Canasta for Windows Help

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1 Getting Started

1.1 The game explained

Canasta is a card game, which has been played for many decades. It developed in Uruguay in the fifties at the Punta del Este beach, and has become popular all over the world. The word 'canasta' is Spanish for basket.

Canasta is played with two decks of cards, with 54 cards each: 52 standard cards, plus two Jokers. Canasta can be played with two to four players, but in this Windows version there are always two players: you and your opponent. The opponent can either be your computer or another person (when playing over a network).

Overview of the game

- Your goal is to beat your opponent by scoring more points than (s)he does. You score points by melding cards, and making as many canastas as possible.
- Each player starts with 15 cards in hand. Yours are visible at the bottom of the window.
- Both players take turns in drawing one card from the stock, and discarding one card on the discard pile (in that order). Both players take turns in drawing the first card.
- After drawing a card, a player may meld cards if (s)he wants to. Cards are melded in columns of at least three cards; e.g. you can meld three Kings, or four Fives. You cannot meld sequences like Four-Five-Six. Once a card has been melded, it cannot be taken back into the hand (except with the Undo meld option).
- When a player has melded his cards, he ends his turn by discarding a card. At that point, his melded cards are checked to see if they conform to the canasta rules. Discarding a card is not necessary if the player can go out by melding all of his cards.
- Instead of drawing a card from the stock, a player may take the entire discard pile. However, this is only allowed if he can directly meld the top card.
- A hand is over when one of the players has no cards left in his hand, or when there are no cards left on the stock. The scores of both players are then computed, and a new hand is dealt. A player can only finish a hand when he has at least one or two canastas, depending on the setting of the corresponding option.
- A canasta match is over when one of the players reaches 5,000 points.

1.2 The screen explained

Click on the various parts of the Canasta screen to bring up information on their meaning.
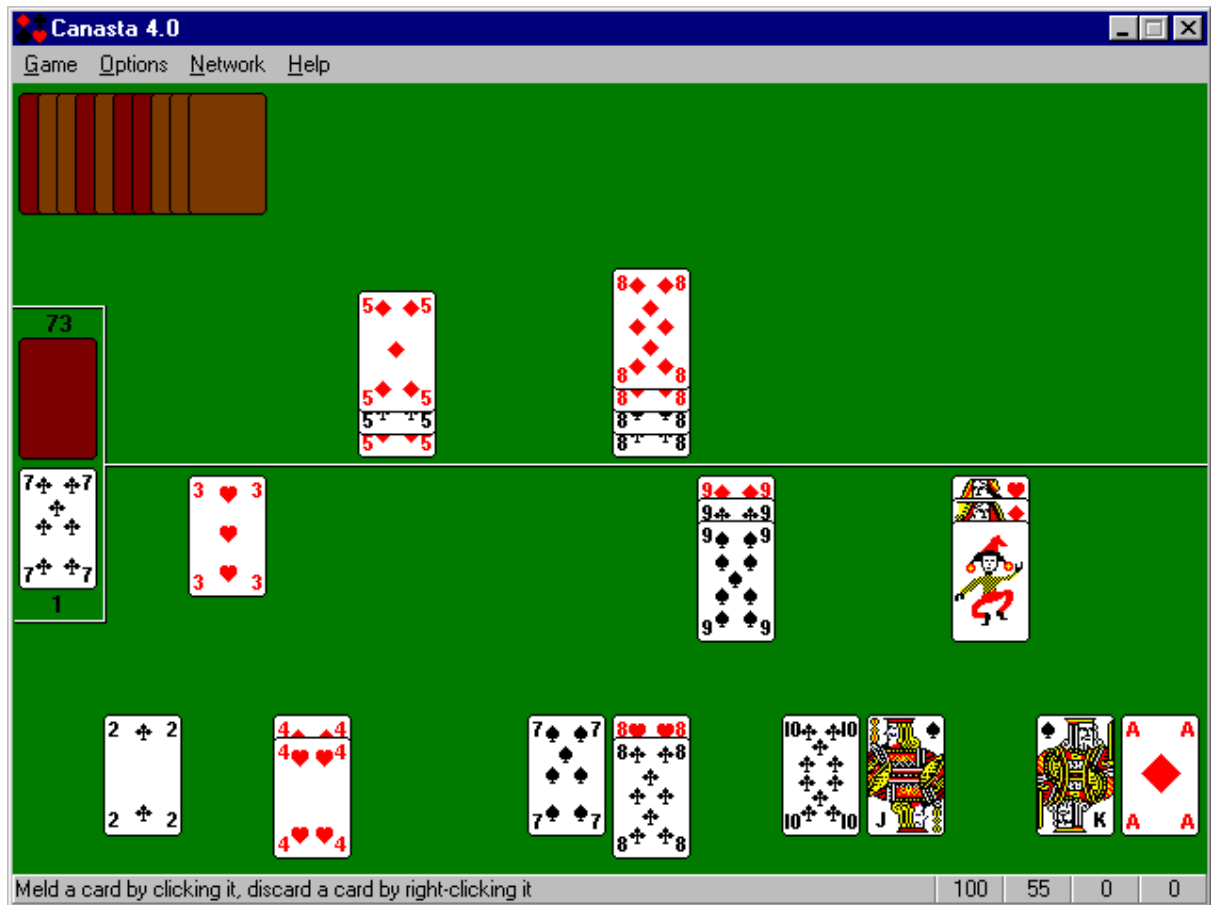
See also: Controls

1.3 The rules explained

The rules in Canasta for Windows follow 'Hoyle's Rules of Games'. The options mentioned below all refer to the **Options\Rules** dialog box.

The rules are defined as follows:

- If a rank is melded, it must contain at least three cards on the table.
- It is possible to add a wildcard to a column of cards of any rank on the table. The wildcard is then seen as a card of that rank (but the value remains unchanged). However, there may never be more wildcards than natural cards within one column.
- At the beginning of a hand, the top card of the stock is automatically turned around and placed on the discard pile. If this card is a Red Three or a wildcard, the procedure is repeated until the top card of the discard pile is neither a Red Three nor a wildcard.
- When a new hand is dealt, the hands of both players are checked to see if they contain a Red Three. If there is one, that Three is then automatically melded, and an extra card is dealt to the hand out of which it came. This procedure is repeated until neither player has any Red Threes left in his hand.
- Black Threes may not be melded, except when the player can go out by melding a column of three or four Black Threes. These Black Threes must then be the last cards to be melded.

- The discard pile can be **frozen** by discarding a wildcard or a Red Three. A freeze is indicated by brackets [..] and means that both players are only allowed to take the discard pile if they can meld the top card using only the cards in their hand, as if they had no cards on the table.

  For example, if the discard pile is frozen and the top card is a Seven, the pile may only be taken if the player has two Sevens in his hand, even though he has a column of three Sevens on the table. Also, no wildcards may be used in melding: if he has one Seven and a wildcard in hand - instead of two Sevens- he may not take the discard pile.

- If you have taken the discard pile but discover that you cannot use the top card, you can restore the pile by clicking on it. This carries a penalty of 50 points.

- It is never allowed to take the discard pile when the top card is a Black Three, a Red Three or a wildcard. Thus, Black Threes can be used as a refrigerator for a single turn.

- The first time a player melds cards in a hand, their value must be at least a certain minimum. When a player goes out in one turn ('goes out concealed'), this requirement does not apply.

- A player can only go out when he has at least one or two canastas, depending on the **Canastas needed to go out** setting. If a player has less than this number of canastas, and only has one card left that he should discard, he has to 'pass the discard', i.e., he does not discard that last card.

- Taking a discard pile that only contains one card is never allowed if you only have one card in your hand.

- When there are no more cards on the stock a special situation occurs:
  1. If the discard pile is not frozen and you can add the top discard to one of your melds, you *must* take that top discard. Only that card is removed from the pile; you do not receive the rest. You must discard normally.
  2. If you can take the discard pile in the normal way, you may. You must discard normally.
  3. If you can do neither, press the 'End Hand' button that appears in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. You do not have to discard.

2   Reference Information

2.1   Scoring

Card Values and Bonuses

The cards have the following point values:

Card	Value
Four, Five, Six, Seven, Black Three	5
Eight, Nine, Ten, Jack, Queen, King	10
Deuce, Ace	20
Joker	50
Red Three	100

The following bonuses are awarded:

- A mixed canasta is worth 300 points, a natural canasta 500 points, and a wildcard canasta 1,000 points.
- The player that goes out gets a bonus of 100 points. If this player had no cards (except Red Threes) on the table directly before going out ('goes out concealed'), this bonus is doubled to 200 points.
- If a player has all four Red Threes on the table, their score of 400 points is doubled to 800 points.

- If a player goes out and his opponent has melded nothing but Red Threes, the value of those Red Threes is **deducted** from his opponent's score.

Total Score

At the end of a hand, the total score is calculated as follows:

1. The sum of the values of the cards on the table forms the initial score value.
2. Bonuses for canastas, going out and Red Threes are added to the score.
3. The values of the cards in hand are deducted from the score.

However, if you have selected Yes in the **Canasta required for positive score** option, this calculation is only valid if you have at least the number of canastas as it is shown in the **Canastas needed to go out** setting ! If not, a negative score results consisting of the sum of the values of the cards in your hand and on the table. It is therefore always wise to get a canasta quickly, so that you don't run the risk of holding a large collection of cards if your opponent goes out.
If you have selected No, the above does not apply.

Minimum

The first time in a hand that a player melds cards the sum of their values must be at least a certain minimum. This minimum depends on your current score in the following way:

Score	Minimum
Less than 0	15
Between 0 and 1495	50
Between 1500 and 2995	90
3000 or More	120

Notes
- The values of any Red Threes never contribute to the required minimum. Canastas contribute only if the corresponding option is enabled.
- If you turn off the option **Top card counts for initial meld**, you must add the value of the top card to the minimum needed when taking the discard pile. E.g., if the minimum is 50 and you took an Ace from the pile, you must have 50 + 20 = 70 points on the table to get the rest of the pile. The value of the Ace is thus not counted toward the 50 point minimum.
- If you took the top card of the discard pile but you discover that you cannot use it, you can put it back by clicking on the pile again. This carries a penalty of 50 points.

2.2　Rules

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- If a rank is melded, it must contain at least three cards on the table.

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neither a Red Three nor a wildcard.

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  2. If you can take the discard pile in the normal way, you may. You must discard normally.
  3. If you can do neither, press the 'End Hand' button that appears in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. You do not have to discard.

2.3   **Mouse and Keyboard Controls**

Mouse
The mouse buttons have different functions, depending on the area of the Canasta window the cursor is placed over. They are listed here for reference:

Area	Left click	ctrl + left click	shift + left click	Right click
Card in hand	Meld one	Meld three	Meld all	Discard*
Melded card	Add wildcard		Add wildcards until canasta	
Melded red three				Discard**
Stock	Draw card			
Discard pile	1- Take pile 2- Undo taking pile			

*: This is a double right click if you set the **Discarding** setting to 'Double right click'.

: This is only allowed if you set the rule option **Freeze discard pile.

Melding a column of two cards will automatically cause a wildcard to be added (if available).

Keyboard
There are keyboard equivalents for the mouse actions:

Key	Action
F6	Draw card
F7	Take discard pile
F8	Meld card
F9	Add wildcard
F10	Discard card

3 Network Play

3.1 Concepts

Instead of playing against the computer, Canasta allows you to play against another person. This way, every move you do is sent to the computer of your opponent and vice versa. The location of your opponent does not matter: (s)he can be your neighbour or someone halfway across the world.

Chat window
A chat window is opened when a connection is established. This window allows you to type messages to your opponent to compliment him/her with a victory, or to protest a particularly nasty piece of Canasta play.

Your name in the chat window is the same as the current player defined in the Options\Customize...\Player setting. If no player is defined, you are simply known as 'Opponent'.

Rules
It is possible that your opponent has set his/her rule options differently from yours. Since you don't want to play with different rules, Canasta detects this and shows you a list of the inconsistent settings. You can change these after negotiating with your opponent via the chat window.
The easiest way to synchronize the rules is press the 'Use Opponent's Rules' button. This sets your rules equal to your opponent's rules. They are reset to your old settings when the network game ends.

Don't change the rules at both sides, or you will be stuck in the reverse situation.

TCP/IP
Canasta uses the TCP/IP protocol. This protocol lets your computer talk to the computer of your opponent. Because the Canasta online play goes via a server on the internet, it is not possible to play over a LAN without having an internet connection.

Ladder Competition
Click here for more information on the Canasta Internet ladder competition.

3.2 Meeting other Players

Canasta features an online lobby, where you can meet other Canasta players. To log in, select Network\Lobby from the Canasta menu, or press F5. This opens the Lobby screen.

Enter your nickname if you do not have one already, and press the Login button. This connects you to the Canasta lobby. When the connection is complete, you will see other players available in the list on the right. Select one of them and press 'Invite' to start a game with him/her.

The lobby has multiple rooms, "Just for Fun" and "Competition". When you log in, you can play with people who are in the same room with you. You can also create a private room by entering a name. Only players who know that name can use this room. This is mostly useful for tournaments.

If there is no player available, you can press 'Hide, stay available' to hide the lobby screen but remain logged in to the lobby. This way, when another player enters the lobby, you are still available for play.

3.3   Ladder Competition

On the Internet, a ladder competition is available for Canasta players. If you like to test your skills against others around the world, this is the place to go. The website is located at

http://www.igl.net/canasta.

The ladder competition is intended for licensed players.

 More details on the ladder rules can be found on the IGL site.

4   The Menu Bar

4.1   Game Menu

The Game Menu has the following items:

New
This item starts a new game; the scores are set to 0, and a new hand is dealt.
You must use this if you want to change the rule options: they are disabled during a game. Starting a new game will allow you to change them.

Load...
This item lets you resume a game of Canasta that you saved earlier. Your current game will be lost.

Save...
This item lets you save your current game of Canasta. The suggested name is the name of the current player plus the extension .can.

HiScores...
This item brings up the highscore window.

Win Ratio...
This item shows you the win ratio statistics for a player.

Undo Meld
This item moves the last card you melded back into your hand.
The number of melds undo 'remembers' is limited only by memory size, however due to the rules of Canasta you cannot undo the following things:

1) Discarding a card.
2) Melding cards that you were forced to meld to get the discard pile.

You can undo taking the discard pile by clicking on it again.

Undo All
Selecting this item undoes all melds in this turn.

Exit
This item exits from Canasta. If you set the option Autosave on Exit in the Options screen, your game will be saved automatically. Otherwise, your current game will be discarded. If you want to keep it, press F4 before exiting to save the game to disk.

4.2   Options Menu

The Options Menu has the following items:

Customize...
This item brings up the Customize dialog box in which you can personalize your copy of Canasta.

Decks...
This item brings up the Cardback dialog box where you can determine the kind of card back you want. You can set different card backs for each of the two decks.

Sound...
This item brings up the Sound dialog box where you can customize the sounds that Canasta uses.

Rules...
This item brings up the Rules dialog box in which you can set and view the rules for Canasta.

4.3   Network Menu

The Network Menu has the following items:

Connect to Opponent...
This item brings up the dialog box where you can start a connection with your opponent.

Rule Differences…
During a network game, this item brings up the dialog box where you can view the rule differences that exists between you and your opponent. If there are no differences, the dialog will not display.

Disconnect
During a network game, this item disconnects you from the current network connection, or it will stop waiting for that connection. Your opponent will get a notification of this.

Chat window always on top
Indicates whether the chat window stays on top of the Canasta window when it loses the focus.

4.4   Buy Menu

Enter here your License Name and License Key that you receive when you order Canasta (see Ordering). If the key matches the name, your copy of Canasta is automatically upgraded to the licensed version. The key only has to be entered once.

Note that the user name is case-sensitive, so be sure to enter it exactly as provided.

The Buy menu is removed after a successful registration.

4.5   Help Menu

The Help Menu has the following items:

Help Topics...
This item starts the Canasta help system.

Canasta Home Page
Opens the Canasta website in your webbrowser.

Order online
Opens the order page on the Canasta website in your webbrowser.

Check for Upgrade...
Checks with the Canasta website to see if there is a newer version of Canasta available.

About
This item brings up a dialog which gives information about Canasta and shows your name, if you have licensed the game.

5 Product Information

5.1 Ordering

Canasta is a shareware program. This means that it is not free, but you can use it without payment for a limited time.
The evaluation version of Canasta has full functionality and a timeout limit of one hour. You can try everything so you have the opportunity to try the game before purchasing.

When you decide you want the full game with billions of different hands, you need to buy it. You will then receive a license key that you can enter in the Buy menu. You only have to do that once; the key will remain valid for future updates of Canasta.
If you decide not to purchase the full version, it is possible to uninstall Canasta from your harddisk.

If you like this game and support the shareware concept, please purchase a license.

The price of Canasta is $19.95 (US) or the equivalent in a European currency. See Prices for a pricelist in other currencies.

For ordering instructions, follow this link.

5.2 Getting the latest version

The latest version of Canasta can be downloaded from the Canasta for Windows website:

http://www.canasta.net/download.php

Licensed users can also download from this location; your license info will remain valid.

5.3 Author Contact

If you
- Have a question about Canasta;

- Want to report a bug;

- Have a comment or suggestion;

- Want to convince yourself of the existence of product support;

You can contact us via the Canasta support page on the Canasta website:

http://www.canasta.net/support.php

If you report a bug, please include the version of Canasta you are using and all rule options that were active when the problem occurred. This makes it easier to find the error in the program. If possible, attach a saved game of the situation.

5.4   Credits

I would like to thank the following people, who have helped me in various ways with the development of Canasta:

	Thank you for :
Raymond Arts	Testing
Wim Bax	Introducing me to Canasta, Testing & Sound
Eva Bendix	Testing & Design
Angelo de Crook	Testing network functionality
Arjan de Gast	Testing
Ger & Mieke Harte	Financial and moral support
Paul Johannsen	Suggestions, Distribution & Hardware Supply
Silvia de Kloe	Testing
Sacha Prins	Technical advice
Stuart Williamson	Having a great time
Manuel Mertens	Testing

Of the numerous people who made suggestions, I want to mention the following:

Paul Johannsen, my American Godfather (but who won't get an Oscar);
John McElroy, for pointing me to ICQ.

To you, and to all the others who made a contribution: Thanks, people!

Mark-Jan Harte

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