

Hearts

An intriguing game for 3 to 7 players; great to learn from someone who knows how to play. These official rules are helpful reminders. There are lots of variations!

Object of the game: Avoid taking penalty cards and end the game with no heart cards

Before you deal: Depending on the number of players, discard 2s from the deck:

Three players: discard one 2

Four or six players: do not remove any

Five players: discard two 2s

Seven players: discard three twos

The 2 of hearts cannot be discarded.

Deal: The dealer deals out all the cards one at a time and face down, beginning with the player to her left and going clockwise.

Play: The player to the dealer's left leads to the first trick. Thereafter the winner of one trick leads to the next. Each player after the lead must follow suit if she can. If she cannot, she can play any card she likes. A hand ends when all the hearts cards have appeared in play.

Revoking: If a player fails to follow suit when she is able to, she may correct her mistake without penalty if she does so before the trick is picked up. Otherwise she scores 13 points and the hand ends. No other player can score penalty points on that hand.

Scoring: Each player scores one penalty point for each card of the hearts suit contained in tricks taken by her.

Continuing play: After each hand, the deal passes one player to the left.

End: The winner is the player with the fewest penalty points after an agreed number of hands. Alternatively, the winner is the player with the fewest penalty points when one player reaches a set number of points (eg 50 points).

Adapted from The Little Giant Encyclopedia of Card Games (Sterling, 1995)