it will need to be exited before the new version is installed. You may do this yourself when prompted, otherwise the Online Update process will terminate it for you.

6.4 Downloaded File Store

Files downloaded by the online update process are placed in the "downloads" subfolder of your MeggieSoft Games filefolder - i.e., the filefolder which you specified when installing MeggieSoft Games programs.

The names given to the files in the download file store are based upon what they contain and the version/build numbers. The higher the number, the later the version.

The prefix to the version/build number is a program code, as follows:

For the games:

- The first two characters of the program code are "cn", "cb", "eu", "gw", "gr", "pn", "pq" and "r5" for Canasta, Cribbage, Euchre & Écarté, German Whist, Gin Rummy, Pinochle & Bezique, Piquet, and Rummy 500, respectively.
- The third character is "f" for full installation, "u" for update installation and "b" for beta version
- The numeric part is the build number

Thus `cnu16001.exe` is an update installation for version 16.0 of Canasta.

For other files, the three character codes for these files:

- upd (Online Update prior to version 3)
- plp (Plus Pack),
- wsp (WinSpeech)
- t4s (Text-To-Speech v4.0)
- t5s (Text-To-Speech v5.1)
- mmv (Mike and Mary Voices)
- msi (MSI file installer)

You may delete these files unless you wish to keep them for reinstallation later. You may review and delete any existing files in your downloaded file store via the "Manage Old Install Files" selection in the [Admin Menu](#). Note that this selection will not be displayed if you have no downloaded files stored.

7 Useful Things To Know

The MeggieSoft Games share a number of features to facilitate operational ease and playing realism. A number of the most popular of these are presented in the following sections:

[Assistance and Information](#)
[Starting and Resuming](#)
[Mouse and Mousepointers](#)
[Realism and Sound Effects](#)
[Visual Customization](#)

7.1 Assistance and Information

Each of the MeggieSoft Games includes a wealth of facilities to help you understand and play the game. These include:

Query button: To the left of the center of the status bar, clicking on this button will inform you of what you should be doing next. This is equivalent to selecting "[Explain](#)" under the [Assist Menu](#).

Lightbulb button: Next to the query button, clicking on this button will result in an examination of your cards with a specific recommendation, i.e., hint, of what the computer opponent (master level) would do in this situation. This is equivalent to selecting "[Suggest](#)" under the Assist Menu.

Status Bar Displays: Helpful information regarding the state of play and (depending on the game and selected preferences) the state of your hand.

Tutorial: The [tutorial](#) feature is started from the Assist Menu. This will walk-you through as many turns, rounds or games as you wish while providing a visual commentary of what is happening at each step. Your current game in progress will be suspended for the tutorial and resumed when you conclude the tutorial.

AutoStep: The [AutoStep](#) feature is started from the [Player Menu](#). This operation permits you to step through the playing of the game with the computer opponent playing your cards for you. When you stop the AutoStep operation, you may resume playing yourself, either from the current state of play, or from where you were before invoking AutoStep.

Help: The MeggieSoft Games provide in-depth help documentation regarding how to play the game and how to get the best from the user-interface. The text you are reading is part of the help file.

User Guide: The contents of the help file are also included in a printable User Guide in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. You will need the free Acrobat reader in order to read and print this User guide.

Analysis and Review: Additional facilities under the Assist and [View](#) Menus permit you to review, deduce,

and/or analyze various aspects of the play and card distribution of the current round.

7.2 Starting and Resuming

When you first start Canasta, you start with the player name "Player" at Round 1 of Game 1, with the "Start" button showing in the status bar. When you exit, a record is retained of the games and rounds completed. When you next start Canasta you will, by default, start at the beginning of the round following the last one completed. Thus if you exit halfway through round five, you will be at the beginning of round five when you next start Canasta.

There are numerous menu option and preference facilities which are available to alter this default behavior. These include:

Player Names: If you don't want to be called "Player", select "[Change Players](#)" from the [Player Menu](#) and use the "Add" facility to add a player name of your own. You may then switch to your new player name and, if you wish, remove the record of "Player", again via the "Change Players" menu item. If you have more than one player name defined, see the note regarding multiple players (below).

Start Button: If you select "AutoStart - Dealing" from the [Operational Preferences](#), the start button will be bypassed and dealing will commence immediately.

Multiple Players: If you have defined more than one player name (perhaps for different family members), you will be asked to choose which player each time that you start Canasta. However, you may bypass this by selecting "AutoResume" from the Operational Preferences. When selected, Canasta will always start for the player who last exited Canasta.

Restore Game In Progress: If you want to start each session from exactly where you left off the previous one (that is part way through a round), select "Autostart - Restore" from the Operational Preferences.

Replaying Games or Rounds: You may select "[Replay Game](#)" or "[Replay Round](#)" from the [Game Menu](#). Note that these are strict replays - the cards will be dealt as before. If you wish to restart the current game with a fresh shuffle, select "[Restart Fresh Game](#)".

7.3 Mouse and Mousepointers

The Meggiesoft Games support both "[Drag and Drop](#)" and "[Point and Click](#)" methods of operation. There is no preference setting required; you can use either method at any time.

With the drag-and-drop mode, the special [mousepointer icons](#) change to provide a visual reminder of where you can drop what is being dragged. You may suppress these mousepointers and use the regular Windows mousepointer icons if you wish. This is done via the [Animation Preferences](#).

All point-and-click operations are effected via single mouse-clicks. With the exception of the AutoMeld facility (see [Using The Mouse](#)), double-clicking has no effect and, even though every effort is made to ignore the second click, may in rare circumstances cause an operational error. You will receive an advisory message if you are double-clicking frequently.

The "AutoMouse" features may be enabled via the [Operational Preferences](#). When selected, these move the mousepointer automatically to where you are most likely to next need it.

7.4 Realism and Sound Effects

MeggieSoft Games has invested considerable effort in developing the level of realism included in the game playing experience. However, we are very aware that such a feature to one person is a gimmick to another, so all of these effects are selectable and deselectable as personal preferences:

Rounded Card Corners: The majority of computer card games have rectangular cards, or moderately approximated corner rounding. The MeggieSoft Games include proprietary "True Corners" technology which correctly displays cards with rounded corners on every background (even your own custom image files). This preference is set via the [Card Preferences](#).

Animated Card Movement: This effect refers to the display of a card moving across the display as it is moved from one place to another. It may be enabled or disabled via the [Animation Preferences](#). When disabled, cards merely disappear from their start position and appear at their end position.

Animated Card Turning: This effect is additional to animated card movement and refers to the additional display of a card rotating as it is moved from a face up position to a face down position (or vice versa). It may be enabled or disabled via the [Animation Preferences](#). When disabled, cards instantaneously flip when they reach their end position.

Card Interleaving: This effect refers to the sliding of cards in and out of the player's hand between the adjacent cards. For even more realistic effects, the TrueSlide [Animation Preference](#) may be selected. Because the card interleaving effect is somewhat processor and graphics intensive, it may be disabled via the Animation Preferences. For more information, see the [Card Interleaving](#) section.

Sound Effects:

The sounds effects, including those of shuffling and cards being placed, may be suppressed (or changed to a wav file of your choosing) via the [Sound Preferences](#).

7.5 Visual Customization

The MeggieSoft Games provide a wide variety of customization options so that you may enjoy playing them in an environment that you find personally pleasing to the eye.

Table Effect: If you wish, you may enable/disable the use of a "wallpaper" image for the table display (the outer area). If enabled, you may select an image effect supplied by MeggieSoft Games or select any image file (bmp, wmf, or jpg) from within your own computer files.

Mat Effect: If you wish, you may enable/disable the use of a "wallpaper" image for the mat display (the inner area). If enabled, you may select an image effect supplied by MeggieSoft Games or select any image file (bmp, wmf, or jpg) from within your own computer files. The table and mat effects may be enabled/disabled via [Screen Preferences](#).

Card Back: If you wish, you may enable/disable the use of a graphic image for the card backs as an alternative to the six built-in designs. This is achieved via the [Card Back Preferences](#). You may select an image effect supplied by MeggieSoft Games or select any image file (bmp, wmf, or jpg) from within your own computer files - a photograph of a loved one, perhaps.

Colors: The colors for various parts of the display, including the table and mat if wallpapering is disabled, may be changed and defined via the [Color Preferences](#).

Font: The font used for the scoresheet and the status bar may be changed via [Screen Preferences](#).

Game Score Position: You may display the game totals in any one of four positions (main title bar, on the table, on the scoresheet, in the status bar) via the Screen Preferences.

Display Size: You may alter the display window size to your liking, or maximize it to fill your screen. This is achieved either by selecting one of the preset sizes under Screen Preferences, or by dragging the bottom or side

of the window (per normal Microsoft Windows practices). If the MeggieSoft Games mousepointers are operative, you will not see the normal Windows resizing mousepointer icon, but the operation will work without problem if the mouse is positioned at the edge of the window. If you have installed the Plus Pack, there will be three additional card sizes (one smaller and two larger) in addition to the standard size for you to select according to your window size. These are selected via the [Card Preferences](#).

8 Miscellaneous Topics

The following topics are included to help you learn more about Canasta, and enhance your enjoyment of the game:

- [Silent Startup](#)
- [Automatic MAPI Email Creation](#)
- [About The Opponent](#)
- [Skill Levels](#)
- [Online Play Protocol](#)
- [How To...](#)
- [Saved Information](#)
- [Increasing Performance](#)
- [Troubleshooting](#)
- [Diagnostic Dump Files](#)
- [Technical Construction](#)
- [Third Party Components](#)

8.1 Silent Startup

If you use Canasta extensively, you may choose to have it startup as a background (sleeping) process when Windows starts.

To do this, you need to add a shortcut to your Windows Startup folder with the following target:

"C:\Program Files\MeggieSoft Games\Canasta.exe" \S

(you will need to alter the path accordingly if you installed Canasta to a different installation filefolder than "C:\Program Files\MeggieSoft Games".)

During Windows startup, you will then see the Canasta splash screen as Canasta loads, and then Canasta will sleep as an icon in your Windows taskbar tray. When you want to play Canasta, you may then merely click on the tray icon. Canasta will appear instantly.

If you startup using this method, you should also select the "On Exit:Sleep As Tray Icon" setting in the [Operational Preferences](#) so that Canasta will return to sleeping in the tray when you exit it. (If you do not do this, Canasta will exit completely and will undergo a fresh start when you next run it.)

8.2 Automation MAPI Email Creation

Canasta includes the ability to invoke MAPI-compliant email clients automatically.

If you use such a client (popular examples include: Outlook, Outlook Express, Eudora, Thunderbird, AOL version 7.0 and later), selection of the "Email MeggieSoft Games" facility under the [Help menu](#), or the "Create Diagnostic File" facility under the [Admin menu](#), should result in your email client's "compose" window being opened with the Meggiesoft Games email address already included. For the "Create Diagnostic File" facility, the diagnostic file will automatically be attached.

In the case of an unexpected program failure, the email client will be invoked in a similar manner and will also include the detail of the failure as the message text.

If you do not use a MAPI-compliant email client (for example, if you manage your emailings online through your internet browser), or if the automatic MAPI link does not work for any reason, you will need create and send the email by hand, following the alternative instructions that will be displayed.

8.3 About The Opponent

The opponent plays automatically after you have discarded, or when it is the opponent's turn to start a round.

The opponent skill level may be set at any of six levels from the "[Skill Level](#)" option under [Opponent Preferences](#).

When the opponent takes a new card from the stock, it will briefly highlight the stock as confirmation. When the opponent takes cards from the discard pile, it will briefly highlight the leftmost of the cards taken. If this is not the last discard, the opponent will also briefly highlight the card when it melds it so that you can be sure that the opponent is abiding by the rules.

The opponent also pauses briefly (about two fifths of a second) after taking a card and between each of multiple melds so that the actions of its turn can be clearly viewed.

If desired, the highlighting features and the pause can be turned off via [Opponent Preferences](#).

8.4 Skill Levels

Six skill levels are available, in ascending order of difficulty from Carefree to Master. The three higher levels are the most time consuming of the skill levels, and may be frustrating on a slow processor. However, they make for the most challenging game and are relatively hard to beat.

When rounds and games are recorded on the scoreboard, the skill level of the opponent is also saved. If the opponent skill level is changed during a round or game, then the skill level recorded is the highest that was used during the round or game.

Note that the Carefree level rarely wins because it always takes from the stock and prefers to meld Canastas rather than shorter melds.

8.5 Online Play Protocol

This information is provided for users who have some knowledge of online communications protocols and who are interested to learn something about the protocol used within the MeggieSoft Games to manage online play between two computers.

The underlying transport protocol is IP managed by the "msinet.ocx" ActiveX control.

Once communication has been established, the MeggieSoft Games protocol is applied on top of the IP transport protocol, and the "Play Sequence" super protocol is applied on top of the MeggieSoft Games protocol. The current level of the MeggieSoft Games is Level 4. If the connecting users are using different versions of the protocol, the level employed is the lower of the two levels. (If the level employed is lower than Level 4, many of the following features will not be applied.)

Protocol Level 4 operates as follows:

Packet Basics

- The primary packet types are termed "data", "receipt" and "confirmation".
- A "play" packet is a data packet which contains the details of a player's turn (card play), or which contains control data indicating readiness to receive the next play packet.
- Outbound data packets are sequence numbered in a cycle of 1-9.
- Each data packet received is acknowledged by the return of a corresponding receipt packet .

- Each receipt packet received is acknowledged by the return of a corresponding confirmation packet.

Duplicate Packets

- All duplicate packets are ignored upon receipt; only the first accepted is processed. Prolific packet duplication is a standard feature of Protocol Level 4 in order to compensate for the receiver not receiving a packet, or ignoring the receipt of a packet if it is otherwise busy or if the packet arrives out of sequence.

Partial Packets

- If a partial packet is received, it is not processed until the remainder arrives. (This compensates for the possibility of packets arriving in pieces due to network pathing conditions.)

Ignored Packets

- Receipt and confirmation packets are ignored if they do not carry the same packet number as the corresponding data packet.
- A data packet is ignored if it does not carry the next expected packet sequence number. (This compensates for the possibility of packets arriving out of order due to network pathing conditions.)
- The games do not transmit or accept new data packets while awaiting a receipt or confirmation packet, or if actively operating upon the last data packet received.
- Any data packets that are received when the game is not accepting new data are ignored. (However, if a data packet arrives with the next packet number following that of an expected confirmation packet, it is accepted as a confirmation packet before it is ignored. This compensates for the possibility of a lost confirmation packet.)

Packet Retransmission

- While awaiting a receipt packet, the data packet transmitter will repeat sending the data packet until the receipt packet is received. This compensates for the packet being ignored (see above) or lost in transit.
- While awaiting a confirmation packet, the receipt packet transmitter will repeat sending the receipt packet until the confirmation packet is received. This compensates for the receipt being ignored (see above) or lost in transit.
- In order not to overload the recipient's capacity to accept retransmission, Protocol Level 4 continuously monitors the round-trip time (data sent - receipt accepted) of the connection and the repeat transmissions of a packet are timed accordingly. Retransmission will occur for sixty seconds, after which time the link will be dropped as non-responsive. (Note that this is not sixty seconds of user inactivity, but sixty seconds of not obtaining the required protocol communication feedback to a data packet or receipt packet.)

Play Sequence Super-Protocol

The super protocol protects against any possibility of a communication gridlock due to play packet collision (each sends a play packet simultaneously) or premature play transmission (one sends a second play packet before the other has fully processed the previous play packet).

- When one side is ready to accept the other's card play (i.e., it is "waiting for opponent"), it sends a "positive" play control packet indicating that it is ready.
- The other then sends its play detail packet when the player completes their turn. When it receives the receipt for this packet, it temporarily suspends all further outbound data packet transmission.
- The recipient of the play detail packet will then send a second "negative" play control packet (indicating that the recipient has started processing the play packet, and will not accept another play packet until it indicates that it is ready to do so).
- When it receives the "negative" play control packet, the sender of the play packet will remove its suspension on outbound transmissions. However, it will not transmit another play packet until it receives a "positive" play control packet indicating that the other party is ready to accept a play packet ("waiting for opponent").

The testing for Protocol Level 4 is performed on a connection with a very fast round trip time (less than 2 milliseconds on average) for a non-stop series of over 500 online games without failure. The testing procedure uses AutoPilot on each side, so that the user responses when taking a turn are significantly faster than under human player conditions. Moreover, in test mode, each side completely ignores 7% of inbound packets in order to simulate a high-level of corruption or loss in transit.

8.6 How To ...

How to save personal preferences

All options changed via the [Preferences](#) window are saved if the "Save Preferences" option at the bottom of

the Preferences window is checked.

How to recover a reset scoreboard

Scoreboards are only permanently saved when you select "[Save Scoreboard](#)", or when you respond "Yes" when exiting Canasta or changing players. If you have reset your scoreboard and would have preferred not to have done so, just exit Canasta and respond "No" to the prompt "Save updated scoreboard...?" When you restart Canasta, your previous scoreboard will be active.

How to start Canasta for a specific player

Canasta supports Windows file associations. If you know how to associate a file extension with a program, you may associate the extension "cns" (scoreboard files) with "canasta.exe". You may then create a shortcut for each player's cns file and have Canasta start automatically for that player. You might put these shortcuts on the desktop.

8.7 Saved Information

Registration and preference information is saved between Canasta sessions in the Registry.

Registration

If you are a registered user, your name and encoded registration are stored.

AutoResume

When AutoResume is active, the name of the last player is maintained. Thus AutoResume always recovers the state that it was when the previous session exited.

Personal Preferences

The preference settings for each player are saved separately. For example, Jane's options will be saved in the section named "Jane".

Personal Scoreboards

Each player's scoreboard is saved in the Canasta directory as xxxxxx.cns, where xxxxxx is the player's name. Canasta considers a player to be currently defined by whether a scoreboard file exists for the player, irrespective of whether options are saved for that player. An empty scoreboard file is created for a player when their name is added via the [Change Players](#) menu option. If [AutoRestore](#) is enabled, the state of the game in progress is saved as xxxxxx.cnk.

To clear the scoreboard completely, use the "[Reset Scoreboard](#)" option of the [Player Menu](#).

8.8 Increasing Performance

Canasta includes Preference options that are intensive of graphics processing. You should select these if you want more realism, but deselect them if graphics performance suffers unacceptably. These options are:

- True Corners
- Card Dragging
- "Place Card" Sound Effect.
- Animation
- Table Effect and Mat Effect
- Tinting of Melds and Discard Pile

If the speed of the deal is the only aspect that you find frustrating, consider using the "Quick Deal" or "Quiet Deal" under [Dealing Preferences](#). Also, consider selecting the "Quick Display" option under [Opponent Preferences](#) if the opponent is too slow for your liking. This will remove the 0.4 second delay between the opponent's actions. Selecting the respective "No Highlight" options under [Opponent Preferences](#) will inhibit discard and stock highlighting and the associated 0.2 second delay.

8.9 Troubleshooting

Most problems encountered are a result of one of the following:

- Graphics driver conflict, usually manifested by the system freezing or by the display of white cards. Check that you have the latest drivers from your graphics card manufacturer. Otherwise configure your system to use a graphics setting with fewer colors (256 or 16), reduce the intensity of acceleration effects (via the System Control Panel), or disable [Table Effect and Mat Effect](#), [Animation](#), and perhaps [Custom Cardback](#), if you have these selected.
- Corrupt scoreboard file. Under the "[Change Players](#)" option of the [Game Menu](#), remove the player for whom the problem occurs and re-add. Alternatively, exit Canasta and delete the corresponding xxxxxx.cns and xxxxxx.cnk files from the directory where Canasta resides and then re-add the player from within Canasta.

If all else fails, delete the directory where Canasta resides, and reinstall. If the problem persists, you may need to create a [diagnostic dump file](#) for analysis by MeggieSoft Games.

8.10 Diagnostic Dump Files

Occasionally there is a fault with Canasta, or its interaction with a particular system configuration, which requires in-depth analysis to resolve.

If you report such a problem to MeggieSoft Games, you may be requested to provide this file, which contains all the preference and other data required to exactly replicate your playing conditions.

In order to create such a file, select the Create Diagnostic File option under the [Admin menu](#). The file will be created with the name "canddiag.txt" and will be found in your MeggieSoft Games filefolder (default is C:\Program Files\MeggieSoft Games). Please then send the file as an email attachment in your reply to MeggieSoft Games.

A similar file is generally created when Canasta is terminated abruptly by the system (e.g., via the Windows Task Manager or a reboot).. In this case the file name is msgdump.txt. Again, MeggieSoft Games will need to receive this file in order to swiftly examine and resolve any problems.

8.11 Technical Construction

Canasta is programmed in Microsoft Visual Basic, Version 6.0.

Canasta works from a bitmap of all the card images and makes extensive use of the Windows API BitBlt function. Because of this, Canasta is fast, but consumes some RAM and GDI resources. Alternative methods of managing the user interface proved to be more processor intensive and less conducive to fluid play. The trade-off was made for performance at the cost of resource consumption.

8.12 Third Party Components

Although Canasta does not use a dll for card drawing (for performance reasons), Stephen Murphy's excellent freeware "qcard.dll" was used to create the bitmaps which Canasta uses. The card back designs included in qcard.dll were created by Daniel Di Bacco. Acknowledgments are extended to each of them.

The Canasta help system was created using Firas Bushnaq's powerful "Visual Help".

Visual Help is a shareware product licensed by the author.

The "Speak-To-Me" feature uses PC WholeWare's WinSpeech technology, which has been licensed by MeggieSoft Games for use with Canasta.

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