CardShark Spades(tm) Configuration Program

This configuration program is licensed for use ONLY by registered users of CardShark Spades. It may not be copied for any other use or purpose.

The CardShark Spades Configuration Program allows you to make the following changes:

<u>Change the names of the computer players</u>
<u>Change the playing style of the computer players</u>
<u>Edit computer player feedback comments</u>
<u>Add new feedback comments</u>
<u>Change or add new WAV files</u>
<u>Delete a comment</u>
<u>Insert a comment</u>
<u>Save an edited comment</u>
<u>Insert your name</u>

<u>Saving and Reversing Changes</u>
<u>Tech Support</u>

The ability to change the prompts means that you can customize the program by entering personal comments and names, or you could even translate comments to a different language. (If you do the latter, we would appreciate getting a copy of the new CMT_SPDS.INI file.)

If your computer came with a microphone, you should be able to easily create personalized comment files. You should also be able to easily capture comments/music from music CD's in your computer's CD-ROM drive. You can also plug the audio output from your VCR or other sound source into the line input connector on your sound card to record WAV files.

Changing the Names of the Computer Players

The "Name Box" is the top drop down list box to the right of the player's picture. The "Style Box" is the drop down list box below the Name Box.

To change a player's name, first select the player by clicking on the down arrow on the Name Box and on the desired player. Then type in a new name and click on the Style Box. You will be asked if you want to save the new name.

This does NOT save the new name to disk, only to the list. You must still select Save in the File menu to save it permanently before quitting the program.

You can NOT change the name assigned to the face shown by clicking on a name in the List. Clicking on the list will simply bring up that computer player's face and name to work on.

Changing Playing Styles

There are 8 playing styles, as explained in the CSSpades help file. You cannot add new styles or delete old ones, but you do not have to use all the styles and you can assign the same playing style to as many players as you wish. For example, you make every player use style #4.

For my personal use, I select Smooth Sam, Sneaky Sue, and Wiley Willy. They all use the Expert style, which is the strongest style (at least of those that play fair).

The drop-down Style box is not like the drop-down Name box because you cannot type anything new in it. All you can do is select a style. You will be asked to confirm that you wish to change the style. If you say yes, this does NOT save it to disk, just in working memory. You must use Save in the File menu to save this (and other changes) to disk.

Click on the playing styles below for descriptions.

Novice
Timid
Cautious
Aggressive
Wild
Vicious
Cheater
Surprise

Novice

Novice - has trouble keeping track of the cards that have been played. The Novice may lead away from a King or discard a high card. The Novice's bids are usually not the best, either. Novices should be pretty easy to beat, making them good opponents for young children or for adults looking for a little ego trip.

Timid

Timid - is afraid of over-bidding, finessing and of trumping when not the last player. Timid will never bid Nil Timid is pretty easy to beat.

Cautious

Cautious - Doesn't take any unnecessary risks when bidding or playing (e.g.: will not finesse). If a Cautious player bids Nil the odds are extremely small that you can beat him. A Cautious player will not count lone Kings (e.g.: K-6-2, as opposed to K-Q-2 or A-K-2) when bidding and will try to take his winners quickly.

ALL computer players become Cautious when way ahead and closing in on a game, in order to keep from blowing their lead.

Expert

Expert - the best overall playing style. The Expert player takes reasonable risks in bidding and play.

Aggressive

Aggressive - takes more chances, mainly when bidding. For example, an Aggressive player may count a King in a 5-card suit.

All players bid Aggressively when way behind and another player is closing in on game (except when using Scaled Scoring or when in a Tournament). This will normally make them go set a lot, but in the situation described, they are very unlikely to win anyhow, and once in a while the cards may run hot for them and get them back into the game.

Vicious

Vicious - is out to get YOU! The Vicious player will take a chance of not making his/her own bid for a chance to set you. On the positive side, this means that she goes set more frequently than the less psychotic players.

Note: To maximize the effect of Vicious Vickie, put her on your left so that she plays immediately after you do. On your right, she can't do as much damage since you would often play after her.

Every player becomes Vicious towards any player who gets way ahead and close to winning a game, unless Scaled Scoring is on or a Tournament is being played.

Cheater

Cheater - peeks at everyone's cards! When a computer player cheats, He will virtually never overbid, such as counting an Ace when someone else is void in the same suit and able to ruff the Ace. During play, the Cheater would normally never lose a finesse or get over-ruffed when cheating. However, a Cheater will NEVER cheat by not following suit.

Surprise

Surprise - the computer assigns a playing style at random. It's up to you to figure out the style and adjust your play accordingly.

Editing Comments

Comment Categories

The following categories of comments are displayed on the menu bar:
Prompts
Duplicate
Points
Won
Misc.

You can edit comments by selecting a category and subcategory. The text of the comments will be displayed in the List box.

Double click on a line in the List box to make that line the Current Comment to edit. At that time, its associated WAV file will also be shown, as well as the face, name, and style of the player to whom the sound is assigned, if any.

Up to 20 individual comments can assigned to each player in the Prompt category and up to 30 comments to each player in the Points category.

You can specify that a player use the comments of another player in addition to its own by entering a semicolon followed by the other player's number. See Sharing Comments.

Sharing Comments

Some players share the comments assigned to other players. To do this, enter the a semicolon, followed by the number of the player whose comments you want the current player to us. For example, in the "Won" - "I Won" menu, the first entry is "1: ;9" and the second line is "2: ;11". These are the comment assignments for players 1 and 2.

Since there are no actual comments assigned to player #1, the ";9" means that player 1 shares the comments assigned to player #9. Likewise, the ";11" for player #2 means that player #2 shares the "I Won" comments assigned to player #11.

You could manually type in all the same comments and WAV file names, but using the "sharing" format makes the comments file smaller and easier to manage. Sharing WAV files keeps down the number of WAV files (which take a lot of disk space) while allowing some individuality.

In the "Points" - "I Ruffed You" list, notice that player #6 (the line which starts with "6:") has 1 comment assigned to it and that #6's next line says "6: ;1", meaning that #6 shares the comments assigned to #1. As you can surmise from this, it is possible to mix the assignment of actual comments plus sharing of other player's comments.

However, it is not possible to share just SOME of another player's comments, nor can you share comments from a different category of comments. That is, when working on "I Ruffed You" comments, you cannot share comments from "I Won". However, you *could* use some of the same comments and WAV files; it's just that you must manually type them in rather than using the "sharing" format.

Sound Without Text

You can assign a WAV file to an event without adding written text to it by entering a semicolon (";") as the first character of the text. Lines starting with a semicolon are ignored by the text display routine.

If you are using a WAV file such as applause, you can use the text field to describe the sound: "; applause" without it being printed.

If you do not want the program to have a comment on every play, you could intersperse comment lines with non-comment lines.

You can also have text without sound by putting "NO-FILE" in the WAV field.

Synchronizing Lip Movement

It looks dumb to have the player's lips not moving in sync to the sound, and while it may seem like a nuisance to sync the lip movement and sound, it really isn't much trouble and it's kinda fun.

Even sync-ing lip movements to the comments without WAV files adds to the realism. For long text, I just throw in a reasonable number of lip movements without being too precise, but for very short comments, the lip sync-ing is noticeable even without a sound file.

After bringing up an entry to edit or after creating a new entry, insert carats ("^") to indicate where the lips should move. For starters, you can put them in the text where you think they should go, but the speed of speech in the WAV recording will dictate the actual placement.

The carat mark opens the user's mouth for a fraction of a second and then it is closed again. Several carat marks in a row will keep the mouth open.

The space and characters between carat marks determine the amount of time the mouth is left closed. A carat, space, carat sequence would cause the mouth to open, close and open quickly.

Add extra spaces to increase the length of time the mouth is left closed. For example, if a WAV file starts with music before speech, add sufficient spaces to the beginning of the text to keep the player's mouth closed during the music. (Multiple spaces are omitted when the text is displayed.)

The easiest way to see how this all works is to select a subcategory (such as "Points - I Ruffed You"), double-click on

some of the lines to select them and click the Play button to hear/see them.

Comment Categories and Subcategories

Prompt:

a) Pass to me - comments to indicate which player you are passing to.

b) Cards passed to user - comments to indicate who passed to you. (The cards are passed to the user are displayed during these comments.)

c) Suit led - to indicate who led and the suit led. The name of the suit is added to the end of the comment by the program. For example, "Everyone play" becomes "Everyone play SPADES" when Spades are led.

d) I took the trick - to indicate which computer player took the trick.

e) User took the trick - when the user took it.

In the Prompt category, each player can have up to 20 personalized entries. Each line in the List box starts with a number followed by a colon. The number corresponds to the User numbers as shown in the pull-down Name box.

As sent from us, there are no WAV files associated with the comments in this category. The above prompts tend to slow down play and clutter up the screen, and after playing a while, you should be able to tell at a glance who led, the suit led, who took the trick, etc.

Duplicate

The following subcategories are used in the Duplicate mode, so they are only used by the CardShark (player #11), thus the fishy tone of the comments.

1) Shark Won

2) Shark Lost

3) Shark Tied

Each subcategory can have up to 20 comments. As sent from us, there are no WAV files associated with these comments.

Points

This category is related to the taking/giving of points:

a) I Ruffed You - the computer trumped your winner.

b) You Ruffed Me - you trumped the computer player's trick.

Each subcategory can have up to 30 comments per player name. As with Prompt comments, the player number is shown for each comment in the List box, and players can use other player's comments.

Won

The subcategories are

a) I won - A computer player won the game. Up to 30 entries allowed per player.

b) User won - Up to 30 entries allowed, but the CardShark always does the talking.

c) Draw - Two players tied for low. CardShark does the talking.

Changing Miscellaneous Comments

The following are game comments spoken by the CardShark. Up to 30 entries allowed per subcategory.

a) Hello - spoken when the game starts.

b) Ok Response - after most menu items are selected.

c) Quit - when quitting the game.

d) CardUp sound - sound made when the human player's cards pop up. No text.

e) General Responses - These are various comments made in the program, such as when a wrong card is played. You can change the text of these comments, but you cannot add or delete an entry to this section. Since each comment in this section is used in a particular place in the program, if you change a comment, it should retain the same basic meaning/purpose as the original comment.

Because some of the comments are combined with others, I do not recommend changing anything in this section. It is provided primarily for ease in customizing for other languages. Please remember that while you may customize CS-Spades for other languages, you cannot legally distribute such revised versions to others. If you wish to share your translations, please send them to PsL and we will add them to our distribution disks.

Adding New Comments

To add a new comment, just type in the comment and click on Insert, then double-click on the line after which the new comment should be inserted.

NOTE: A common mistake is to select a comment, change it, then quit the program without clicking on the Save or Insert button. You must click on the Save or Insert button to save a new or changed entry.

Changing/Adding WAV Files

To add a WAV sound file to a comment or to change a WAV file assigned to a comment, click the Get WAV button and use the directory dialog boxes to find the desired WAV file.

With your sound card and microphone, you can easily create custom WAV files, add them to the program, and type in the text to match.

You might want to tape one of your all-human Spades games to record the comments made and then convert the comments to WAV files using your sound card and Window's recorder. Select the styles of your favorite human opponents and it will almost be like playing the ol' gang!!

Or if you have children who play the game, you can record comments for them. For example, you could have Hello sounds (played when the program begins) asking them if they have finished their homework/chores.

If a WAV file is deleted, moved, or renamed after assigning it to a comment, the text will be displayed but no sound will be heard. You will not receive an error message, so if you are playing CS-Spades and don't hear a sound file where you think it should be, make sure the sound file is still there.

NOTE: A common mistake is to select a comment, change it, then quit the program without clicking on the Save or Insert button. You must click on the Save or Insert button to save a new or changed entry.

Deleting Comments

The "current comment" is the one displayed in the Current Comment box. The Delete, Insert and Save buttons operate on the current comment.

To delete any comment line, first double-click on the line in the List box to make the line the current comment, then click on the Delete button. You will be asked to verify the deletion.

Every player must have at least one entry, even if it is "NO-FILE" for the WAV and ";" for the text. If you save the configuration file and any entries are missing, a NO-FILE-; entry will be created.

Inserting a Comment

To insert the Current Comment, click on the Insert button, then (as prompted), double-click on the line ABOVE which you wish the comment to be inserted.

You can easily copy a comment from one player to another:

a) First double-click on the comment.

b) Then click on the Player Name pull-down list to select the new player.

c) Then click on Insert and double-click on the appropriate place to insert.

The player number will be changed to match the player number of the line you clicked on, for those comments that requrie player numbers.

Saving Edited Comments

After editing a comment or WAV file, you must click the Save button to save it to the List. If you have changed the player number, you will be told to use the Insert button instead. That is because the entries must be kept in order by player number, so if you change the player number, the entry cannot simply be saved back to the same location.

Insert USER's Name:

Registered users can enter their own name for the program to use. To insert the user's name into a comment, simply enter "USER" (without the quotes) at the appropriate place. The program will remove the word USER and insert the user's name in its place when the comment is displayed.

Saving and Reversing Changes

The CardShark Spades configuration file is in the directory in which you installed CS-Spades. It's name is CMT_SPDS.INI. Every time you save changes to this file, the program backs up the file to CMT_SPDS.BAK.

In the File menu is an option to Restore. This feature will copy CMT_SPDS.BAK back to CMT_SPDS.INI, wiping out any changes you've made since the last Save.

Since the program can only back up as far as the last save, and since it is a good idea to save frequently, you may wish to copy CMT_SPDS.INI to another disk or directory before starting to work on it. You can then cancel an entire edit session by recopying the old file back to your CSSPADES directory.

So that the program can be run from a CD-ROM, the program does not try to write a revised CMT_SPDS.INI file back to the program's directory, which is impossible if it is on a CD-ROM. Instead, it writes the revised file to your WINDOWS directory. Therefore, your new CMT_SPDS.INI file really gets messed up somehow, just delete it from the WINDOWS directory and the program will automatically revert back to the original file in your CSSPADES directory.

Tech Support

For assistance with this program or with CardShark Spades, call Tech Support at 713-524-6394 and ask for CardShark Spades Tech Support. You can also get tech support via FAX or email. See the game's main Help file for details.