

## ROYALS

Royals is an elaborate game of the Rummy family in which players must accumulate royals (face cards) of a particular suit by winning tricks, before they can acquire further points by melding matches of three or more cards.

**Number of Players** - Two

**Object of the Game** - To gain points in a meld display, either by winning tricks or by melding matches of three or more cards.

**The Pack** - 100 cards, the equivalent of a 52-card Poker deck plus a 48-card Pinochle deck. Thus there are three of each card 9 through Ace, and one of each card 2 through 8.

**Rank of Cards** - A (high), K,Q,J,10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2 (low). However, in a trick a 2 beats an Ace, although any other card beats a 2.

**The Deal** - Dealer gives ten cards to each player, alternately beginning with his opponent. The remaining cards are placed face-down in a draw stack in the middle of the board, with the top card turned face-up to initiate a discard pile.

**Choosing Suits** - Beginning with the dealer's opponent, each player declares a home suit. Both players may choose the same suit. Dealer's opponent may pass, giving first choice to dealer. The dealer then chooses and also plays first. The dealer may also decide to force a re-deal, with his opponent dealing.

Face cards from a player's home suit are called "Royals".

**The Play** - Players alternate turns as offense, beginning with the player who chose home suit first. Each turn includes the following:

1) Draw- Offense draws one card, defense draws one card, and offense draws a second card. Players may draw either the top card of the draw stack, or the top card of the discard pile if this is from their home suit. See also "Drawing the Discard Pile", below.

2) Trick - Offense leads a card from his hand and defense plays a card from his, following suit if possible. Winning card must be in the leading suit, and offense wins a tie.

Note that a 2 beats an Ace but loses to any other card.

Winner places one of the cards face-up in his meld display. The second card is placed face-down in a "dead pile" where it is removed from play.

The principle objects of tricks are Royals (K, Q, J) and Aces.

3) Optional Plays - Melding, assassination, ransoming or changing suits, all described below, may be performed before or after the trick, but must be completed before the discard. Each of

these options requires special combinations of cards (see below).

4) Discard - Offense discards one card from his hand to the top of the discard pile, which is spread so that all cards are visible.

**Melding** - If a player has at least one Royal present in the meld display before her turn begins (i.e., from a previous trick), she may meld matches of three or more cards with the same denomination, such as three tens. Cards already in the meld display may be included, and further cards may be added in later turns, provided that the total number continues to be three or more, and that at least one Royal is still present.

Home suit royals may not be melded, that is, they can only enter the meld display through a trick. However, once in the meld display, royals may be included in a meld match to complete the required sum of three or more. Face cards of other suits may be melded directly from the hand.

Melded cards may not be returned to a player's hand or played in a trick.

Melded aces must be kept separate from those taken in tricks (see "Assassination", below).

**Drawing the Discard Pile** - If offense at the beginning of his turn has in his meld display two or more different royals from his own suit (e.g. K & Q, but not 2 Q's), then he may draw all or part of the discard pile instead of the usual two cards from the draw pile. The bottom card so drawn must be used immediately in a match meld. All cards on top of this card are placed in the hand, or may also be melded if matched. Defense draws the usual one card from the draw pile, and play proceeds as usual.

**Assassination** - Aces taken in tricks are called "assassins", and may be used by offense to eliminate cards from defense's meld display. The assassin must be in meld display before the turn begins. The assassin may eliminate any one card of the same suit from defense's meld display, and both the assassin and the victim card are placed in the dead pile.

Typical victims of assassination are opponent's royals and aces which threaten home suit royals. Assassination can also eliminate the third card of a match meld, thereby reducing the point values of the remaining cards (see "Scoring", below).

**Ransoming** - Offense may "ransom" a Royal from her opponent's meld display with a card from her hand of equal denomination but different suit, but only if the Royal was melded the previous turn.

For example, if offense is hearts, she may trade a jack of clubs from her hand for a jack of hearts in defense's meld display, melded the previous turn. She then places the ransomed Royal back in her hand, where it may be saved or used to lead a trick. Cards taken in tricks may not be ransomed.

**Changing Home Suits** - If offense can accumulate three cards exactly alike (e.g., three tens of spades), he may use them to change his home suit to the suit they represent (i.e., spades) by melding two of them, placing the third in the dead pile, and declaring the home suit changed. This melding does not require the usual one home suit royal in meld display.

The three cards may be 1) already in meld display, 2) taken from the hand, 3) drawn from the draw pile, 4) drawn from the top of the discard pile, as if the new suit were already the home

suit, or 5) ransomed from defense's meld display if melded the previous turn. These last two options are permitted only for the turn in which the suit is changed.

Royals of the new home suit, if present in meld display before the turn begins, carry the usual privileges of home suit royals (i.e. melding, drawing the discard pile, or ending the hand, see below). This is true even if they were melded instead of taken in tricks.

**Ending the Hand** - Offense may end the hand if he meets three requirements:

- 1) at least one home suit royal in meld display before his turn begins,
- 2) no face cards (K, Q, J) of any suit left in his hand at the end of his turn, and
- 3) winning the trick.

Discarding is optional on the final turn.

If the draw stack runs out before either player ends the hand, play continues as usual, with players skipping their draw unless they can legally draw from the discard pile.

The hand then ends in the usual way, or when one player's hand runs out of cards. (This last does not end the game if cards still remain in the draw pile.)

**Scoring** - Cards in meld display are added, five points for 9, 10, J, Q, K, A, ten points for 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Points are doubled for cards in matches (e.g., two sixes are 20 points, three sixes are 60 points). Cards left in a player's hand are subtracted from her score, without doubling for matches. If the points in the hand are more than the points in meld display, the score is negative ("in the hole").

A player with a complete set of home suit royals (K, Q & J) in his meld display when the game ends doubles his score. Two complete sets triples the score, and three complete sets quadruples the score. These multiplications apply to negative scores, also.

**Game** - Scores for each hand are added until one player wins by surpassing a number agreed to before the game begins. The traditional winning score is 1066 (effectively 1070), the date of the Battle of Hastings.