

Liverpool Rummy

3-8 players

104 cards

Difficulty: Medium

Duration: Long

Complete each deal's contract and minimize penalty points over 7 deals.

SETUP

- Use two decks with Jokers.
- Deal cards according to the current deal number.

SCORING

- Cards in hand are penalty points at end of each deal.
- Number cards = 5, face cards = 10, Aces = 15, Jokers = 20.

Tip: Swap Jokers from table melds when you hold the card they represent to gain a wild for your own contract.

ON YOUR TURN

- Draw from stock or discard pile.
- Lay down contract melds; lay off on table melds after.
- Discard one card.

Liverpool Rummy is a contract rummy variant popular in the United Kingdom, played over seven deals with specific contracts that must be met each round. The game uses a buying system and Jokers as wild cards. Each deal requires a progressively harder combination of sets and runs, making it a test of adaptability and hand management across the full game.

Objective

Complete the contract in each of the seven deals and finish with the lowest cumulative penalty score.

Setup

1. **Players:** 3-8
2. **Deck:** Two standard 52-card decks plus Jokers (for 3-4 players); three decks for 5-8 players
3. **Deal:** The number of cards dealt increases with each round: 6 cards in deal 1, up to 12 in deal 7. Place remaining cards face down as stock and flip one for the discard pile.

Gameplay

1. **Contracts:** Deal 1: 2 sets of 3. Deal 2: 1 set of 3 and 1 run of 4. Deal 3: 2 runs of 4. Deal 4: 3 sets of 3. Deal 5: 2 sets of 3 and 1 run of 4. Deal 6: 2 runs of 4 and 1 set of 3. Deal 7: 3 runs of 4.
2. **Draw:** Take one card from the stock or the top of the discard pile.
3. **Buying:** If the current player does not take the discard, other players may request to buy it. The buyer takes the discard plus one penalty card from the stock.
4. **Melding:** Lay down your contract when fulfilled. After that, lay off cards on any table melds.
5. **Jokers:** Wild cards that can represent any card. A Joker in a meld can be swapped out by a player who holds the card it represents.
6. **Discard:** End your turn by placing one card on the discard pile.

Scoring

1. **Number cards (2-9):** 5 points each.
2. **10s, Jacks, Queens, Kings:** 10 points each.
3. **Aces:** 15 points.
4. **Jokers:** 20 points if left in hand.
5. **Going out:** The player who empties their hand first ends the round. All other players score penalty points for remaining cards.

Variations

- **May I? variant:** Players must say May I? to buy from the discard pile, and a limit of 3 buys per deal applies.
- **Liverpool Rummy for two:** Adapted with a single deck and simplified contracts.
- **Speed Liverpool:** Reduce to 5 deals for a shorter game session.

Tips and Strategies

- Complete your contract as quickly as possible to start laying off cards.
- Swap out Jokers from opponents' melds when you hold the represented card to recover a wild for later use.
- Manage your buys carefully since each one adds cards to your hand.
- In later deals with larger hands, plan multiple melds simultaneously.

Tips & Strategy

Prioritize meeting the contract each deal before focusing on reducing hand size. Use the Joker swap rule to your advantage by reclaiming wild cards from table melds. Be strategic with buying to avoid inflating your hand.

The Joker swap rule is a key strategic element. If you see a Joker in a meld on the table and hold the card it represents, swapping it gives you a powerful wild card for your own contract.