

CANASTA GAME STRATEGIES

1. Do not meld aces with wildcards on your first turn if your partner has not had a chance to play because they may want to go down with wild cards.
2. Close aces ASAP to prevent your opponents from using aces in their meld.
3. When you have 5 of a kind, only put down 3. Keep 2 to allow you or your partner to pick up the discard pile.
4. Lay 3 of a kind down so that your partner does not discard them.
5. When saving to meld 180 do not keep 4, 5, & 6 even if you have 3 or more. Keep high point cards.
6. Keep count on how many 7s & aces have been discarded.
7. The game is often won by who picks up the discard pile. Protect it. But do not give up your meld to protect the pile unless it is toward the end of the hand.
8. Do not discard a card that is not in play, most likely your opponents will have it.
9. After melding, keep 4, 5, 6 pairs to pick up the pile.
10. Toward the end of the hand & the discard pile is loaded with 7s & aces, and you and your partner have them protected, bait your opponents to pick up the pile.
11. After melding, if you have 3 of a kind, discard one to bait your opponents to discard that card.
12. You meld, you discard, you pick-up your 3 or 4 cards & it includes a 3 & a 6. It goes around & your opponent on your right discards a 6. You lay down your 3 & pick a card. It's a 6, you now have a pair. You can now pick up the pile.
13. When the card pile is low, count the 3s that are on the table so you know how many turns you have left (how many 3s are left). Remember that if your opponents are not down, they can take 3 extra cards when they meld if you're not in the Talone.
14. When your opponents have 2 canastas, beware, they may go out.
15. When your opponents pick up the discard pile that has 3 or more 7s or aces, try to go out.
16. Wild card canasta: Go down with 4 if your opponents do not have 3 or more wild cards already on the table.
17. Watch what your opponents are discarding. Are they baiting you or preparing to go out? Now might be time to get rid of excess 7s and/or aces.
18. Do not get down to 1 or 2 cards in your hand unless you are preparing to go out. Your chances of picking up the pile is greatly reduced.
19. If you have several 3s down, get a canasta ASAP.
20. If your opponents are going for a 7 or ace canasta never discard a 7 or ace.
21. If your opponents are not down, do not make dirty canastas, go for clean ones. You can always add wildcards when you're ready to go out or your opponents start getting canastas.
22. Go for a pair hand if you have several pairs & no wildcards.