

Special Hands



How a special hand works

- Only **before your team has opened**, and only right after you draw from the draw pile.
- Put **all 14 cards** down at once, with no discard. Every special hand is exactly 14 cards.
- It is your team's only meld, and the hand ends there.
- Your team scores the special hand and nothing else. The other team scores its hand as usual.
- No threes in a special hand, apart from the straight, which needs one.
- A matching pair of wild cards is two jokers or two 2s, never one of each.



Pairs, 2,500: seven different pairs and no wild cards, laid down all at once.

COUNT A hand, scored step by step

An ordinary hand, not a special one. Your partner went out. Your team finished a natural canasta of queens and a mixed canasta of kings, laid down two red threes and one black three, and has three 5s on the table. You hold a 9 and a 4.

Canastas: 500 queens, 300 kings	800
Going out	100
Threes: 300 for two red, 100 for one black	400
Melded cards: queens 70, kings 120, 5s 15	205
Cards left in your hand: a 9 and a 4	minus 15
Score for the hand	1,490

From 2,000, that team now has 3,490, so its next first meld needs 155.

The ten special hands

HAND	SETS	WHAT IT IS	POINTS
Pairs	7 pairs	Seven different pairs, no wild cards.	2,500
Wild pairs	7 pairs	Seven pairs, including a pair of aces, a pair of 7s and one matching pair of wild cards.	2,000
Miami pairs	7 pairs	Seven pairs, including aces, 7s, a pair of jokers and a pair of 2s.	2,500
Zip code	2, 2, 3, 3, 4	Two pairs, two sets of three and one set of four. Matching wild cards allowed.	2,500
Straight	one of each rank	One card of every rank, a 3 and a 2 included, plus a joker.	3,000
Garbage	4, 4, 3, 3	Two sets of four and two sets of three, no wild cards.	3,000
Blast off	5, 4, 3, 2	A set of five, a set of four, a set of three and a pair. Matching wild cards allowed.	3,000
Triples	3, 3, 3, 3, 2	Four sets of three and a matching pair of wild cards.	3,500
Quads	4, 4, 4, 2	Three sets of four and a matching pair of wild cards.	3,500
Dream hand	5, 5, 4	Two sets of five with four matching wild cards, or a set of five and a set of four with five wild cards.	8,500

Table rules vary

Special hands differ from table to table more than any other rule, so settle yours before the first deal. This list follows the Canasta League of America, and many tables play only some of these hands. Several published lists leave out the **dream hand**. Some tables also give you one more turn to try for a special hand after your partner opens.