Contents

Welcome to <u>Rummy 500</u>.   *Help is organized in the following sections.   Click on the one you require.*
Alternatively, click on the search, index, or glossary button above to look for information on a specific subject.

Overview

Rummy 500 is a member of the "Rummy" family of card games.   It is more formally known as "Five Hundred Rum" and is documented in Hoyle's Rules Of Games.   Rummy 500 adheres to the documented rules, but provides rule variations should you be familiar with other methods of playing.

Thirteen cards are dealt to you and thirteen to your opponent.   The remaining cards form the stock and are placed face down by the table.   The top card is turned face up on the table.   This card forms the beginning of the discard pile.

The game progresses with the player and opponent alternately starting their turn by taking either the top card of the stock, or one or more cards from the discard pile.

You may always take the last card of the discard pile as an alternative to taking a new card from the stock, unless the rule variation inhibiting this is in effect.

You may elect to take another card from the discard pile only if you are able to meld the card you select.   The selected card, and any and all cards to the right of it, are added to your hand.   Your next action must be to meld the selected card.

Whether you started your turn by taking a card from the stock, or by selecting one or more cards from the discard pile, you continue your turn by playing melds to the table as many times as you wish--providing that you have the cards to meld.   You conclude your turn by discarding one of the cards in your hand, unless you have melded them all.

A round ends when: (i) a player has discarded or melded their last card or (ii) if there are no cards in the deck and the player whose turn it is elects not to take from the discard pile.   Any cards remaining in your hand then score against you.

Successive rounds are dealt and played until one of the players achieves the goal of 500 points to win the game.

Getting Started

When learning a new <u>game</u>, many people prefer to watch others play a few hands before diving in for themselves.   <u>Rummy 500</u> caters to such wishes by means of its "AutoPlayer" mode.   Click the second line below for instructions on how to start the AutoPlayer.

<u>Getting Started Instructions</u>

<u>"I'd Rather Watch First"</u>

Getting Started Instructions

When you first start <u>Rummy 500</u>, you will be informed that you lead the first <u>round</u>.   Click on the OK button to proceed.   If you need to change any of the menu <u>options</u>, do this as soon as the round is dealt.

The first round of the first <u>game</u> starts with your turn, which you make by either taking a new card from the <u>stock</u>, or by taking the card from the <u>discard pile</u>.   The lead alternates on each successive round.   The initial lead also alternates from game to game.

If you elect to take a new card from the stock, you click on the top of the stock.   The top card will then be turned face up for you to see, and, after a fraction of a second, is automatically added to your <u>hand</u>. Alternatively, if the <u>AutoMouse</u> option is enabled, the card will not be displayed on the deck, but will be moved directly to your hand.   With AutoMouse, the mouse pointer also moves to your hand and indicates which card was newly taken.

If you want to take the last card from the discard pile, click on it.   If AutoMouse is enabled, the mouse pointer will move with the card to your hand.

If you are able to, and wish to, you may <u>meld</u> some of your cards at this time.

You end your turn by <u>discarding</u> a card from your hand by clicking on it with the RIGHT mouse button.   If AutoMouse is enabled, the mouse pointer will automatically move back to the deck.

Your <u>opponent</u> (the computer) will then play its turn, and so on.

At any time you can get assistance on what to do next by clicking on the "Explain" option of the "Assistant" menu.   An information window will appear describing your options at that point of play.   This window will disappear automatically when you click anywhere except the title bar of the information box.   You may move the information window by dragging its title bar.

When you are learning the game, you might set the opponent <u>skill level</u> to "champion" and discard each of your cards immediately after taking them.   In this way, you will see how melds and discards are played by the opponent.   Subsequently, you might set the opponent skill to "carefree" (in which case the opponent will always discard) to play out your hand completely.   You might also care to check the "Show Cards" option of the "Opponent" menu while you are learning the game.   Once you have experimented with these methods, you should be ready to play in earnest!

Watching A Game Being Played

If this is your first experience of <u>Rummy 500</u>, you might prefer to watch a <u>game</u> being played before launching into reading the help information in detail.

Follow the following steps to set Rummy 500 into AutoPlayer mode.

1   Select "AutoPlayer" from the "<u>Player</u>" menu
2   Select a <u>skill level</u> for the player.   "Expert" would be a good choice.   Press "OK"
3   Sit back and watch.
4   Press the "Stop" button when you have watched for long enough.

The Layout

The layout of the display is shown above.   You can click on any part of the graphic to learn about that item. (To dismiss the resulting pop-up window, click on it.)

Briefly:

The stock is shown face down to the left of the table, with the discard pile arranged face up on the table, to the right of the stock.   The opponent's cards are displayed face down above the table, and the player's cards are displayed face up below the table.   Melds are displayed on the table, below the discard pile.

Using The Mouse

All mouse operations in <u>Rummy 500</u> are performed by clicking.   Rummy 500 does not support dragging.

Operations take effect when the mouse button is released, and are ignored if the mouse button is released in a different area from where it was depressed.

If you have depressed a mouse button in an area of the screen and wish to abandon the action, move (drag) the mouse away from that area   and release the button.   The different areas of the screen are:

- The <u>stock</u>
- The <u>discard pile</u>
- The opponent's cards
- The player's cards
- The <u>table</u>
- The cards <u>melded</u> to the table
- The <u>status bar</u>

For example, if you have depressed the mouse button on the stock and wish not to take a new card after all, move the mouse away from the stock before releasing the button.

Either the left or right mouse button may be used for all operations except:

- The left mouse button must be used to select (highlight) cards
- The right mouse button must be used to discard from your <u>hand</u>

The <u>AutoMouse</u> features may be enabled to move the mouse automatically between the stock and the <u>player</u> area and/or to and from message and information windows.

Playing The Game

After the cards for a <u>round</u> have been dealt, the sequence of your turn (or your opponent's) is:

1   Taking a card from the <u>stock</u>, or one or more cards from the <u>discard pile</u>
2   <u>Melding</u> cards from your <u>hand</u> to the <u>table</u>, as and if possible
3   <u>Discarding</u> one of the cards from those in your hand.

The round ends when one of the players discards the last card from their hand.

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Dealing

The first round is dealt automatically after you confirm that you will start the first round.

After the end of each round, after displaying the scores for the round, Rummy 500 will shuffle and deal the cards for the next round.

At the end of each game, you will be asked if you want to proceed with the next game.   If you select "Yes", Rummy 500 will shuffle and deal the cards.

At any time, you may select "Start New Game" from the Game menu.   In this case, the current game is abandoned, and the cards are reshuffled and redealt.

If AutoMouse is enabled, the mouse pointer will   be moved automatically to the deck after the cards have been dealt.

Taking The Top Card Of The Stock

Position the mouse pointer over the face down card on top of the stock. (In AutoMouse mode, the mouse will have been automatically positioned over the stock after you discarded the previous card.)

Click either the left or right mouse button on the card.

The card will then be removed from the stock and added to your hand, which will immediately be sorted.

If AutoMouse mode is operative, the mouse pointer will also move to your hand and point to the card taken.

If AutoMouse mode is not operative, the card will be displayed face-up on the stock for a fraction of a second so that you can see what it is before it is moved to your hand.

Taking From The Discard Pile

If you wish to take cards from the discard pile, you do this instead of taking a new card from the stock.

You may freely take the last card from the discard pile by clicking on it.   It will then be added to your hand, just as taking a new card from the stock would.   However, you cannot discard the same card back to the discard pile at the end of your turn.

Alternatively, you may take any number of consecutively discarded cards, up to and including the last one discarded, and add them to your hand provided that you meld the earliest discarded (that is, the leftmost) of these cards immediately after it is added to your hand.

To take a sequence of discards, position the mouse pointer over the (first) card in the discard pile to be taken and melded.   Click the LEFT mouse button.   The selected card, and those to the right of it, will be added to your hand.

In order to execute the meld immediately after taking the discards, Rummy 500 will highlight the selected card in your hand and prohibit you from deselecting it or discarding before you have melded it.   (Use the "Undo" option from the "Player" menu if you wish to return the selected cards to the discard pile and start over.)

If required, select (by clicking on them) additional cards from your hand which are to be part of the current melding action.

The identified cards will be played to the table in the normal manner.   (See "Melding Cards" topic).

Melding Cards To The Table

You may either create a new <u>meld</u> of at least three cards, or you may add one or more cards to an existing meld displayed on the <u>table</u>.   You may add to any displayed meld, whether it originated from one of your turns or one of the opponent's.   Similarly, your <u>opponent</u> may add cards to melds you initiate.

At the beginning of your turn, as an alternative to drawing a new card from the <u>stock</u> or taking the last card from the <u>discard pile</u>, you may meld any number of the <u>discarded</u> cards together or with others from your <u>hand</u>. To do this, you merely click on the leftmost card you require from the discard pile.   The selected card and those to the right of it will then be added to your hand.   Your next action must be to meld the selected card.

You then continue your turn until you discard or have <u>melded</u> all your cards.

Further information:
  Creating A New Meld
  Adding To An Existing Meld

Creating A New Meld

First you must select which cards from your <u>hand</u> are to form the new <u>meld</u>.   You do this by identifying each of those that you wish to select.   You must select at least three cards.

To select a card: Position the mouse pointer over the card and click the LEFT mouse button.   The card will now be <u>highlighted</u>.   If you just started your turn by taking cards from the <u>discard pile</u>, one of the cards will be highlighted already.

To deselect a card: Position the mouse pointer over the highlighted card and click the LEFT mouse button. The card is no longer highlighted.   Note that you cannot deselect a card which is highlighted as a result of having been taken from the discard pile.   Such a card must be <u>melded</u> immediately.

When you have selected (i.e., highlighted)   three or more cards, you may meld them to the <u>table</u>. You do this by positioning the mouse pointer over any uncovered part of the table and clicking the LEFT mouse button. (If the lower part of the table is filled with melds, click on the uncovered area to the right of the discard pile.)

If the meld is valid, the cards will then be moved from your hand to the table.

Alternatively, if the combination of highlighted cards does not represent a valid meld, you will receive an <u>error message</u>, and the cards will remain in place.

Adding To An Existing Meld

First you must identify the card, or cards, which are to be added to the <u>meld</u>.

To select a card: Position the mouse pointer over the card and click the LEFT mouse button.   The card will now be <u>highlighted</u>.

To deselect a card: Position the mouse pointer over the highlighted card and click the LEFT mouse button. The card is no longer highlighted.   Note that you cannot deselect a card which is highlighted as a result of having been taken from the <u>discard pile</u>.   Such a card must be <u>melded</u> immediately.

To add the highlighted card(s) to a meld on the <u>table</u>, position the mouse pointer over any card in the existing meld and click the LEFT mouse button.

If the highlighted card(s) can be melded with those on the table, the card(s) will then be added to the meld on the table.

Alternatively, if the card(s) highlighted cannot be melded with those on the table, you will receive an <u>error message</u>, and the card(s) will remain in place.

Discarding From Your Hand

You end your turn by discarding any one of the cards in your hand.   The only exception being that if you started your turn by taking the last card from the discard pile into your hand, you cannot discard it back again on the same turn.

To discard a card from your hand, position the mouse pointer over the card and click the RIGHT mouse button. The card is then removed from your hand and added to the discard pile.

If the AutoMouse option is in effect, the mouse pointer will move automatically to the stock.

Note that you cannot discard while cards are highlighted.   You must deselect any highlighted cards before discarding.   If you started your turn by taking cards from the discard pile, the card which was automatically highlighted must be melded and cannot be deselected.

About The Opponent

The <u>opponent</u> plays automatically after you have <u>discarded</u>, or when it is the opponent's turn to start a <u>round</u>.

The opponent <u>skill level</u> may be set at any of six levels from the "<u>Skill Level</u>" option under the "Opponent" menu.

When the opponent takes cards from the <u>discard pile</u>, it will briefly highlight the leftmost of these cards.   If this is not the last discard, the opponent will also briefly highlight the card when it melds it so that you can be sure that the opponent is abiding by the rules.   If desired, this feature can be turned off via the "No Highlighting" option under the "Opponent" menu.

The opponent also pauses briefly (about two fifths of a second) after taking a card and between each of multiple melds so that the actions of its turn can be clearly viewed.   If desired this delay can be suppressed via the "Quick Display" option under the "Opponent" menu.

Scoring

Points are earned for each card <u>melded</u> to the <u>table</u>.   The points distribution is:

-         1 Point : an ACE when melded at the low end of a run   (See note below)
- Face Value : a TWO through NINE   (See note below)
-     10 Points : a TEN, JACK, QUEEN or KING
-     15 Points : an ACE when melded with other aces, or at the high end of a run

At the end of a <u>round</u>, when either the <u>player</u> or <u>opponent</u> has <u>discarded</u> the last card in their <u>hand</u>, or the deck is exhausted, any points remaining in the other player's hand are deducted from their score.   Aces are always valued at 15 points for this purpose.   A player will realize a negative score if the points in their hand exceed the points played to the table.

Successive rounds are played until one of the players wins the <u>game</u> with 500 points.

Note:
If you have selected the rule variation to score in units of 5, 10, and 15 the following differences apply:

- An ACE melded at the low end of a run scores five points
- The cards TWO through NINE score five points

Menus

The following drop-down menus are available:

[Game](#)
[Configuration](#)
[Player](#)
[Opponent](#)
[Assistant](#)
[Rules](#)
[Scoreboards](#)
[Help](#)

Game Menu

The following selections are available under the <u>Game</u> Menu:

AutoResume
Restart Round
Redeal Game
Exit

AutoResume

The AutoResume feature controls how <u>Rummy 500</u> starts up when there are multiple scoreboards defined.

If AutoResume is checked, Rummy 500 will remember which <u>player</u> was playing when it exits, and will automatically start up for that player when Rummy 500 is next run.

If AutoResume is not checked, Rummy 500 will not remember which player is playing and, if multiple players are defined, will present the "Select Player" window when Rummy 500 is next run.

If only one player is defined, AutoResume has no effect on how Rummy 500 starts up.   It will start up for that player.

If the remembered player's <u>scoreboard</u> file is deleted between sessions, thus effectively undefining the player, Rummy 500 will present the "Select Player" window when next started.

The AutoResume option status is not saved as part of 'Save <u>Options</u>".   Rummy 500 automatically starts up with AutoResume set as it was when the previous Rummy 500 session exited.

Restart Round

Click to restart the current round. Rummy 500 will abandon the current round and restart it from the beginning, without shuffling the cards..

Redeal Game

Click to start a new game. Rummy 500 will abandon the current game, reset all counters and scores, and shuffle the cards before dealing.

This action restarts only the current game.   Thus, if you are currently on game 3, the play will restart at round 1 of game 3.

Exit

Terminates the session and exits from Rummy 500.

Before exiting, Rummy 500 asks if you want to save the updated scoreboard for the current player, if it has changed since it was last saved.

If you respond "Yes", Rummy 500 will save the scores of all previous games and the scores of the rounds of the current game (if not yet completed) for the current player.   When this player next plays Rummy 500, this information will be restored automatically and play will proceed with the same game number and round number.

If you respond "No", the information will not be stored and when the current player next plays Rummy 500, the situation will be as it was previously.

If, when you next play Rummy 500, you start part way through an unfinished game (e.g.,   round four) and you wish to restart from round one of the game, use the "Start New Game" option.

Note that Rummy 500 only saves the scores of games and rounds completed.   It does not save the card distribution if you exit Rummy 500 partway through a round.

Configuration Menu

The configuration menu comprises selections that are mostly either checked or unchecked.   When the menu drops down, a checked item will have a check mark by it.   To select an option, click on it so that the check mark is showing.   To deselect an option, click on it so that the check mark is not showing.

The following selections are available under the Configuration Menu:

AutoMouse - Cards
AutoMouse - Dialogs
Card Design
True Corners
3D Effects
Colors
Resolution
Sounds
Sort Ace Low
Sort By Suit
Stagger Player Hand
No Status Messages
No Start Reminders
New Game Deal Cut
Display Turn Count
Overlap Melds
Save Configuration

AutoMouse - Cards

When checked, the mouse pointer automatically moves: (i) to your <u>hand</u> when you take a new card from the <u>stock</u> or you take the last card from the <u>discard pile</u>, and (ii) back to the stock when you discard.   It also moves to the stock after each new deal.

This facility reduces mouse movement and potential carpal tunnel strain for avid players of <u>Rummy 500</u>.

AutoMouse - Dialogs

When checked, the mouse pointer automatically moves to any message or information windows which are displayed and, if "AutoMouse - Cards" is also selected, back to the player's hand or the stock (depending where it was previously) after the window is dismissed.

This facility is intended to be used as an addition to "Automouse - Cards" to further reduce mouse movement and potential carpal tunnel strain for avid players of Rummy 500.

Note:

Some mouse drivers and add-in utilities also perform this function on some user's systems, which is why this is a separately selectable option within Rummy 500.

Card Design

There are six standard card back designs available.   To change the design, select this <u>menu option</u> and click on the required card back from those displayed.

If you wish to, you can design your own card backs as alternatives to the standard cards.   In this case, the card design choice window will include a "Custom/Standard" button to switch between the six standard designs and up to six custom designs.

If you have previously saved your configuration with a custom card back which is no longer present on disk, <u>Rummy 500</u> will default to the first of the standard designs.

See also:

Designing Custom Card Backs

Designing Custom Card Backs

Rummy 500 does not provide graphic design capabilities, so it is assumed that you are able to scan, copy, or design the image file(s) you require using other tools.

The size of a card image is 71 by 96 pixels.   If your design is larger, Rummy 500 will take the card back from the upper left part of your design.

You do not need to add the card frame (single pixel black line around the edge) or trim the corners.   Rummy 500 will do this automatically when it loads the card back image file, which will override your efforts anyway.

Card back designs should be stored in Windows Meta File (WMF) format.   If a card back is saved in bitmap (BMP) format it will likely display blank at higher color resolutions and may cause system instability.   If you already have or develop your designs in bitmap format, convert them to WMF format using an image converter program (such as Image Convert from MTE industries, available as shareware) or a graphics program (such as Paint Shop Pro from JASC, Inc. - also available as shareware).

Card back designs must be stored in the same directory as Rummy 500 as file names rumback1.wmf to rumback6.wmf.   You don't need to have all six, Rummy 500 will retrieve as many as it finds when displaying choices in the Card Design selection window.

See also:

Card Design

True Corners

When selected, <u>Rummy 500</u> will display cards with rounded corners, removing the small gray corner flash.

When unselected, the default, Rummy 500 will display card images as rectangles which include the corner flash.   This method displays the cards much faster on slower systems.

While often not noticeable, the corner flash is more visible with dark custom card back designs and certain choices of background color.

Note:

When this option is selected, Rummy 500 uses more complex card display methods which will slow down the display of cards on slower systems, or those with slower graphics adaptors.

With faster systems and graphics adaptors, the difference in display speed is not noticeable and provides a much more realistic card image.

3D Effects

Select this menu item to enable or disable the <u>3-Dimensional</u> look to the user interface.   The 3-Dimensional look is becoming increasingly fashionable among Windows applications.   However, <u>Rummy 500</u> permits you to use the more traditional 2-Dimensional look if you prefer this.

Changes to 3D effects do not take place immediately.   You must exit and restart Rummy 500 to see the changes.   Note that the specified suppression of 3D effects is registered in the file vbctl3d.ini in your windows directory.   If this file is deleted or damaged, Rummy 500 will default back to 3D effects until this <u>menu option</u> is reset.

By default,   3D effects are enabled.   In this state all menus, pop-up windows and forms, dialog messages, etc., are displayed using gray backgrounds and three-dimensional highlighting.   To suppress 3-D effects, uncheck the "3D Enabled" sub-menu entry.

When 3-D effects are enabled, 3-D menus can be separately enabled or disabled.   To disable 3-D menus, uncheck the sub-menu entry "3D Menus Enabled".   When 3-D menus are disabled, menus appear with the colors you have defined for all your other Windows applications.   When 3-D menus are enabled, a gray background and 3-D separators are applied to Rummy 500 menus.

Note:

The 3D effects used by Rummy 500 are provided by a capability called VBCtl3D. If you have other applications on your system which also use VBCtl3D, be aware that enabling or disabling 3D effects in Rummy 500 will similarly affect these other applications, and vice-versa.   Note that unless a 3D application displays gray 3D menus by default, it does not use VBCtl3d and this note doesn't apply.

Colors

The colors sub-menu allows you to change the colors used by Rummy 500 as follows:

- Main - The outer part of the display.   Default is brown.

- Table - The center table area.   Default is green.

- Label Text -   The labels (e.g., "Cards In Hand").   Default is yellow.

- Counter Text - The numeric counters under the labels.   Default is black.
- Counter Background - The background of the above.   Default is gray.

- Error Message Text - The text of error messages.   Default is black.
- Error Message Background - The background of the above.   Default is red.

- Scoreboard Wins - The scoreboard text color of games won.   Default is blue.
- Scoreboard Losses - The scoreboard text color of games lost.   Default is red.

- Factory Defaults - Resets all colors to the Rummy 500 default values encoded into the program.
- Local Defaults - Resets all colors to the values saved for the "Default" player

Note
If you define custom colors in the color selection window, these will be stored in the RUMMY500.INI file so that you can use the same colors within Rummy 500 at any time in the future.

VGA/SVGA Resolution

This option does not appear in the menu if your monitor is set to VGA resolution (i.e., 600x480).

At higher screen resolutions, Rummy 500 will default to SVGA (800x600) resolution unless you have saved options with VGA selected.   The SVGA default takes advantage of having more room to lay out the cards.   At the higher monitor resolutions, you have the option to switch between VGA resolution and SVGA resolution.

Resolution switching is permitted after you have taken a new card from the deck and before you have melded or discarded.   Otherwise, this menu option will be dimmed.

When necessary, Rummy 500 automatically compresses groups of cards to keep them within the field of play. This will occur much more frequently at VGA resolution.

Sounds

Select this menu option to invoke the sound options window.

Rummy 500 permits the optional association of a wav file with each of the following six events:

- Start Up
- Winning A Round
- Losing A Round
- Winning A Game
- Losing A Game
- Exit

Rummy 500 does not check that you have a sound board or the speak.exe driver installed.   The speak.exe driver is a freely available Microsoft product which uses your PC speaker to play (low quality) sound.   If you do not have either of these sound capabilities installed, no error message will appear but any sounds you specify won't be heard.

The sound options window is configured in the following three sections:

Enable Effects
The check box at the top of the window acts as the master switch.   It must be checked for sounds to be played and can be unchecked to temporarily suppress sounds.

Sound Files Currently Defined
Select one of the six buttons corresponding to the events which can have a sound associated.   The name of the currently assigned file name will be displayed.   (If there is no associated sound file, [none] will be displayed.) To test the sound, press "Play".   To break the association between the file and the event, press "Cancel".

To assign a sound file, or a new sound file, with an event, use the lower part of the sound options window (see below).

Select Different File
First, ensure that the required event is selected in the above section.

Use the directory selector, and the drive selector above it, to select the directory in which the required wav file is located.   A list of all wav files in the directory will be displayed in the file list to the left of the directory selector.   Click on the required filename and use the "Select" Button to assign it to the required event.   To test the sound, use the "Test" button.

Sort Ace Low

When checked, the sort criterion is set such that aces will be sorted low in the player's <u>hand</u> (and the opponent's hand, if visible), before twos.

When unchecked, aces are sorted high, after kings.

This option is disabled when the <u>player</u> has <u>highlighted</u> cards in hand.

This option is automatically enabled if the rule variation is enabled which forces aces to be treated as low.

All sorting is performed in the order: Clubs, Diamonds, Spades, Hearts.   This improves differentiation of the suits by color.

Sort By Suit

When checked, the sort criterion is set such that cards will be sorted by rank within suit.   For example, all hearts will be grouped together.

When unchecked, cards are sorted by suit within rank.   For example, all kings are grouped together.

All sorting is performed in the order: Clubs, Diamonds, Spades, Hearts.   This improves differentiation of the suits by color.

A shortcut to this action is to click on the sortation symbol in the status bar.

Stagger Player Hand

When selected, the cards in the player's <u>hand</u> will be displayed such that the suits are vertically offset from each other.   This makes it easier for some players to scan their hand for runs of cards in the same suit.

When unselected, the player's cards are displayed in alignment.

A shortcut to this action is to click on the alignment symbol in the <u>status bar</u>.

Note that display update operations (such as highlighting and removing cards) for a staggered hand may be noticeably slower than for the aligned method on some systems.

No Status Messages

When checked, status messages are not displayed in the <u>status bar</u> during play.   Error messages will continue to be displayed as appropriate.   When unchecked, the status messages indicating the state of play will be displayed.

No Start Reminders

When selected, the reminders of who starts next (player or opponent) are suppressed.

When unselected, the default, a reminder of who starts next is displayed at the start of each <u>round</u>.

New Game Deal Cut

When selected, the players will cut for deal at the start of each new <u>game</u>, and non-dealer will lead on the first turn.

When unselected, the default, the <u>player</u> leads the first game, the <u>opponent</u> the second game, and so on alternately.

The deal cut window permits you to cut any card between the first and fifty-first in the deck.   Move the scroll bar to select the cut.   The opponent will cut the remaining cards in half.

Display Turn Count

When selected, a display counter of the number of the current turn (within the current round) is displayed under the <u>game</u> and <u>round</u> counters in the upper left part of the <u>Rummy 500</u> window.

When unselected, the default, only the game and round counters are displayed.

Overlap Melds

When selected, melds are overlapped by at least 49% in order to horizontally compress the space needed to display them.   This facility reduces the need for <u>Rummy 500</u> to automatically compress melds when the <u>table</u> width would be exceeded, which can be time-consuming and distracting on slower systems.

When unselected, the default, melds are not overlapped unless and until   space limitations require them to be overlapped.

Save Configuration

This action copies a permanent record of the current configuration settings to the computer's hard disk.

Each time that <u>Rummy 500</u> is started, or players are changed, the configuration settings for the incoming <u>player</u> are restored automatically.   If the player has not previously saved their personal configuration, the default <u>options</u> will be used.

Saving configuration is effected in one of the following manners:

Single Player
If there is only one player defined, the current configuration settings are saved to hard disk as the custom options under the player's name.

Multiple Players
If there are two or more players defined and the current player name is not "Default", a sub menu will appear asking whether the current configuration options are to be saved specifically for the current player, or whether they are to become the new local <u>defaults</u>.

To change the default configuration, establish yourself as the player named "Default", make the required changes, and "SaveConfiguation".

See Also:

Save Opponent
Save Rules

Save Opponent

This action copies a permanent record of the current settings under the <u>Opponent</u> menu to the computer's hard disk.

Each time that <u>Rummy 500</u> is started, or players are changed, the opponent settings for the incoming <u>player</u> are restored automatically.   If the player has not previously saved their personal <u>options</u>, the default options will be used.

Save Opponent is effected in one of the following manners:

Single Player
If there is only one player defined, the current opponent settings are saved to hard disk as the custom options under the player's name.   Initially, Rummy 500 is configured with one player named "Default".

Multiple Players
If there are two or more players defined and the current player name is not "Default", a sub menu will appear asking whether the current opponent settings are to be saved specifically for the current player, or whether they are to become the new local <u>defaults</u>.

To change the default opponent settings, establish yourself as the player named "Default", make the required changes, and "Save Opponent".

See Also:

Save Configuration
Save Rules

Save Rules

This action copies a permanent record of the current settings under the Rules menu to the computer's hard disk.

Each time that <u>Rummy 500</u> is started, or players are changed, the rules settings for the incoming <u>player</u> are restored automatically.   If the player has not previously saved their personal <u>options</u>, the default options will be used.

Save Rules is effected in one of the following manners:

Single Player
If there is only one player defined, the current rules settings are saved to hard disk as the custom rules under the player's name.   Initially, Rummy 500 is configured with one player named "Default".

Multiple Players
If there are two or more players defined and the current player name is not "Default", a sub menu will appear asking whether the current rules settings are to be saved specifically for the current player, or whether they are to become the new local <u>defaults</u>.

To change the default rules settings, establish yourself as the player named "Default", make the required changes, and "Save Rules".

See Also:

> **Save Configuration**
> **Save Opponent**

Player Menu

The following selections are available under the <u>Player</u> Menu:

[AutoPlayer](#)
[Add New Player](#)
[Remove Player](#)
[Change Players](#)
[Undo](#)

AutoPlayer

The AutoPlayer is a capability used during the development and enhancement of the Rummy 500 skill levels. AutoPlayer puts Rummy 500 into a fully automatic mode whereby both the opponent's and the player's hands are played alternately by the computer.

AutoPlayer has now been included as an option into Rummy 500 because it is a valuable learning facility for new users who wish to watch the game being played before playing it themselves.

When the AutoPlayer option is selected, you may be asked if the updated scoreboard for the current player is to be saved.   Respond "yes" if you wish to recover to the current state after AutoPlayer has finished, otherwise recovery will be to the point that the scoreboard for the current player was last saved.

You will be asked to define which of thesix skill levels is to be used by the player.   You may cancel at this point by pressing "Cancel".   Note that the opponent will play at the skill level in operation when AutoPlayer is selected.   Therefore you should change this before selecting AutoPlayer if and as necessary.

Once the player skill level has been selected and you have selected "OK", just sit back and enjoy the view. When you have seen enough, press the "Stop" button to the left of the table.

When it is stopped, AutoPlayer will display the scoreboard for the AutoPlay session.   If the first game was not completed, this will be a scoreboard of the rounds played in the first game, otherwise it will be a scoreboard of the games played.

After the scoreboard is dismissed, Rummy 500 returns to the previous player's game.

Add New Player

Rummy 500 permits the definition of up to 12 players.   Scoreboards and personal options are maintained separately for each player.

When you first use Rummy 500, the only player is "Default".   Use the "Add Player" menu option to add more players.   Each time you use this menu option, you will be asked to specify one new player's name.

Enter players' names as 1-8 letters and numbers.   Spaces, punctuation marks, and special characters are not permitted.   Valid examples are: Jane, Charles, Dave2.   Irrespective of how you specify upper and lower case, Rummy 500 will always display the player names in lower case with the first letter capitalized.

If you attempt to add a new player when twelve players already exist, you will receive an error message.

Remove Player

Select this option to remove a player from your system.   After clicking on this option, select the required player name from the button pad.   You will be asked to confirm that the player is to be removed, after which the scoreboard file and the saved options for the player will be permanently deleted from your system.

Note that if you remove the player named "Default", only the scoreboard is removed.   This is because the corresponding saved options are used as the defaults for players who do not have personal options saved.

Change Players

Select this menu option to change to another player.   If only one player is defined, this menu option will not appear, and you will need to add a new player first.

When changing players, you will first be asked if the scoreboard for the outgoing player is to be saved, if it has changed since it was last saved.   Then the incoming player's saved options and scoreboard status will then be restored.   If the incoming player does not have personal options saved, the stored defaults will be used.

You can also change players by clicking on the current player name in the status bar.

Undo

Select this option to undo your current turn and start it again.

This option is only enabled during your turn.   You cannot undo the opponent's turn, nor your previous turns. You cannot return a seen card to the <u>stock</u>.   Once you have <u>discarded</u>, you cannot turn back.   Thus, the undo feature only permits what a reasonable human <u>opponent</u> would permit.

If you started your turn by taking a new card from the stock, that card will not be returned to the stock (because you have already seen it).   You will restart your turn from immediately after you took the card.   The <u>status light</u> (green) and status message will confirm this.

If you started your turn by taking from the <u>discard pile</u>, that card, or those cards, will be returned to the discard pile and you will restart your turn by taking a new card from the stock, or selecting from the discard pile.   The status light (yellow) and status message will confirm this.

If you have <u>highlighted</u> cards in your <u>hand</u>, the undo option will deselect them - even if there is nothing else to undo.

A shortcut to this action is to click on the Undo symbol in the <u>status bar</u>.

Opponent Menu

The following selections are available under the <u>Opponent</u> Menu:

[No Highlighting](#)
[Show Cards](#)
[Show Remaining](#)
[Skill Level](#)
[Quick Display](#)
[Save Opponent](#)

No Highlighting

When checked, suppresses the highlighting of cards during the opponent's turn.

When unchecked, the <u>opponent</u> will highlight the card in the <u>discard pile</u> that it is taking and again as it is <u>melded</u>.

Show Cards

When checked, shows the opponent's cards face up.   This facility was required when Rummy 500 was being developed and tested.   It remains part of the finished application so that you can determine for yourself whether there is any truth in the assertion that most people will occasionally cheat when nobody is watching them.

If you just want to see the opponent cards at the end of each round, use the "Show Remaining" option.

Show Remaining

When checked, any cards remaining in the opponent's <u>hand</u> will be turned face up at the end of each <u>round</u>.

When not checked, any cards left in the opponent's hand will remain face down at the end of each round.   This is the default.

Skill Level

The following skill levels are available, in ascending order of difficulty:

Carefree
Novice
Average
Expert
Champion
Master

Expert, Champion and Master modes are the most time consuming of the skill levels, and may be frustrating on a slow processor.   However, they make for the most challenging game and are relatively hard to beat.

Scoreboard Records

When rounds and games are recorded on the scoreboard, the skill level of the opponent is also saved.   If the opponent skill level is changed during a round or game, then the skill level recorded is the highest that was used during the round or game.   The skill level is noted when the player makes the first discard of a round, irrespective of who started the round, and is updated (if necessary) when subsequent discards are made. Therefore, be sure to change the desired skill level for a game before your first discard.

Relative Performances

The scores from 100 game test series for each combination of skill levels are shown below.   These results should be taken as an approximate guide only.

- Average vs. Novice: 87 - 13   (Average scored 35% more points)
- Expert vs. Average: 63 - 37   (Expert scored 8% more points)
- Champion vs. Expert: 58 - 42   (Champion scored 4% more points)
- Master vs. Champion: 58 - 42   (Master scored 6% more points)

Carefree never wins because it never melds.   It is therefore not included in the above.

Carefree Skill Level

The opponent always picks up a new card from the stock, and immediately discards at random.   The opponent never plays a meld, and never scores any points.   This setting is useful when you are learning the game and wish to play out your own hand completely.

Novice Skill Level

The opponent will consider whether to pick up any of the last 50% of the discard pile for melding, or take a new card from the stock.   The opponent will play melds, and discards at random.

Average Skill Level

The opponent will consider whether to pick any of the last 75% of the discard pile for melding.   Otherwise it will decide whether to take the last discard or take a new card from the stock.

The opponent will play melds, and discards intelligently.   It avoids discarding potential members of future melds, and considers your previous discard in this decision.

Expert Skill Level

The <u>opponent</u> plays similarly to the "average" opponent, except that all of the cards in the <u>discard pile</u> will be considered for <u>melding</u>.   The discard decision considers all cards in the discard pile.

When in "expert" mode, the opponent will make two passes of its <u>meld</u> analysis of each combination - the first considering runs before same-kind melds, and the second vice-versa, to determine the better potential.

Champion Skill Level

Champion mode is an extension to Expert mode, and includes features which are intended to make the opponent just a little more clever. The primary difference between Champion and the other skill levels (except Master), is that Champion will hold meldable cards in hand for a time, instead of playing them to the table, when it calculates that this is beneficial.

Other features included in Champion mode are:

- The opponent will avoid melding an Ace-Two-Three combination unless you have very few cards left in your hand
- The opponent remembers which cards you have taken from the discard pile and takes account of this knowledge when making the discard decision
- The opponent will calculate the probability of other cards being in your hand based upon what cards it hasn't yet seen and the number of cards in your hand compared with the number of cards in the stock
- The opponent will discard its higher value cards when you have very few cards left in your hand
- The opponent will go out as soon as it can in the hope of catching you with high points against you, even if it could have taken and melded more discards

Note: You might find Champion mode easier to beat than Expert mode, depending upon your particular style of play.

Master Skill Level

Master <u>skill level</u> is the hardest to win against.   It is an enhancement of the Champion <u>skill level</u>, and includes the following strategies:

- The risk calculation regarding taking cards from the <u>discard pile</u> is based upon how many turns have been played in the current <u>round</u>, as well as how many cards the <u>player</u> has in <u>hand</u>.
- <u>Melding</u> is minimized except toward the end of a round, or when the player has few cards in hand.   When cards are taken from the discard pile, the selected card will be <u>melded</u> immediately (as required by the rules), but others may not.   Four card melds will be played as soon as possible.   By minimizing the number of melds, the <u>opponent</u> minimizes the player's ability to add cards to them.
- If any card in the opponent's hand is "dead" it will be <u>discarded</u>.   A "dead" card is one that cannot be melded.   For example, if all the eights and tens have been melded and two of the nines have been melded (as parts of runs), then the other two nines must be "dead".

Quick Display

When checked, <u>Rummy 500</u> does not pause when the <u>opponent</u> is playing.

When not checked, the default, there will be a 400 millisecond pause after the opponent has taken a card (or discards), or has <u>melded</u> cards to the <u>table</u>.   This is to allow you to more clearly see the opponent's actions, particularly on faster processors.

Assistant Menu

The following selections are available under the Assistant Menu:

Explain
Suggest
Swap Cards

Explain

When this menu entry is selected, the "Assist!" window will appear.

The "Assist!" window is context sensitive and will describe your alternatives at the current state of play.

When you have read the assistance, just continue playing.   The window will disappear as soon as you click the mouse anywhere on the screen, except in the "Assist!" window's title bar.   You may move the "Assist!" window by dragging its title bar.

Suggest

When this menu entry is selected, Rummy 500 will examine your hand and provide a hint suggesting a reasonable action for you to take.   (Rummy 500 does not compromise its integrity by taking advantage of this knowledge when determining subsequent turns for the opponent.)

When it is your turn to take a card, the suggestion will be to either take a card from the stock, or take and meld a card from the discard pile.

After you have taken a card, the suggestion will be to either meld something from your hand, or discard a particular card.

Rummy 500 employs the same logic for providing the suggestion as it does for playing the opponent's hand. The skill level employed is above "Average" but slightly below "Expert". (After all, why would Rummy 500 give you a hint which might help it lose the game!)

A shortcut to this action is to click on the Light Bulb symbol in the status bar.

Swap Cards

Select this option if you wish to swap cards with the <u>Opponent</u>.   <u>Rummy 500</u> will then swap the cards currently in the player's <u>hand</u> with those in the opponent's hand.

The purpose of the option is as a learning tool.   It is not intended to be used to distort your true scoring ability relative to your peers, as might be reported by the League <u>Table</u> and the Hall Of Fame.

Rules Menu

The default rules of <u>Rummy 500</u> are those documented in "Hoyle's Rules Of Games" for the <u>game</u> formally known as Five Hundred Rum.   Variations to these rules, as listed below, are available to support the methods employed by earlier versions of Rummy 500, and to support other reported variations.

[Ace Must Be Low](#)
[Best Of 7 Rounds](#)
[Deal 7 Cards](#)
[Discard To Go Out](#)
[Meld Last Discard](#)
[Score 5-10-15](#)
[Save Rules](#)

Ace Must Be Low

When this option is selected, Aces may only be <u>melded</u> by the <u>player</u> or the <u>opponent</u> as part of run including the Two and the Three of the same suit, or as a <u>meld</u> of three or four Aces.   This is consistent with basic Rummy rules.

When this option is unselected, Aces may also be melded as part of a run including the King and Queen of the same suit.   This is the default and is consistent with the documented rules of Five Hundred Rum.

Best Of 7 Rounds

When this option is selected, each <u>game</u> is won by the first <u>player</u> to win four rounds, irrespective of the points score.   Under these conditions, the display of previous points totals shown to the right of the <u>table</u> becomes a display of previous rounds won.

When this option is unselected, each game is won by the first to win 500 points.   This is the default and the normal way of scoring a game.

The option is disabled if either player has already won four or more rounds of the current game.

Deal 7 Cards

When this option is selected, the <u>player</u> and <u>opponent</u> are dealt seven cards each, as is documented as the rule for three or more players.

When this option is unselected, the player and opponent are dealt thirteen cards each.   This is the default and is the documented rule for the two-player <u>game</u>.

Discard To Go Out

When this option is selected, the <u>player</u> or the <u>opponent</u> must discard a last card in order to "go out" and end the current <u>round</u>.

When this option is unselected, either the player or the opponent may <u>meld</u> their last card and not have to play a final discard.   This is the default and conforms with the documented rules.

Meld Last Discard

When this option is selected, the last card played to the <u>discard pile</u> may be taken only if it can be <u>melded</u> immediately (as is the case for all earlier discards).   In this case, selecting the last card highlights it in preparation for <u>melding</u>.

When this option is unselected, the last discard may be freely taken as an alternative to taking a new card from the <u>stock</u>.   In this case, selecting the last card moves it immediately to the player's <u>hand</u>.   This is the default.

Score 5-10-15

When this option is selected, the cards 2 through 9 are scored with a points value of five, as is an Ace <u>melded</u> as part of an Ace-Two-Three run.

When this option is unselected, the cards 2 through 9 are scored at their face value, and an Ace melded as part of an Ace-Two-Three run scores one point.   This is the default and corresponds to the published rules.

In both cases, the cards 10 through King score ten points and an Ace scores fifteen points except when melded as part of an Ace-Two-Three Run.

Scoreboards Menu

You may display information about previous rounds and games in the following four ways:

This Game
Game History
League Table
Hall Of Fame
Reset Scoreboard
Save Scoreboard

This Game

Displays the winner, and the scores of the <u>player</u> and the <u>opponent</u>, for each of the previous rounds of the current <u>game</u>.

The display includes the date and opponent <u>skill level</u> for each <u>round</u>.   If the player's <u>scoreboard</u> was started with an earlier version of <u>Rummy 500</u> which did not record dates and skill levels, the scoreboard will be automatically converted to the new format.   For these records, the opponent will be displayed as "Unknown" and the date will be displayed as "1/1/94".

The text colors (blue for wins, red for losses) may be changed via the Configuration menu.

See also:

<u>Skill Level</u>

Game History

Displays the winner, and the scores of the <u>player</u> and the <u>opponent</u>, for all previous games played by the currently active player.

The display includes the date and opponent <u>skill level</u> for each <u>game</u>.   If the player's <u>scoreboard</u> was started with an earlier version of <u>Rummy 500</u> which did not record dates and skill levels, the scoreboard will be automatically converted to the new format.   For these records, the opponent will be displayed as "Unknown" and the date will be displayed as "1/1/94".

A selection pad permits the display of the game history against the opponent at a particular <u>skill level</u>.

The text colors (blue for wins, red for losses) may be changed via the Configuration menu.

See also:

Skill Level

League Table

Displays the following information for all players for whom a saved <u>scoreboard</u> file exists: Games Won, Games Lost, Points For, Points Against, Average (points for divided by games played)

Hall Of Fame

From examination of all saved scoreboards, displays statistics such as highest and lowest scores for and against, narrowest and widest winning margins, etc.

Reset ScoreBoard

Select this option to reset your game scoreboard to zero.   The game counter will return to game number 1.

If you are partway through a game, the scores of the previous rounds are not cleared.   Thus you can make the current game the first of your new scoreboard.

The previously saved copy of your scoreboard is not erased by this action.   You must use the "Save Scoreboard" option to replace the previous scoreboard with the new one.

If you clear the scoreboard and decide you would have preferred not to have done so, exit Rummy 500 (or change players) and respond "No" when asked if the updated scoreboard is to be saved.

Save Scoreboard

Select this option to perform an immediate save of the current <u>scoreboard</u> status (games and rounds) for the current <u>player</u>.

This option is useful if you are enjoying an extended session of <u>Rummy 500</u> and don't want to wait until you exit Rummy 500, or change players, before your updated scoreboard status is safely saved to disk.

Help Menu

How To Use Help

Describes how to use the Microsoft Windows help file capability.

Using This Menu

Displays this help window.

Main Contents

Displays the main <u>Rummy 500</u> help window.

Screen Layout

Explains the screen layout of Rummy 500.

Index

Displays the index to Rummy 500 help.

Glossary

Displays the glossary of Rummy 500 terms.

Search...

Displays the topic search window.

Order Form

Displays a form for you to enter your name and address and print the order form to register Rummy 500.

Enter Registration

Permits you to enter or re-enter your registration number.

While Rummy 500 is unregistered, the five-second shareware notice will appear before each <u>game</u>. Registering Rummy 500 both makes your copy legal and removes this notice.

Should the Rummy 500 <u>options</u> data on your hard disk ever become corrupted or is missing, Rummy 500 will return to the unregistered status.   In this case, you will need to re-enter your registration details.

About

Displays information about the version number and <u>author</u>, and the registration confirmation.

Note:

Like many other Windows programs, Rummy 500 supports the "F1" function key to provide context sensitive help.   You may press "F1" at any time to get help about the specific facility you are using.   For example, pressing "F1" when in the sound options window will display the help information for setting the sound options.

Shortcuts

You may click on the following parts of the <u>status bar</u> in order to achieve the associated actions:

Status Message

Click on the status message to display the "Assist!" window with more detail about the current alternatives.

Error Messages

Click on an <u>error message</u> to clear it and see the underlying status message.

Light Bulb

Click on the light bulb to get a hint.   (Equivalent to "Suggest" under the "Assistant" menu.)

Undo

Click on the undo symbol to undo your current turn and start over.   Note that you cannot undo taking a new card from the <u>stock</u>.   (Equivalent to "Undo" under the "<u>Player</u>" menu.)

Card Alignment

Click on the card alignment symbol to switch between normal and staggered display of the player's <u>hand</u>. (Equivalent to the "Stagger Player Hand" option under the "Configuration" menu.)

Sort Order

Click on the sort order symbol to switch between rank sortation and suit sortation of the cards in the player's and opponent's hands.   (Equivalent to the "Sort By Suit" option under the "Configuration" menu.)

Player Name

Click on the player name to invoke the "Change Player" selection window.

Opponent Skill Level

Click on the <u>skill level</u> to invoke the "<u>Opponent</u> Skill" selection window.

Strategies

Taking A Card

Provided that the rule variation inhibiting the practice is not enabled, you should consider taking the last card from the discard pile as an alternative to a new card from the stock if the card increases the number of potential meld possibilities in your hand.

Remember, however, that the next unseen card from the stock may be equally or more useful.   At champion skill level, the opponent rates the usefulness of the last discard based upon its proximity to other cards in the opponent's hand.   The opponent will then only take the last discard if the rating is higher than a specified guideline,. You might consider a similar strategy for your own play.

Selecting Discards

Select and meld discards from the discard pile rather than taking a new card if the result will leave you with more net points (those you have melded less those left in your hand).

If the opponent has more than a few (say, five) cards in its hand, you might choose to end up with a worse net situation from taking the discards if there are a number of melds on the table to play to in subsequent turns.

Note that if the opponent only has one or two cards, there probably won't be many subsequent turns, and the excess cards in your hand will score against you.

The opponent, at average skill level and above, employs the same logic described above.

As a general rule, it is better to take and meld discards than to not do so.   You cannot score more than 90 points (four aces and three others at ten points) in a round if you only take from the stock.

Melding

The advantage of melding is that you get cards out of your hand to count for you, which would count against you if the opponent empties its hand first.

The disadvantage of melding is that you provide the means for the opponent to empty its hand faster, as and when it can play to your melds.

Except when employing "Champion" skill level, the opponent always melds when it is able to.   At "Average" skill level and above it takes cards from the discard pile with consideration to how many points it will have melded, how many left in its hand after melding the ones selected, and how many cards remain in your hand. Thus the opponent is more likely to pick up discards when you have more cards in your hand.

Discarding

Select which card to discard based upon which is the least useful in comparison to others in your hand, and which is probably less useful to your opponent.

Remember, if the opponent has only one or two cards left, that aces will count fifteen points against you if the opponent melds its remaining cards on its next turn. Tens, Jacks, Queens and Kings remaining in your hand will score ten points against you.

How To ...

How to change the default settings

To change the default settings for Configuration, <u>Opponent</u> or Rules, merely select the "Save" option under the respective menu when the desired settings are in effect.   If you are playing as "<u>Player</u>: Default", the current settings will be saved as the new <u>defaults</u>, otherwise the menu will give you the choice between saving the settings for the current player, or as the new defaults.

How to save personal color and sound choices

All <u>options</u> changed via the "Configuration" menu are saved by the "Save Configuration" option.   Even though the color and sound settings are altered via their own setting forms, they are saved, and only saved, when "Save Configuration" is selected.

How to recover a reset scoreboard

Scoreboards are only permanently saved when you select "Save <u>Scoreboard</u>", or when you   respond "Yes" when exiting <u>Rummy 500</u> or changing players.   If you have reset your scoreboard and would have preferred no to have done so, just exit Rummy 500 and respond "No" to the prompt "Save updated scoreboard...?"   When you restart Rummy 500, your previous scoreboard will be active.

How to speed up the display

The Rummy 500 and Gin Rummy user interface was originally developed for use on Intel 386-based systems.   Considerable effort went into making the display of cards as fast as   possible.   By factory default, Rummy 500 is set to use the configuration settings for these slower systems.

However, more modern systems are much faster and generally include graphics accelerators.   Therefore Rummy 500 and Gin Rummy include some advanced options that are only acceptable to many people when used on a faster system.   If you find Rummy 500 slow to display, check that the "Trim Corners" option is not selected, and don't use the "Stagger Player <u>Hand</u>" option more than you need to.   Both of these features are much more intensive of graphics processing.

Also, consider selecting the "Quick Display" option under the "Opponent" menu if the opponent is too slow for your liking.   This will remove the 0.4 second delay between the opponent's actions.   However, you might then find it too fast!

For The Technically Curious

Technical Construction

Rummy 500 is programmed in Microsoft Visual Basic, Version 3.

Rummy 500 works from a bitmap of all the card images and makes extensive use of the Windows API Bitblt function.   Because of this, Rummy 500 is fast, but consumes approximately 1.4 Megabytes of RAM and 16% of the GDI resource stack.

Starting with version 3.5, the bitmap is stored externally to Rummy 500 and is loaded at run time.

Alternative methods of managing the user interface proved to be more processor intensive and less conducive to fluid play.   The trade-off was made for performance at the cost of resource consumption.

Rummy 500 was originally developed and tested on a 20MHz 386SX system with 5MB of RAM. Performance and fluidity of play was very satisfactory on this configuration.   Since version 3.7, development has moved to a Pentium 60 with 8MB of RAM.

When in Expert, Champion and Master modes, the opponent will often "think" for up to twenty seconds on an Intel 386SX class processor.   "Thinking" is almost instantaneous on an Intel Pentium processor.

Third Party Components

Although <u>Rummy 500</u> does not use a dll for card drawing (for performance reasons), Stephen Murphy's excellent freeware "qcard.dll" was used to create the bitmap which Rummy 500 uses.   The card back designs included in qcard.dll were created by Daniel Di Bacco.   Acknowledgments are extended to each of them.

3-D effects are provided using "VBCtl3D" by Bernd Beekes and Jeff Simms.   This utility was selected for Rummy 500 as it provides an extremely full set of 3-D capabilities to Visual Basic programs.

The Rummy 500 help file was created using Firas Bushnaq's powerful "Visual Help".

VBCtl3D and Visual Help are shareware products licensed by the <u>author</u>.

Saved Information

Information is saved between Rummy 500 sessions as follows:

Registration

If you are a registered user, your name and encoded registration are stored in the [Rummy 500] section of RUMMY500.INI (in your windows directory).

AutoResume

When AutoResume is active, the name of the last player is maintained in the [Rummy 500] section of RUMMY500.INI.   The status of AutoResume is not saved independently . On start up, AutoResume is deemed to be enabled or disabled depending upon whether the name of the last player was saved.   Thus AutoResume always recovers the state that it was when the previous session exited.

Custom Colors

When custom colors are defined in the color selection window, they are stored in the [Rummy 500] section of RUMMY500.INI.

Player Options

The options (configuration, opponent, and rules) for each player are saved in a section of RUMMY500.INI identified as pertaining to the player.   For example, Jane's options will be saved in the section of RUMMY500.INI named "[Jane]".   If a player has not saved personal options, the defaults stored in RUMMY500.INI under "[Default]" are used.

Player Scoreboards

Each player's scoreboard is saved in the Rummy 500 directory as xxxxxx.scb, where xxxxxx is the player's name.   Rummy 500 considers a player to be currently defined by whether a scoreboard file exists for the player, irrespective of whether options are saved for that player in RUMMY500.INI.   An empty scoreboard file is created for a player when their name is added via the "Add Player" menu option.

If you wish to erase disastrous games from the scoreboard, you may edit your scb file with any text editor, such as Notepad.   Each line of the scb file represents the scores for one game (stored in the order played) until the line that starts "-1,-1...", after which each line represents the scores for each round of the currently stored game (if any).   To clear the scoreboard completely, use the "Reset Scoreboard" option of the "Scoreboards" menu.

3D Effects

The three dimensional effects of Rummy 500 are provided by VBCtl3D, which is a third party component of Rummy 500.   VBCtl3D looks at the content of a file called VBCTL3D.INI (in the windows directory) to determine whether 3D is to be suppressed and whether 3D menus are required.   Rummy 500 updates this file for you when you change the 3D Effects settings via the Options menu, but VBCtl3D only takes note of the content of VBCTL3D.INI when Rummy 500 starts.   This is why you must exit and restart Rummy 500 for the changes to take effect.

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Gin Rummy

Gin Rummy was first released by MeggieSoft Games in February 1995, and is the stablemate to <u>Rummy 500</u>.

From the early days of the Rummy family, the derivatives developed along two distinct paths.   One path, which includes Gin Rummy and its variations, emphasizes "going out".   The other path, of which Five Hundred Rum (or Rummy 500) is a well-known example, emphasizes <u>melding</u>.

Therefore, whereas Rummy 500 is oriented towards building the highest possible score from creating melds, Gin Rummy is oriented towards who goes out (knocks) first and who has the lesser amount of unmeldable points remaining in their <u>hand</u> (deadwood).

A <u>round</u> of Gin Rummy starts with each <u>player</u> being dealt ten cards.   As the round progresses, each player picks up and discards similarly to Rummy 500, with the following differences:

- Only the last discard may be picked up as alternative to taking a new card from the <u>stock</u>
- Melds are only played when a player knocks.   A player must have ten or less points of deadwood in order to knock.   The knocking player then lays down their melds, and the other player follows by "laying off" whatever meldable cards they may have.   This ends the round.
- The points scored are based upon the difference in deadwood points between the players; plus bonuses for knocking, undercutting (having less deadwood than the knocker), and winning a <u>game</u> (first player to reach 100 points).

Gin Rummy supports all well documented variations including: Hollywood Scoring, Oklahoma Gin, and 11 Card Gins.

Gin Rummy uses the same basic Graphical User Interface (GUI) as Rummy 500.   Thus the display and the use of the mouse is similar in both games.

Cards In Hand Counter

This counter displays the number of cards remaining in the Player's <u>hand</u>.

Card Sort Order

Click on this symbol as a shortcut to changing the "Sort By Suit" option under the "Configuration Menu". When the cards are sorted by rank, the symbol represents the four suits.   When the cards are sorted by suit, the symbol shows numbers (representing rank order).

Card Stagger

Click on this symbol as a shortcut to changing the "Stagger <u>Player</u> <u>Hand</u>" option under the "Configuration" menu.   When the player's hand is normally aligned, the symbol is a staggered hand, and vice versa.

The Discard Pile

This is where each of the <u>Player</u> and <u>Opponent</u> discard a card at the end of their respective turn.

The Game Counters

These counters indicate the current <u>game</u> number, and the current <u>round</u> number within the current game.

The Light Bulb

Click on the Light Bulb (indicating an idea) as a shortcut to the "Suggest" option of the "Assistant" menu in order to receive a hint.

Melds

Melded cards which have been played to the table by either player.

The Menu Bar
Click on one of the menu items on the left to see what choices you have.

The Net Points Counter

This counter displays the current net points position of the <u>Player</u>.   This is the difference between points <u>melded</u> and points left in <u>hand</u>, and would be the Player's score for the <u>round</u> if the round finished on the next turn.

The Opponent's Hand

The cards currently in the Opponent's <u>hand</u>.

The Opponent Melded Counter

This counter displays the number of points earned by the <u>Opponent</u> for <u>melding</u> cards in the current <u>round</u>.

Current Opponent Skill

This part of the <u>status bar</u> shows the current <u>opponent</u> <u>skill level</u>.   you may click on this as a short cut to changing skill levels.

The Player's Hand
The cards currently in the Player's <u>hand</u>.

The Player Melded Counter

This counter displays the number of points earned by the <u>Player</u> for <u>melding</u> cards in the current <u>round</u>.

Current Player Name

This part of the <u>status bar</u> indicates the name of the current <u>player</u>.   You may click on this as a shortcut to changing players.

The Points-In-Hand Counter
This counter displays the total points value of the cards in the Player's <u>hand</u>.

The Prior Round Totals Counters

These counters are only visible after   the first <u>round</u> of each <u>game</u>.   They show the total points earned in prior rounds of the current game by the <u>Player</u> and by the <u>Opponent</u>.

The Rummy 500 Logo

The logo is displayed on start up and during <u>Game</u> 1.   Once Game 1 has been completed, the two logo displays are replaced by indicators of games won by the <u>Player</u> and the <u>Opponent</u> respectively.   If you click on the logo, the "Help | About" window is displayed.

The Status Display

This area shows the current state of play, prompting the <u>Player</u> what to do next.   Error messages are also displayed here.   Error messages will disappear as soon as play continues, or if you click on the message.

The Status Light

This glows red when the <u>Opponent</u> is thinking, yellow when it is the Player's turn to take a card, and green during the Player's turn. You may click on this as a shortcut to selecting the "Undo" <u>menu option</u>.

The Stock

The group of undealt cards, and the counter of how many remain.

The Table
The area where melds are played and   cards are <u>discarded</u>.

Undo

Click on this symbol to undo your turn.   This is a shortcut to the "Undo" action under the "Player" menu.

3-dimensional

A particular style of visual user interface which displays sunken and raised effects using shades of gray, black, and white to provide shadows.

author

Rummy 500 © 1994,1995   MeggieSoft Games

AutoMouse

The capabilities whereby the mouse pointer automatically moves between the deck and the player's hand as cards are taken and discarded and/or to and from messages and information windows.

defaults

The saved option settings for a player named "Default".   These are used if a player does not have their own saved default options.   If the "Default" settings are not found on disk, Rummy 500's factory defaults will be used.   The default settings are changed by changing the current player to "Default", setting the options, and saving them.

discard pile

The cards which the player and opponent have discarded from their respective hands.

discarded
Having moved a card from one's hand to the discard pile.

discarding

The act of moving a card from the player's hand on to the discard pile.   This concludes the player's turn.

error message

Error messages are displayed, with red highlighting, in the status bar.   An error message will disappear as soon as you play on, or if you click on it.

game

In Rummy 500, a series of rounds which is concluded when either the player or the opponent has scored more than 500 points and the scores are not equal.

hand

The cards displayed above the top of the table (the opponent's hand) and below the bottom of the table (the player's hand).

highlighted

A card displayed in reverse-color (black as white, etc.) in order to signify that it has been selected in preparation for melding.

meld

A set of matching cards played to the table.   A meld can be either a run of cards of the same suit, or three or four cards of the same rank (or value).   For example, the 8-9-10 of hearts would a valid meld, as would three jacks.

melded

Played to the table as part of an existing or new meld of three or more cards (either a run or of the same value).

melding

The act of moving cards from your hand to the table in order to form a meld.   A meld is a run of cards of the same suit or three or four cards of the same rank (or value).

menu option

One of the entries in one of the drop down menus.   Click on a menu entry to select it.

opponent

The opponent is the computer.

options

The custom selections which can be made by a player and stored as their personal defaults.   Options include: colors, sounds, card design, opponent skill level, rule variations.

player

A person who has been defined by name to play against the opponent.   Only one player can participate at a time.   Each player's personal options and scoreboards are stored independently from each other.   (Depending on the context the term "player" may also include the opponent.)

round

A series of turns (alternating between player and opponent) which is concluded when either the player or the opponent has either melded or discarded the last card from their hand, or when there are no more cards remaining in the stock.

Rummy 500

The world's first shareware game of Rummy for Microsoft Windows.

scoreboard

The record of a particular player's scores and the opponent's scores for games and rounds completed to date.

skill level
"Carefree", "Novice", "Average", "Expert", "Champion", "Master".

status bar

The area along the bottom of the Rummy 500 window where status messages, error messages, and the current player name and opponent skill level are displayed.

status light

The indicator at the left of the status bar.   This shows red when the opponent is taking its turn, yellow when Rummy 500 is waiting for the player to take a card, and green during the player's turn.

stock
The undealt cards from which the player and the opponent take a new card to start their turn.

table

The area in the center of the display where the discard pile and melds are shown.

wav file

A file of a particular format defined for storing sounds.   Rummy 500 can play sound files which are stored in wav file format.