

PLAYERS  
**2-4**AGES  
**8+**FRONT PORCH  
CLASSICS®

# Boat Canasta

Latin America's  
Favorite Card Game

## Instructions

### Contents:

- 2 custom card decks with Jokers (all 108 cards are used in each game)
- Scorepad

### Object of the Game:

To score the most points by creating Melds, Canastas and earning bonuses. The first team to reach 10,000 points wins the game. If both teams reach a score of 10,000 points in the same round, then the team with the most points wins. For a shorter game, players can agree on a lower point total before play begins, say 5,000 points.

### Set-Up:

The optimal way to play Boat Canasta is with 4 players to form 2 teams. Team members sit across from each other and share a common score, which is tracked after every round. Partners must not communicate with each other, either by speech or making signs, unless closing a round.

Boat Canasta can also be played with 2 or 3 players. In the case of 2 or 3 players, each player plays for him/herself.

### Wild Cards and Other Special Cards:

- **Joker (Wild):** Wild card worth **50 points**.
- **2 (Wild):** Wild card worth **20 points**.
- **3R (3 Red):** Special card worth **100 points** after being placed on the table. This card must be played on the table immediately after being drawn.
- **3B (3 Black):** Special card worth **-100 points** if left in a hand after a round is closed. This card may be discarded to block the next player from taking the Treasure pile. It cannot be played on the table.
- **4 through K and A:** Natural cards. 4, 5, 6 and 7 are worth **5 points**; 8, 9, 10, J, Q and K are worth **10 points**; A is worth **20 points**. (All points are noted on the cards for easier scoring).

### Dealing the Cards:

Shuffle all 108 cards. Each player picks a random card from the deck. The player with the highest card is the dealer for the first round. The player with the second highest card is the dealer's partner. 2 is low, A is high and Jokers don't count. If players happen to select the same card, they should choose again. The dealer replaces the drawn cards into the deck and shuffles. The dealer distributes cards from left to right so that everyone receives 14 cards in their hand.

Players immediately check their hands for 3R cards. If a player receives a 3R card, he/she must immediately place the card(s) on the table and replace it with a card(s) from the draw pile. This process takes place in order moving left of the dealer. If a 3R card is drawn during later play, the player must place the card on the table and draw a replacement card. A player who fails to expose a 3R card during a round is penalized with -500 points.

In subsequent rounds, dealing passes to the left until the game ends.

### How to Play:

The remaining cards are placed face down in the center of the table to create the draw pile. At the end of each player's turn, he/she must discard a card face up to the "Treasure" pile. The player's turn is over and play passes to the left. Players must make sure the Treasure pile is stacked neatly so that only the top card can be seen.

For the remainder of the game, players will engage in the following during each turn:

- Take a card from the draw pile or take the entire Treasure pile.

- Play cards on the table.
- Discard a card in the Treasure pile or close the round.
- **Note:** Cards cannot be played on the table and the Treasure pile cannot be taken until each player has had 3 turns.

If there are no cards left in the draw pile, the Treasure pile is turned over, shuffled and serves as the new draw pile.

### Making Melds:

A Meld consists of three or more cards of the same number or rank. When the fourth turn begins, players may place their Melds on the table in columns to score points. In order for a team to place their **first** Meld on the table, one of the players must meet a minimum point total. If the player wants to pick up the Treasure pile, only the top card of the Treasure pile counts toward the initial Meld points. The value of a 3R card does not contribute to required minimum points. Minimum points needed are as follows:

TEAM'S TOTAL GAME SCORE	MINIMUM POINTS NEEDED TO PUT DOWN FIRST MELD OR PICK UP FIRST TREASURE PILE
< 0 points	15 points
0 – 2,500 Points	50 points
2,505 – 5,000 Points	90 points
5,005 – 7,500 Points	120 points
7,505 – 9,995 Points	150 points

Once a Meld is on the table, partners may add cards of equal rank or Wild cards to Melds already played. Cards may never be removed from Melds. Partners do not keep separate sets; one partner keeps all of the

team's Melds in front of him/herself.

Wild cards (Jokers and 2s) can be added to Melds, but the number of Wild cards must always be less than the number of Natural cards in the set. A special rule in Boat Canasta allows players to make Melds of Jokers and 2s to build special Wild Canastas (see Creating Canastas below).

### Creating Canastas:

A Canasta consists of at least seven cards of the same number or rank (e.g., seven 4s, seven 7s, seven Qs, etc.) or a combination of Wild cards (Jokers and 2s) and Natural cards. Canastas are critical, as a team cannot close a round until they have at least one Canasta. The value of the Canasta depends on the presence of Wild cards and not on the value of individual cards in the Canasta. A **Natural Canasta** contains NO Wild cards and is worth more than a **Mixed Canasta** containing Wild cards. In Boat Canasta, to score big points, it is possible to make a **Wild Canasta** out of only Jokers and 2s, and the value is determined by the type of Wild card in the majority.

CANASTA TYPE	DESCRIPTION	POINT VALUE	TOP CARD
Mixed Canasta	At least 7 cards with a mix of Natural and Wild cards	300 points	Black
Natural Canasta	At least 7 cards with all Natural cards	600 points	Red
Small Wild Canasta	At least 7 Wild cards containing more 2s than Jokers	1,000 points	2
Big Wild Canasta	At least 7 Wild cards containing more Jokers than 2s	2,000 points	Joker

A Canasta is worth its value as soon as it is played on the table. Additional cards may be added to a Canasta to score their individual point values; However, if a Wild card is added to a Natural Canasta, it is reduced to a Mixed Canasta. Natural cards cannot be added to Wild Canastas.

The cards of a Canasta are always merged into a stack. The color of the top card indicates the type of Canasta: a black card signifies a Mixed Canasta, a red card signifies a Natural Canasta, a 2 indicates a Small Wild Canasta and a Joker indicates a Big Wild Canasta.

### Taking the Treasure Pile:

Taking the Treasure pile is an alternative to drawing a card from the draw pile and is done at the beginning of a player's turn. A player may never draw a card AND take the Treasure pile. A player **cannot** take the Treasure pile if:

- It is the first team Meld and he/she cannot meet the point requirement.
- It is within the player's first 3 turns.
- It is blocked by a 3B, Joker or 2.

A player may pick up the Treasure pile if he/she can do one of the following with the top card of the Treasure pile (unless the Treasure Pile is blocked):

- Match with a Natural pair from his/her hand.
- Match one Natural card and one Wild card from his/her hand.
- Add the top card to an existing Meld on the table. The top card of the Treasure pile must be played immediately, then the player takes the entire Treasure pile into his/her hand.

### Blocking the Treasure Pile:

3Bs, Jokers and 2s can block the Treasure pile for the next player's turn. The first time a 3B, Joker or 2 is discarded in the Treasure pile, it is done so horizontally to indicate a block. When the Treasure pile is blocked, it cannot be taken by the next player. Only a subsequent player with a pair of Natural cards to match the top Natural card can pick up the Treasure pile.

When there is more than one 3B, Joker or 2 in the pile, only the lowermost card is turned sideways to indicate there is a block on the pile. Discarding continues, and 3Bs, Jokers and 2s can continue to block the next player's turn. When a blocked Treasure pile is picked up, the block is ended.

If the first card of a new Treasure pile is a 3B, Joker or 2, that card is turned sideways to indicate that the Treasure pile is blocked.

### Closing a Round:

When a player plays the last card in his/her hand either by a legal Meld or discard, that player closes the round and earns an additional 200 points. Closing ends play and the round is scored. Rules for closing:

- Players cannot close before each player has played 3 turns.
- Players cannot close if their team has no Canastas.

If able to close, a player may ask his/her partner, "May I close?" The partner's yes or no answer is binding. If a player has only one card remaining and cannot close, the player keeps the card and play continues (player does not discard).

There is a special rule regarding 3B cards: If a player has all four 3B cards and no other cards in his/her

hand, he/she can meld them, resulting in 1,000 points for closing the round.

If a team has all four 3R cards on the table at the close of a round, they are worth 200 points each, or 800 points.

### Scoring:

After a round is closed, both teams count their points and write them down on the Scorepad. The total score of a round consists of the following:

- The closing team receives 200 points for closing (or 1,000 with all four 3B cards).
- All cards left in the hand count as negative in their value.
- If a team did not create at least one Canasta, all cards on the table count as negative in their value.
- If a team did create at least one Canasta, all cards on the table count as positive in their value.

The first team to reach 10,000 points wins (or whatever total score players agree on before beginning the game).



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