CardShark Spades (tm)

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For context-sensitive help on menu items during play, select the menu heading, cursor down to desired menu item, and press F1 for help on that item. Or you can press F1 at any time and use the list below:

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Installation of Shareware Version

CS-Spades requires Windows and is written for VGA or better video.

If you got CardShark Spades from PsL on CD-ROM, you can either run it from the CD-ROM or create a CSSPADES directory on your hard disk and copy all the files from the CardShark Spades' directory on the CD-ROM to on your hard disk.

If you got the program from PsL on a floppy disk, the disk will have a SETUP program. Put the disk in your floppy drive and run SETUP. It will put icons into program manager for running the game. If you downloaded CSSpades in a ZIP (or other archive) file, first de-archive it into a subdirectory on your hard drive.

You can put the CS-Spades files in any directory. If you have CardShark Hearts installed in a directory named on the same drive as CS-Spades, you can use the same sound (WAV) files for both games. All the *.WAV files should be in the directory, not the CS-Spades directory.

CS-Spades also requires VBRUN300.DLL. VBRUN is used by dozens (maybe hundreds) of pd/shareware programs and is widely available. If you already have VBRUN, you do not have to do anything else. If you do not have it, you can get it from the address on the order from by sending $4 to cover shipping and handling to the address on the order form. You can also download it from from PsL's Web page at "http://206.109.101.6/csspades.htm". VBRUN300.DLL must also be in your Window's directory or other directory in your PATH.

After copying the CS-Spades files to the directory of your choice...
  In WIN31, use Program Manager's File-New menu options to add CS-Spades' EXE file to one of your Program Groups.
  In WIN95, use "My Computer" to locate the CSSPADES folder, double-click to open it, find the CSSPADES.EXE icon, click on it and without letting go of the mouse button, drag it over to the other icons on your desktop. (If you prefer, use the right mouse button to create a short-cut icon.)

Sounds:

The shareware version of CS-Spades is distributed with only a few sound files in order to save space. The complete collection of sound files is over 5 Meg. NOTE: If you have CardShark Hearts, CS-Spades will use the sound files that are in the CSHEARTS directory. You can delete the WAV files from the CSSPADES directory. However, if you have not gotten an update to CS-Hearts on CD-ROM lately, you may not have all the sound files.

Print the order form for information about getting all of the sound files.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you use CSS_CFG.EXE to modify the comments and/or sound file used by CS-Spades, the changes will be stored in a file in your WINDOWS directory with the name CMT_SPDS.INI and the CMT_SPDS.INI file in your CSSPADES directory will be left unchanged.

If you get an update to CS-Spades which includes new sounds and/or comments, in order to hear them, you must copy the new CMT_SPDS.INI file to your WINDOWS directory to replace the old CMT_SPDS.INI file.

Colors:

If you have selected one of the alternative system color setups from the Windows Control Panel, CardShark Spades may not display properly. There is nothing I can do about this. Try changing the colors back to "Windows Default".

If you get strange colors in CardShark Spades, it is because another program has changed the Windows palette and will not give up control of it. If quitting other programs does not help, you may have to restart Windows. (This bug

in Windows 3.1 seems to have been fixed in Win95.)

Configuration Program

Registered users get a program for configuring the players and sounds. That program, CSS_CFG.EXE and CSS_CFG.HLP, can be copied into your Spades directory and run by clicking on Run Configuration Program in the File menu in CS-Spades.

Overview

Introduction

Introduction

Spades is a card game similar to Bridge, except that in this game, Spades is always the trump suit and each player gets only 1 chance to bid.

There are many ways to play Spades. CardShark Spades uses the rules and playing options which minimize luck factors and maximize the test of the cardplayer's skill.

Spades can be played with two pairs of partners or "cutthroat", where each player is on their own. The cutthroat variety can be played with any number of players, but four players is the ideal number.

The preferable form for a computer Spades game is Cutthroat, since in Partners, your results are not based on your own skill versus the computer, but on your skill aided or detracted from (depending on the quality of the program) by a computer partner.

CS-Spades plays four-handed cutthroat. You play one hand and the computer plays the other three hands individually. "Individually" means that the computer does not "cheat" -- it does not look into other hands or play any differently against the human opponent than it does against the other computer hands.

In fact, there is an <u>External Deal</u> option which will allow you to use CS-Spades to play one hand against three other human or computer opponents. In this mode, you only tell The CardShark what cards are dealt to him, what the others bid, and what they play for each trick.

The goal in Spades is to bid as many tricks as you think you can take without going over that number. At the end of the hand, you get 10 points for every trick bid and made and only 1 point for every trick that you made but didn't bid.

For example, if you bid 3 and take 5 tricks, you will get 3 x 10 + 2 over-tricks, for a total of 32 points. If you bid 5 and take 5, you get 50 points.

If you do NOT take the number of tricks you bid, you lose 10 points for each trick bid. For example, if you bid 5 but take fewer than 5 tricks, you lose 50 points, whether you take 4, 3, 2, 1, or none.

As an option, you can bid to take no tricks, called <u>Bidding Nil</u>, and if you succeed in taking none, you get 100 points. If you fail, you lose 100 points. Keep in mind that if you DO bid Nil, the other players are going to play their lowest cards to try to FORCE you to win a trick.

As another option, you can specify a minimum number of tricks which MUST be bid. In other words, you may have a hand that is so bad that you don't think that you can win any tricks, but the low cards are still too high to gamble on bidding Nil, yet you still cannot bid 0; you must bid whatever the minimum bid is.

The first player to reach 500 points wins the game.

Other Rules

There are many rules options that different people play in Spades.

The Sandbagging Rule:

One is to deduct points for tricks made but not bid ("overtricks"). The idea is both to keep the high scorer from deliberately underbidding ("sandbagging") and to penalize the less skilled player who unintentionally underbids.

The problems with this rule are that (1) a perfectly bid hand may be able to take overtricks due to the lay of the cards in a particular deal or due to poor play by opponents, even though the player is not a sandbagger nor a poor bidder, so the concept of the rule is flawed to start with, and (2) it is easy to avoid overtricks by discarding winners, discarding high trumps when someone else has played a higher trump, etc., so the rule is ineffective as well.

Since CS-Spades is designed as a test of card-playing skill and tries to minimize the luck factor, we do not use the "Sandbagging" rule.

The "Must-Ruff" Rule:

Some people play that if you cannot follow suit, you must ruff. Since the decision to ruff or not ruff is probably the part of play that requires the most skill, analysis, and good memory of cards played, removing the option to NOT ruff is simply removing a substantial degree of skill from the game.

For example, if you have the choice of ruffing or of discarding, and you ruff, you may get over-ruffed; but if you had discarded, your trump might have won a trick later.

Bidding Nil

If you have a hand with a lot of low cards in each suit, you can gamble with a bid of "Nil", saying that you will not take any tricks. If you succeed, you get 100 points, but if you fail (and you do take a trick), you lose 100 points.

Because the score from making or not making Nil is so large, it should not be bid unless you have a near-perfect Nil hand or unless you are way behind with one player about to win. If the computer bids Nil and is not way behind, you can almost forget about trying to make him take a trick, since the computer will not gamble 100 points without a near-perfect Nil hand.

Personally, I do not like the Nil bid. Among equal players, it can distort the results because every 40 or 50 deals, someone will get a can't-miss Nil hand. This is a hand with so many low cards that the player is almost certain to make the Nil bid and get 100 points.
Like winning the lottery, getting a perfect Nil hand is nothing but luck, yet the Nil bidder gets 100 points, which obviously has a very significant impact on the score.

Among players of unequal skill, the lesser player can gamble with Nil bids on hands that usually will not make Nil, but if that player is lucky, he can make the bid. The 100 points probably is not going to cause the less skilled player to win (more often than not, he will just drop farther and farther behind by bidding Nil and going set), but defending against the Nil bid can mess up the normal playing strategy and game results for the other players.

Even worse are "blind" Nil bids where you gamble on a Nil bid before looking at your cards. This simply takes the already blind luck of the Nil bid to an even more exaggerated extreme.

In addition, unless an opponent is really on the verge of winning the game and you are a couple of hundred points behind, you should not give up on making a comeback. It is not uncommon for the high scorer to make a big bid, get some bad breaks, and go set, allowing you to catch up.

However, unlike some other rules variations, Nil bidding is so widely used that it has been added to this game despite its shortcomings.

But if you find yourself always behind and having to bid Nil to catch up, a better solution for you might be to play some of the non-expert computer opponents until your game improves.

Mechanics of Play

CS-Spades may be played with a mouse or keyboard. In the Mouse mode, cards are selected to play by clicking on the card, then clicking the Ok button. At the end of each trick, also click the Ok button when prompted or wait for the specified <u>Pause</u> period (0 to 7 seconds) to time-out.

See <u>Keyboard Play</u> for information about playing CS-Spades with just the keyboard.

When you click on the card, it will rise up above the rest. If you change your mind before clicking on Ok, simply click on the card again to lower it.

If the selected <u>Pause</u> period expires before you click Ok, the card will be played automatically.

When it is your turn to bid, a box will appear in the middle of the playing window and a scroll bar will appear at the bottom of the window. You can use the scroll bar to change the amount bid or type your bid into the box manually.

During bidding, you have to click Ok after each player's bid. During play, you normally do not have click Ok after each play. See <u>Pause</u> for details.

Rules of Play

After the cards are dealt, each player bids the number of tricks he expects to take. If a minimum bid is required, you can bid no less than the minimum. If <u>Bidding Nil</u> is allowed, you can bid Nil to indicate that you will not take any tricks. If successful, you get 100 points, but if you do take a trick, you lose 100 points.

Unlike Bridge, each person gets only 1 turn to bid.

The order of bidding is clockwise and the turn to bid and play first also rotates clockwise. For example, player #1 starts the game by bidding and then leading the first card. On the next deal, player #2 will start the bidding and will lead the first card.

Any card may be led, except as a default, Spades may not be led until "broken" (i.e.: somebody trumps a trick or has nothing but Spades left in his hand). As an option, you can change the rules to allow the lead of Spades before they are broken.

After the lead, each player must "follow suit" by playing a card of the same suit as was led. If a player does not have a card of the same suit as led, that player can either play a trump (a Spade -- this is known as "ruffing") or discard a card of another suit.

If nobody ruffs, the high card played in the suit led wins the trick. If one person ruffs, that player wins the trick. If more than one player ruffs, the person to play the highest Spade wins the trick.

After all cards have been played, each player gets points as follows:

If the player won at least the number of tricks bid:
10 points for each trick bid
1 point for each trick won over the number bid

If the player won fewer tricks than bid:
-10 points for each trick bid

If Nil was bid:
100 points if no tricks were taken
-100 points if ANY tricks were taken

Strategy

Many people argue that computers cannot think or make independent judgments. I believe that this is exactly what they are doing in this and similar types of programs.

There are two ways to write a program which must interact with humans. One is to have a specific response for every possible input. In that case, the computer is not making "judgments", just playing back recorded responses.

The other way is to give the computer a set of general instructions which it must apply to ever-changing, unforseen circumstances. This is same way humans think and make judgments. This is how this program is written.

You can click on the File menu and the <u>View Deal Record</u> option to see a play-by-play discussion of strategy for each deal played.

<u>How the Computer Bids</u>
<u>How the Computer Plays</u>
<u>Ganging Up on the High Hand</u>
<u>Defending the Nil Bid</u>
<u>When NOT to Bid Nil</u>
<u>The Computer Players</u>

How The Computer Bids

The way the computer bids depends on style of the player selected. See <u>The Computer Players</u> for more information.

Each computer player keeps track of how many tricks it counted in each suit, as well as how many ruffs and how many high Spades it expects to win. During play, the computer keeps track of corresponding tricks won. At the end of each deal, tricks bid versus won in each suit are displayed so that you can see how the computer did on its bidding.

In the deal record saved to disk, the computer saves the bidding plus each player's explanation of the bidding. Click on the File menu and the <u>View Deal Record</u> option to view the deal record.

"WEAK TRICKS" AND "HALF TRICKS":

In the holdings AKxx or KQxx (where "x" is any small card in the suit), it is relatively safe to count the King as a trick. In the KQxx holding, you can use the Queen to force out the Ace and the King can then take a trick (assuming it is not ruffed, of course).

A lone King holding of Kxx can be counted as a trick because most of the time, the Ace will be played without your having to play the King first. However, some times the player on your right may lead a low card in the suit and if you play the King, the Ace may take it, while if you play low, the player with the Ace may be able to win the trick with a lower card and still have the Ace to take your King with.

Therefore, the computer will count a Kxx holding as a trick, but will consider it a "weak" trick. Some of the computer players may not count weak tricks in their bid.

A holding of "A-Q" may take 2 tricks if you get a favorable lead. This is normally too risky to count as a trick, but the computer keeps track of this and similar risky tricks as "half tricks". If there are two or more half-tricks in a hand, the computer will count them as 1 more trick bid.

How The Computer Plays

The way the computer plays depends on style of the player selected. See <u>The Computer Players</u> for more information. The following discussion applies mainly to the Expert playing style.

CS-Spades' main strength is that it never forgets what has been played. It usually knows (statistically) the best time to play a high card or a low card and when to risk an over-ruff by ruffing low.

ANALYZING CARDS PLAYED:

The program can also draw conclusions/inferences from the cards played. For example, if a computer player has the Q73 of a Hearts, it starts off knowing that each of the other players can have any or all of the remaining cards. Each player keeps a list of these possible holdings for each of the other players, plus a 4th list of the total cards out for each suit.

However, with each card played, it can adjust this list of potential card holdings for each of the other players. In the above example, if the Ace of Hearts is led and you follow with the King, it will infer that you do not have any lower non-touching Hearts. (A "touching" card is the next immediate card. King-Queen-Jack are touching cards. King-Jack are touching if the Queen has already been played.)

As another example, player 2 leads the 2 of Hearts, player 3 plays the 8, player 4 plays the 6, and you play the King, the computer will infer that you have no non-touching cards lower than a King but higher than an 8. The assumption is that you would choose to win with the lowest possible non-touching card to conserve your high cards.

ANALYZING POSSIBLE CARD HOLDINGS:

The computer can make deductions based on the lists and counts of possible holdings for each player. For example:

Player 1 has counts and lists of possible card holdings for players 2, 3, and 4. These counts and lists start off the same for each player, namely all of the cards not in Player 1's hand.

As cards are played, the lists and counts are pared down to the following with 6 tricks remaining: (Example, if player 1 leads Hearts and players 3 & 4 do not follow suit, then player 2 must have all the Hearts which are not in player 1's hand.)

```
  suits:  S   H   C   D
    all:  8   6   3   1 - Total # cards not in 1's hand.
player2:  8   6   3   1 - Possible cards in #2's hand, by suit.
player3:  8   -   -   1
player4:  8   -   3   -
```

Player #2 has all 6 of the Hearts and only 6 tricks are left, so #2 cannot have any of the 8 Spades, 3 Clubs, and 1 Diamond which appear on the "player2" line, so zero the other suits for player2.
* = Revised
```
  suits:  S   H   C   D
    all:  8   6   3   1
player2: *-   6 *- *-
player3:  8   -   -   1
player4:  8   -   3   -
```

In the revised counts, only player4 has Clubs, so 3 of his remaining 6 cards must be those 3 Clubs. Since he only has one other suit, the most he can have in that suit is 3, so change the "8" to "3" possible Spades. Since only one other

player can have Spades (player3), he must have the remaining 5 Spades, so reduce his "8" to "5".

You could also deduce player3's Spade count by figuring that since his only other suit is Diamonds and he has to have the 1 Diamond out, the other 5 tricks have to be Spades.

Player1 now knows the exact layout of the number of remaining cards in each of the other player's hands, not by "cheating", but by deduction:

```
  suits:  S  H  C  D
    all:  8  6  3  1
player2:  -  6  -  -
player3: *5  -  -  1
player4: *3  -  3  -
```

Note that although #1 knows the NUMBER of cards in each of the other players' hands, he has no way of knowing WHICH of the outstanding cards is in each hand.

In the example above, #1 may know that the AQT86532 of Spades are out, but while #1 has revised the Spade COUNTS for #3 and #4, the LIST of Spades which either #3 or #4 may have is still AQT86532, since #3's five Spades can be any of those 8 cards and ditto for player 4.

In the deal records saved to disk, the COUNT for a suit appears in parentheses after the suit letter and it may be smaller than the number of cards listed after it for the reason explained above.

Each computer player's analysis differs because each starts with a different list of possible card holdings for the other players, that being the list of all cards NOT in that computer player's hand.

No Cheating:

The computer plays each hand individually (except for Cheatin' Chuck, obviously). Each computer player keeps track of its own personal knowledge. of what's going on based on what that player has passed, played, and seen others play, as explained above.

When deciding what to bid or play for one hand, the computer never "peeks" into the other hands. It uses only its own knowledge.

In the deal record saved to disk, reasons for each play, as well as inferences made from the plays of others, are shown. You can see exactly why the computer has made each bid and play.

Ganging Up

One basic strategy is that if one player gets way ahead (by 100+ points) and is getting within striking distance of winning (over 350 points in a 500 point game), the other players will try to set him. (NOTE: This strategy is not used in <u>Scaled Scoring</u> or in the <u>Tournament</u> Mode.)

This is essential because once a player gets a big lead and is over 350, he starts bidding more conservatively (unless Scaled Scoring is being used) and it becomes almost impossible to set him without teamwork.

An example of targeting the high scorer:
    The player sitting West leads a low Diamond.
    North, who is way ahead, follows low.
    East plays the Queen.
    You have the Ace and the 6. Which do you play?

The 6. It is likely that North has the King. Save your Ace for the next trick. Even if it doesn't take North's King, you can ruff subsequent Diamond tricks.

Likewise, if you have a chance to ruff a suit but the high scorer is not winning it, then save your trumps to get the high scorer with.

Defending Nil Bids

Defending against <u>Nil bids</u> is difficult because while you are trying to play low and force the Nil bidder to win a trick, you also have to be sure to win enough tricks to make your bid.

One strategy is that if you have a short suit with high cards, play it first. Normally, you want to lead your low cards to try to force the Nil bidder to win a trick, but if you have a short, high suit, you are going to have to take those tricks sooner or later.

By playing your high, short suit first, you clear the way for one of the other players to continue leading low cards in the suit after they get the lead and you are out of the suit.

For example, if you have A-8 of Clubs and the Nil bidder has the Q-T-7-5-2, and the other players have K-9 and J-6-4-3, when you lead the Ace, and the others play Q-K-J, then you lead 8 and they play 7-9-6. Now when the player with the 4-3 left wins a trick, he can lead the 4 then the 3 and force the Nil bidder to win the trick.

If you are leading and have a good hand and the player on your right bids Nil, another strategy is to bid a couple of tricks higher instead of trying to set the Nil bidder. With the Nil bidder on your right, you can win extra tricks by not leading your lowest cards.

For example, if you have A-T-8-3 of Clubs, lead the 8. Chances are that the next two players will play low to try to force the last player to win the trick, but the Nil bidder will usually not have any trouble ducking your intermediate cards.

This kind of lead does not work if the Nil bidder in not to your right because once the Nil bidder plays below your card, the other players are free to play high and take the trick. However, if the Nil bidder is on your left and North leads, you can play high enough to beat North and East while conserving your highest cards and West will play low to let you win.

Even if the Nil bidder gets 100 points, you may get 70 or 80 this way. Meanwhile, the other players may go set because you have taken so many extra tricks, so you don't lose much ground to the Nil bidder (who might have made the bid no matter what you did anyway), and you gain ground on the other players.

When NOT To Ruff

Some computer Spades games (and some people) play that you MUST ruff when you can't follow. This is a very poor rule, since it takes away what is clearly the single most significant strategic decision to be made in the play of most hands: whether to ruff or to discard.

Even when NOT required by a rule, most other computer Spades games (and most people) simply ruff every time they get the chance, without worrying about getting over-ruffed. Again, they are ignoring one of the most important aspects of the game.

CardShark Spades uses its memory and analysis of the cards that its opponents have played and of the cards they could possibly have left. The computer players will not ruff if there is a good chance of getting over-ruffed, because that is just a waste of trump.

You have to be particularly careful about ruffing if you have something like K-4 of Spades and have bid to make the King. If you ruff with the 4 and get over-ruffed, then someone leads the Ace and draws your King, you will get no Spades tricks at all.

In such cases where every one of the low Spades might be needed to protect a high Spade against being drawn (such as with Q-7-5), the computer will not risk a ruff unless the odds are very, very high that he will not get over-ruffed.

If a computer player is short in another suit, the player may decide to discard from that suit and hope to get a safer ruffing opportunity in that suit later on rather than to risk getting over-ruffed now.

For example, if a player has D:A3 C:KJ75 H:- S:T953 and Hearts have already been led a couple of times and Diamonds have not been led yet, then it may be safer to discard a low Diamond and ruff that suit later than to ruff the Heart lead now.

The comments in the **View Deal Record** file will tell you why a computer player decided to ruff or not.

IMPLICATIONS OF NOT RUFFING:

The major effect that not ruffing has is that players discard from other suits instead. This can mean that if you bid 2 on a suit containing A-K-5-3, you may not make the Ace and King if you do not get around to playing them before the other players discard that suit and start ruffing it.

So when faced with opponents who discard rather than ruff at every opportunity, you should take your winners as soon as possible. The exceptions are (1) if you have A-Q or A-J and might win a second trick if you let someone else lead the suit, (2) if you have lots of Spades and can draw trumps before leading your winners, and (3) if one player is way ahead and you want to hold back your high cards in hopes of capturing his high cards. For example, if the winning player has a King and you play the Ace right away, you just make it easy for him to take his King trick.

The Computer Players

NOTE: Any Playing Style can be assigned to ANY PLAYER using the <u>configuration program</u>, which can also change players' names. As a default, players have been given names to reflect their playing styles (e.g.: Novice Nellie), but the Novice playing style COULD be assigned to the CardShark, if you wished.

There may be times when you would like a little variety or just don't want to play the strongest possible play of the computer. For example, a beginner or a child may get discouraged at losing to the computer all the time and would prefer someone of their own skill level.

Or you may just want to see how well other playing strategies work. Using the drop-down list boxes, you can select a different playing style for each hand or the same style for each hand. (Try playing against three Vicious Vickys and see how you make out.) You *can* change the playing style at any time during play, but the effects may be bizarre. I recommend NOT changing during play.

The playing styles at the start of the game are recorded in the Game Record as are any changes to the playing styles during the game.

If you really like surprises, let the computer pick opponents for you by selecting "Mystery Guest" from the list. Just like in real life, it will be up to you to figure out each opponent's style and adjust your play accordingly.

Playing Styles:

<u>Novice</u>
<u>Timid</u>
<u>Cautious</u>
<u>Expert</u>
<u>Aggressive</u>
<u>Vicious</u>
<u>Cheater</u>
<u>Surprise</u>

<u>Players' Names</u>

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 <u>bid Nil</u>. 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.

As a default, several players are assigned the Expert style so that you can play the computer's best game and still get a variety of players.

The Expert players are Smooth Sam, Sneaky Sue, Wiley Willie, and The CardShark.

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. 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 <u>Scaled Scoring</u> is on or a <u>Tournament</u> 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.

Since you would stand no chance against a player who always cheats, a Cheater doesn't cheat all the time. If you suspect a player with the Cheating playing style of cheating on a particular play, you can <u>accuse</u> him and win bonus points if you are right.

For information about scoring bonus points against a Cheater, see PlayOptions - You Cheated!.

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.

Players' Names

The following are the default player names. You can usually tell their playing styles by their names, but see
<u>Changing Player Names, Styles, Sounds</u>

    Novice Nellie
    Fraidy Frank (timid)
    Cautious Cal
    Smooth Sam (expert)
    Crazy Charlie (aggressive)
    Vicious Vickie
    Cheatin' Chuck
    Mystery Guest
    Sneaky Sue (expert)
    Wiley Willie (expert)
    The CardShark (expert)

NOTE: Any Playing Style can be assigned to ANY PLAYER using the <u>Configuration Program</u>, which can also change players' names. As a default, players have been given names to reflect their playing styles (e.g.: Novice Nellie), but the Novice playing style COULD be assigned to the CardShark, if you wished.

Most people will want to play against the Expert style, because it is the best non-cheating style of play. So that you do not have to play three instances of the same player (e.g.: 3 Smooth Sams) four different characters have, as a default, been assigned the Expert style and you can play against any 3 of those to have a good game.

File Menu

The following options are available on the File menu:

View Deal Record
View Previous Deal
Keep All Deal Records
View Stats
Change Scores
Zero Game Score
Zero Out Total Points
External Deal
New Deal
Replay Same Deal
Exit Game

View Deal Record

At any time during a deal, you can use this menu option to view a record of the current deal. The deal record is displayed in three windows. The top-left window shows the bidding. The top-right window shows the tricks played. The bottom windows shows the complete deal record with analysis of bids and plays. By clicking on a bid or play in the top windows, the analysis will be displayed for that bid or play in the bottom window.

The current deal record, is stored in CSS_DEAL.000 and the prior deal is in CSS_DEAL.001 in the _DEALdirectory. (Also see <u>Keep All Deal Records</u>.)

These deal records can also be loaded into Notepad or any other text editor for viewing, editing, printing, FAXing, etc. From Notepad, you can save a deal record permanently under a new name by using Notepad's File & Save-As menu.

In the <u>Duplicate Play</u> mode, the Computer's deal record is appended to the end of yours.

You can view a deal record with "View Deal Record" up until the passing has been done for the next game. Then it is copied into CSS_DEAL.001 (which you can view with the <u>View Previous Deal</u> option) and the new game is written to CSS_DEAL.000.

If you have a problem with CS-Spades or wish to report what you think is a playing or passing weaknesses, save/print the deal record and mail or fax it to me. (If possible, please email it so that I can use the automatic Load/Setup feature to set up the deal. My email address is 74666.3465@compuserve.com. The deal record will let me recreate the deal and fix the problem.

View Previous Deal

Lets you view the previous deal's record. (See comments for <u>View Deal Record</u>.)

When you click on View Previous Deal with the <u>Keep All Deal Records</u> option selected, a window will pop up showing a list of the files in your _DEAL directory.

Click on View to view the highlighted file in the list.

Click on Delete to delete the highlighted file in the list.

In addition to viewing the deal records in the program, you can view the files with Notepad or other text editor.

When viewing a deal record, you may wish to save it permanently with a different name. To do so, after bringing it up in NOTEPAD, use Save-As in NOTEPAD's File menu to save the file in the WINDOWS_DEAL directory with whatever name you choose. The file will appear in the list the next time you select the View Previous Deal option and you can select it the same way you select the CSS_DEAL.### files. You can, of course, add notes to the file in NOTEPAD before saving it if you wish, as long as the notes come after the first trick played.

Deleting or renaming a file may leave a gap in the CSS_DEAL file numbers, reducing the total number of files you can save. To close up the gap and use all the numbers, click on Renumber.

If you would like to replay the deal shown in the deal record, click on Load/Setup Deal Record. This will change the rules settings, the computer opponents' playing styles, the starting scores, and the first-bid/deal turn to match those in the Deal Record.

After replaying an old deal, if you want to restore your original settings, click on the Restore button.

Keep All Deal Records

Let's you save and view up to 999 of the most recent deal records, rather than just the default of saving/viewing the current and previous deals.

The first time you select this option, a directory by the name of CSS_DEAL will be created in your WINDOWS directory so that the deal files can be stored there.

If you have this option selected, the files will be stored as CSS_DEAL.### where ### is a number from 001 to 999 with the largest number being the latest deal. The current deal is saved during play as CSS_DEAL.000.

To help reduce the accumulation of unnecessary files, at the end of each game, you will be given the chance to delete all the CSS_DEAL.### files. Note that this will delete all CSS_DEAL.### files, not just those for the game just finished; however, it will not delete deal records which you saved under a different name with NOTEPAD, only those which start with "CSS_DEAL."

View Stats

The View Stats menu option lets you see the degree to which the luck of the deal affected your game, plus how well each player bid and played his or her cards, to a certain extent.

When you are through viewing the statistics, you are asked if you want to clear the stats file. You may want to clear the stats before a new game, but especially before a tournament or network game begins.

Average Tricks BID-MADE lets you see at a glance how much you overbid, on average, when you MAKE a bid. The next column shows the TOTAL UNDERBID since the last time the stats file was cleared.

Average Tricks BID-SET shows you what the average level at which you overbid and by how much. If the average you bid when going set is under 3, then that's not too bad, since bidding for that 1 extra trick on the 1 or 2 level doesn't hurt as bad as going for 1 more trick when you are bidding 5 or 6.

The TOTAL BID-WON column shows you who got the most winners dealt to them -- assuming that everyone bids and plays on about the same level of expertise. However, some of the players may underbid their hands and also play conservatively (or in Novice Nellie's case -- play badly), so the total tricks won number is not indicative of the luck of the deal.

Other (self-explanatory) stats shown are Number of Times Set and the number of Nil bids that each player bid and made.

Change Scores

Lets you change all the scores.

When replaying a deal, to get the computer to play the same, the scores must be changed to match those at the start of the game to be replayed, since starting scores affect the computer's play.
If you use the Load/Setup option (See View Previous Deal.) to replay a deal saved to disk, the scores are changed automatically.

Scores cannot be changed during network play nor tournament play.

Zero Game Score

This will zero out the current game scores, allowing you to start a new game.

Zero Out Total Points

This will zero out the running total of points in the last column of the score board.

External Deal

CS-Spades can play a single hand against 3 external players, such as 3 other humans or a different computer Spades game.

We use this option in testing to make sure that CS-Spades can beat all the other Spades games on the market. You can try this for yourself, or you might want to let someone who doesn't know how to play Spades play the fourth hand in your game using CS-Spades, although entering into the program the cards dealt and played can slow things down.

After selecting External Deal from the File menu, and at the start of each new deal thereafter, you will be prompted to enter the cards dealt to you, one suit at a time starting with Diamonds.

Rather than trying to put up an array of cards which you could click on to select the cards dealt to the Shark, you type the cards into a text box. This has been determined to be faster and easier than moving a mouse around to select cards from an on-screen array.

The cards must be entered from high to low using the first letter of the names of the cards Ace through Ten (i.e.: AKQJT) and the number of the smaller cards (i.e.: 98765432). For example, if you are playing CS-Spades against another computer game which deals you the Ace, Queen, Seven, and Two of Diamonds, when prompted for Diamonds, you would enter "aq72" (without the quotes).

If you cannot see the screens of both games at once, either write down a list of the cards dealt to you or you can Alt-Tab back and forth between the two games to look at each suit dealt by the other game and to enter those cards into CS-Spades.

When you are finished entering the cards dealt to you, they will be displayed and you will have a chance to compare them to the other program one last time to verify that they are correct. (Obviously, you are not asked to put in the opponents' cards, just the Shark's.)

If they are correct, the computer will bid and then ask you what the players in the other game bid. The bid order is not the same and does not matter as long as each of the players in CS-Spades has the same bid as the corresponding player in the other game.

After the bids have been verified, CS-Spades asks whose turn it is to lead and the play begins. When it is the Shark's turn to play, he will say what card he is playing and you can enter that card into the other program. When an opponent in the other game plays, you simply type that card and suit into CS-Spades at the prompt.

If an opponent plays the Jack of Hearts, for example, you just enter "jh". If the opponent is following the suit led, you can leave off the suit and just enter the "j".

Alt-Tabbing between two games and entering the cards played goes suprising quickly.

You are asked to confirm each card entered; nevertheless, it is possible to make a mistake. If you do, and you cannot recover from it, just go on to the next deal. You can use "Change Scores" in the "File" menu to put the game scores back in sync with the external game's scores. It is important for the game scores to be the same, since the scores can affect the bidding and playing of the deal.

If the program says that a card you have entered for an opponent's play cannot be in that player's hand, it should mean that the card is either in the Shark's hand or has already been played. You either typed in the wrong card on a previous trick or on this trick. The computer will ask if you want to put the card in the opponent's hand anyway. If the error was on a previous trick, you may as well say yes and continue the hand. If the error was a current typo, say no and correct the entry.

As the cards for the opponents are entered in for each trick, the program keeps track of them and displays them on screen. In the deal record, at the end of the deal, you can see the complete hands dealt to each player and a record of the bids and the cards played. Press Ctrl-V to view the complete record of the deal just played.

New Deal

This allows you to abort play and get a new deal.

Replay Same Deal

This allows you to replay the same deal. The scores you got on the first deal will be the ones added into your total, so you cannot improve your score by playing the deal again, but you can see if you could have done better by playing differently.

The exception to using the first scores is that if you choose Replay before you have finished playing out a deal (i.e.: before all the points are in), the points received so far will NOT be used. Instead, the scores from the replay will be used. This can let you recover from accidentally playing the wrong card.

When you replay a deal, your original scores will remain on the score board and the replay scores will appear in the "Dup" column. If you are playing in the Duplicate Play mode, after you have finished replaying a deal as much as you want, the scores in the Dup column will be erased and your original scores will remain in the "Deal" column unless all the points were not in, in which case the scores from the Dup column will be copied to the Deal column. Then the Duplicate scores will be displayed in the Dup column.

The Replay Same Deal option is turned off during CardShark play in the Duplicate mode. When the Shark is done, you can click Replay to see the Shark play his hand again. This is primarily for those who have Pause set to "0" (in the Interface menu) and click on the Zip Button so that the Shark's turn goes by at top speed. If you are curious about the resulting score, you can click on Replay to see the Shark play the cards again with ZIP turned off. You should also turn on Show - Explanations menu.

Scramble Cards

Scramble Cards

When you select the <u>Replay Same Deal</u> menu option, you will be asked if you want to scramble the opponents' cards.

If you say yes, all the cards in the deck which are not in YOUR hand will be reshuffled and dealt to the other three players.

The main purpose of this is to let you see how your strategy would have worked against different distributions of the cards in the opponents' hands.

For example, say that you try to <u>bid Nil</u> and don't make it. Was it a bad idea, or was it just a bad break in the distribution of the cards?

Try replaying your same hand a couple of times with different distributions of the remaining cards in your opponents' hands. If you NEVER make it, then you can conclude that it was a bad idea. If you make it more often then not, then it was a good idea, but bad luck.

Exit Game

This quits the game of Hearts completely. If you are still bidding, the program will start with the same deal again next time you play the game. If you are in the middle of a deal and have not taken the number of tricks you bid, the computer will treat the deal as if you went set, and the program will start with a new deal next time you play.

All options you have selected during the session are saved, as well as your scores, and are used when you start the game again.
Note that if the program is terminated abnormally due to a system error, power failure, etc., the options file will not be updated and you will lose the settings of any options you have selected, as well as the current scores.

Interface Menu

The following options are available in the Interface menu:

Sounds
Pause
Move Cards

Background
Card Backs
Colors
Faces
Text Width

Keyboard Play
Ok Button Click
New Name
Refresh Screen

Sounds

Computer players make various types of comments. Some of the comments have sound files (*.WAV) to go with them; others do not. (The <u>configuration program</u> that you get when you pay for CSS lets you add, remove, and reassign sounds and comments. There are also tons of sound [WAV] files on the Internet available for free downloading. With the configuration program, you could also translate comments into any language you want.)

If <u>All Sounds Off</u> is checked, you will hear no sounds no matter which types of comments you have checked. Any time you see a speech balloon, it means there is no WAV file available for the comment being made.

The following are comment-related options:

<u>Lip Sync</u>
<u>Lead Comments</u>
<u>Take Comments</u>
<u>Razz Comments</u>

Card Sounds are the sounds the cards make when you click on them and they pop up.

Deal Sounds are the sounds of shuffling and dealing the cards. Note that having these on slows down the deal of the cards.

Lip Sync

For added realism, the characters' lips move when they are talking, even if there are only speech balloons and no sound is being played.

This animation makes the program a little less responsive. If you feel it is slowing you down, you can toggle off Lip Sync.

Since the animation does not slow things down when a WAV file is being played at the same time, turning off Lip Sync only stops the animation when there is not an associated sound file or when Sounds are turned off.

Razz Comments

These are comments made when you somebody ruffs your winner or you ruff somebody else's winner. There are sound files available for almost all of these comments. Most people say they had a lot of entertainment to the game. ("Makes me want to choke the computer some times", says one user.)

Lead Comments

These comments let you easily spot who is leading and what suit is being led. No sound files have been made for these comments.

Take Comments

These comments let you easily see who took the trick. If <u>Move Cards</u> is on, the Take comments are not used, since you can see from the card motion who took the trick. (Note: No sound files have been made for these comments.)

All Sounds Off

This is the master on/off switch for sounds. If this option is NOT checked, you will hear comments from the computer players based on the categories you have checked in the <u>Sounds</u> option list.

If this option IS checked, you will hear NO sounds even if you have categories checked in the Sounds option list.

If you do not have the sound file for a particular comment, you will see the text of the sound file displayed in a "speech balloon" instead, assuming that you have checked the appropriate comment category in the Comments option list.

There are no sound files available for the Suit Led, and Took Trick comments, so only speech balloons are shown for those comments. Using the <u>Configuration Program</u>, you can add your own sound files if you wish.

Due to space limitations, we have only been able to add one sound file for each sound category in the shareware distribution files/disks. Unfortunately, this gets old quickly and doesn't give you a true feeling for the fun that a large variety of sound files can add.

If you pay the license fee for CardShark Spades, you can get dozens (over 4 megabytes) of additional sound files as part of the registration package. (These WAV files can also be used as Windows system sound files.)

If you are not ready to pay for this program, but would like the complete set of sound files to try, you can get this multi-disk set of WAV files with the order form which you can print when you exit the program or by calling PsL at 713-524-6394 or 800-2424-PSL.

You can also add WAV files of your own. There are WAV files for free downloading all over the World Wide Web (on Internet).

If you do not have a sound card, or if you experience bizarre problems with sounds turned on, turn them off. Unfortunately, Windows 3 can be flakey and such problems are outside of this program's control.

Pause

You normally have to click Ok after selecting a card, at the end of each trick, and after some other prompts to let the computer know that you are ready to continue, but if you don't like having to click the button, you can set the pause time limit for 0, 1, 3, 5 or 7 seconds.

After selecting a card, for example, you will have the selected number of seconds to click on it again to change your mind, or you can click on Ok or press Enter right away to play it.

You can also elect to HAVE to click the Ok button to continue after selecting a card and at the end of each trick. This assures you of not having a selected card played before you have a chance to change your mind and of not having a trick "picked up" before you have a chance to see all the cards that were played.

The final option is to pause after each card is played. This is mainly of use when View All Hands is on and you want to study the hands to see if you can figure out which card the computer will play before it plays it.

It is interesting to turn on AutoPlay, View All Hands, and Pause and see how the computer plays each hand. Also see Duplicate Play.

Move Cards

With this feature on, at the end of each trick, the cards will move across the "table" to the player who took the trick. This slows things down on older machines, but it makes it even more obvious who took the trick.

With a 486-50 or faster machine and/or a fast video card, the movement of the cards is quick and smooth; otherwise, this is an option best left off.

Background

Some people have complained about being able to see other things on the screen in the background when CS-Spades is running and screen resolution is greater than 640x480. Although this would seem to be just the way Windows is designed to work, this option has been added to put up a solid green background behind CS-Spades.

Card Backs

Lets you cycle through the available decorative card backs.

Colors

Due to screen color differences in different systems which are beyond the programmer's direct control, the background colors behind the players' faces may not match the overall background color.

This option brings up a scroll bar at the bottom of the screen with which you can adjust the background color until the two match.

Faces

Some people prefer a non-cluttered playing board. This option hides the faces.

Text Width

CS-Spades attempts to adjust to different types of video drivers. However, some systems have eluded our best efforts to adapt to them and, in particular, the Score Board may have difficulty showing all the scores.

If this happens, the Text Width menu option puts up a scroll bar which can adjust the width of the text in the Score Board until you can see it all.

Keyboard Play

You can play CardShark Spades without using the mouse. All of the menu options and buttons can be selected by holding down the Alt key and pressing the letter underlined in the menu or button caption.

To select cards using the cursor keys, click on the Interface menu and the Keyboard Play option. When turned on, a rectangular black mark will appear on your card layout.

Select a card by moving the marker with the left and right cursor keys and pressing the up cursor key for the card you want to play. If you have <u>Pause</u> set to 0, the card will be played immediately; otherwise, you have until your specified Pause period is up to press the down cursor to deselect the card, or you can press Enter to play the selected card without further waiting (for Pause periods longer than 0).

When the Pause period is up, the card will be played. When passing, you can lower and raise (up to three) cards at will. The cards are not passed until you press Enter.

If it is your lead and Hearts have not been broken and the Rule is still set that requires Hearts to be broken (or QS played) before they can be led, the marker will skip over Hearts when you move it.

If you are following someone else's lead, the marker will only scroll in the suit that was led. This is to force you to follow suit.

Ok Button Click

In order to try to avoid problems which arise from clicking the Ok button when it should not be clicked, it will be grayed out during such times. Because this is a complex program with a lot going on, it is conceivable that it could remained grayed out some time when you DO really need it. In such a case, you can click on this menu option instead.

New Name

This menu option only shows up for paid users. In the unlicensed version, the computer players refer to you as "USER". When licensed, your first name is used. This feature allows you to change the name the other players refer to you by.

Refresh Screen

This options redraws the CS-Spades windows in case some of it gets wiped out and not re-drawn. You should never need this option, but it is here just in case.

Options Menu

AutoPlay
Cash Out
Deal Number Prompt
Duplicate Play
Network Game
You Cheated!

AutoPlay

The Computer plays your hand too. This is a good way to study the strategy. AutoPlay should be selected at the start of the deal. It may not always work otherwise.

When Duplicate Play is chosen, Autoplay is automatically toggled on for the computer's turn.

Cash Out

Toggles the Automatic Cash-Out option on and off. When checked, the option is on and the following takes place:

At the end of each Trick, the program checks to see if the person with the lead has all winning cards left. If so, the program stops play, displays the remaining cards, and awards the remaining tricks to the person with the lead.

After all, if the person with the lead doesn't have a card left that is lower than those held by the other hands and no trumps are out against him, there is no point in playing out the deal (as most other programs make you do).

One exception is that if only one trick is left, the program will not cash in, since it is faster just to play the last trick.

Deal Number Prompt

If you select this option, you will be prompted before each deal for a deal number. This allows you to replay a particular deal, but please keep in mind that to get the computer to play the same way again, both the bidding turn and the starting game scores must be the same as in the original deal. To set the scores back, select Change Game Scores.

The easiest way to replay a prior deal if you have the deal record on disk is to use the <u>View Previous Deal</u> menu option in the File menu. To replay the deal you just finished, click on <u>Replay Same Deal</u> before the scores have been added in and the next deal started.

The deal number is always shown at the start of the game record, which you can view at any time. It is also displayed at the bottom left of the playing window.

Having a deal number does not mean that the deals are pre-defined. The deals are randomly generated, but once generated, the deal number allows the computer to generate the same deal again.

Note that if you manually replay a deal, the score will still be added to the totals. (The exception is if you replay the last deal, totals don't change.) If you want the scores restored, look at the game record to see what the scores should be, then use the <u>Change Scores</u> option.

If you use the Load-Setup option under View Previous Deal, you can restore the original settings and scores when you are done by clicking on a button.

The <u>Novice</u> style uses random factors in playing and will probably not play the cards the same way the next time. All levels may use a random factor in some plays such as deciding whether or not to ruff, and they may not play the same way the next time.
In addition, a new version of the program very probably will not bid and play exactly the same as an older version, so if you have an old version of this program (e.g.: you are looking at this 1996 release in 1997 or later), there is little point in sending in deal records or bug reports, since newer versions make them obsolete.

Instead, see the order form for information on how to get a new shareware version to try out.

Duplicate Play

Duplicate Play lets you compare your score to the score the computer gets when it plays the same cards. In the Duplicate Play mode, after you play each deal, the computer will replay the same deal with The CardShark playing your cards.

After The CardShark is through playing the same deal you just played, your "Dup Game" score will be increased or decreased by the difference in your score and the CardShark's score on the same hand. The scores are divided by 10 to keep the numbers more manageable. This means that if you and the Shark make the same bid, but the one of you takes an extra, un-bid trick, you will be tied after dividing your final scores by 10.

Since a significant part of the game is not just making the most points with your cards, but setting other players (especially those who are ahead of you), the computer awards bonus points to the Duplicate score for setting others.

You (or the Shark) get 1 point for each 10 points by which the score of the player you set exceeds your score. For example, if the player set has 400 points and you have 300, you get 10 points on the DUP line. If the player set has FEWER points than you do, then you get 1 point on the DUP line.

At the end of the regular game, the "Dup Total" score is increased by one if you have outscored the Shark in duplicate play or decreased by one if the Shark outscored you for the game. If you are using Scaled Scoring, the Dup Total score is increased or decreased by the difference in the Dup - Game points, not by just 1.

If you are interested in learning from the The CardShark's play of the same cards you just played, try to figure out what the computer will play before clicking Ok for each card.

If instead you just want to generate the The CardShark's score as quickly as possible to compare to your score, set Pause to 0 and click on the Zip Button. If you are curious about the resulting score, you could then click on Replay Same Deal before the scores are added in to see the Shark play at a slower speed.

Why a Duplicate Mode?

In card games, luck can greatly influence the outcome of the game, particularly when the skill of the players is very close. Bridge players have gotten around this problem by devising a method of playing called "Duplicate".

In Duplicate Bridge, every pair of players plays the same cards that every other pair does (basically). Your score for the tournament is not the sum of the scores you get against the opponents at your table; instead, your score is based on how the score you got against your opponents compares to the scores that every other pair got when they played the same cards.

In Spades, you may lose or win games because of bad luck in the lay of the cards. By playing in the Duplicate mode, even if you get bad cards, you can still have fun by seeing how your score compares to the computer's when it has to play the same bad cards.

Network Game

The licensed/registered (i.e.: non-shareware) version of CS-Spades can be played on any network or computer connection in which two or more machines can access the same physical drive and directory. For example, using Direct Cable Connection in Win95, you could connect a notebook to a desktop machine and two people could play CS-Spades against each other with CS-Spades playing the other two hands in the foursome. (See the file DCC_INST.TXT for help doing a DCC hookup.)

Since the registration fee of $15 license CS-Spades for use on a single machine, each of the other machines must have their own licensed copy of the game. The additional copies can be ordered for $5 each. Click on Help - About to print an order form. CS-Spades must be installed on individual machines, not on a network drive, and each machine must be running its own copy of Windows.

When you select Network Game, a window will be displayed for setting up the network game. One person (the "Starter") is in charge of specifying the number of people that will be playing, setting the rules and Posting them. The number of people can be from 2 to 4, with the computer players filling in if less than 4 people are to play.

Before Posting the rules, the Starter must select a drive and directory for the game to use in exchanging information with the other players. The directory should be empty. The Starter may have to go to DOS or to File Manager to create a new directory. If the program says that someone else has already posted the rules, then either the directory was not empty to start with or one of the other players has clicked on PostRules.

Each of the Starter's opponents must select the same physical drive and directory. On a network or Direct Cable Connection, the drive letter and path may not necessarily be the same.

Each player must also enter the number of actual people who will be playing. After entering the drive, directory and number of players, the other players click on LogOn on the menu bar.

If the program says that the rules have not been posted, then either the Starter has not posted the rules yet, or (more likely), the Starter's opponent has not selected the same physical drive and directory.

The Starter can look at the directory (in DOS or in File Manager) to see if the file CSSSETUP is in the specified directory. If it is, then the Starter's opponent can use the PsL Find program (which comes on the Bonus Disk when ordering CS-Spades) to search for the CSSSETUP file.

Assuming that everyone has logged on without incident, each player should review the list of rules and then click Exit on the menu bar to get back to the playing window.

During network play, rules options cannot be changed without quitting the network game and starting a new one. None of the options will work which let players view opponents' cards, get hints, see explanations of bids, etc.

When waiting on another (real) person to bid or play, the other players' machines will show a speech balloon for that player with some comment such as "I'm thinking." to indicate whose turn it is. Remember that during bidding, you have to click Ok after each bid, whether by a person or by the computer.

You Cheated!

A player using the Cheating style is almost impossible to beat. So to make the game against a Cheater a little more interesting, he does not cheat on every play. In addition, many of a Cheater's plays will just naturally be the same as the non-cheater, such as when playing a high card to win a trick after everyone else has played, or when discarding a low card under someone else's Ace.

This is similar to a real-life situation where a person would probably not be able to cheat on every play. Also as in real life, if you catch a player cheating, you can exact some punishment on him.

In the PlayOptions menu is the line "You Cheated!". If you think the player cheated, click the "You Cheated" menu line. If more than one Cheatin' Chuck is playing, you will be asked which one you think cheated.

Don't forget that if you are playing against <u>Mystery Guests</u>, one or more of them may be cheaters. Also don't forget that while Cheatin' Chuck is the only cheater by default, ANY player can be set to use the cheating style by using the <u>Configuration Program</u>.

If the player DID cheat, you get twice your bid added to your score for having caught the scoundrel.
If the player did NOT cheat, then twice your bid is deducted from your score for having insulted the computer player. (Obviously, the accusation cannot be made on the 13th trick.)

The computer will not lie about the player cheating, but if you still don't believe the computer, you can always view the deal record to see the cards held in the computer player's hand, as well as the explanation for whatever play he made. If you STILL don't believe the computer, take a reality check. This is just a game. Nobody is REALLY out to get you!

Rules Menu

Break Spades Before Leading
Spades Allowed on 1st Trick

Minimum Bid
Nil Bidding
Scaled Scoring

Play a Tournament
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Break Spades before Leading

The default is that you cannot lead a Spade until a Spade has been played on some other trick. By turning this option off, you can lead Spades whether Spades have been played or not.

Spades Allowed on 1st Trick

If "Spades Allowed" is turned ON, a person who has no cards in the suit led may play a Spade if so desired. With this option turned OFF, Spades may not be played on the first trick.

Minimum Bid

A minimum bid forces you to bid even if you don't think that you can make a bid. This option lets you change the level of the minimum bid required. The default minimum bid is 1.

Nil Bidding

If a player thinks he can avoid taking any tricks, he can bid "Nil". If the other players force him to take a trick (by playing their low cards), then he loses 100 points. If he avoids taking any tricks, he scores 100 points.

The "Nil Bid Score" menu option allows you to change the points won or lost on a Nil Bid to any desired value.

Also see Bidding Nil.

Scaled Scoring

When one player approaches game, the other players will gang up to try to set him. The losing players will also start bidding and playing more wildly to try to catch up. At the same time, a player who is way ahead and approaching game will (or at least *should*) bid more conservatively to avoid losing a game that is essentially already won.

This strategy tends to distort the normal bidding and playing of the hand. To counteract this, you can select "Scaled Scoring".

Scaled Scoring gives the each player points equal to the difference between that player's score and the scores of those players lower than him/her.

For example, if the final scores for players 1-4 are 510, 450, 400, 350, respectively, then player 1 would get (510-450)+(510-400)+(510-350) for a total of 330 points instead of just 1 point for the win. Player 2 would get (450-400)+(450-350) for a total of 150 points. Player 3 would get (400-350) for a total of 50 points. And player 4 would get nothing.

To keep these scores from getting unnecessarily large and hard to handle, we simply divide them by 10 to get smaller numbers with the same comparative value. In the example above, players 1-3, who got 330, 150, and 50, respectively, would instead get 33, 15, 5.

Scaled Better Reflects Game Results:

Traditional scoring - in the Wins column, whoever won the game gets a single point, whether he was 400 points ahead of everyone else or 1 point ahead. The other players get nothing, even if they came within a single point of winning and were 200 points ahead of the 3rd and 4th players.

Scaled scoring - the second-high and third-high scorers get points reflecting how high they scored. And the higher their game scores, the greater the number of points they get in the Wins column and the fewer points the high scorer gets.

This means that even if it seems like you have no hope of winning, you have to continue to play your best game in order to hold down the number of "win" points the higher scorer(s) will get.

If you are way ahead, instead of bidding conservatively and just high enough to finish out the game, you must continue to bid what you think you can make in order to maximize your points in the Wins column.

As a way of keeping the high scorer from underbidding, this is a much better alternative to deducting points for overtricks, which is a penalty easily avoided by careful play.

Play a Tournament

When you are ready to play a SERIOUS game -- no peeking at cards, no aborting a deal that has turned sour for you, no asking for hints -- click on the "Rules" menu and "Play a Tournament".

WARNING: Tournament play is not for people with weak egos!!! Just getting INTO the last round is an accomplishment. To win a tournament is something to really be proud of!

In the Tournament mode, you play 10 sets of a specified number of deals per set. (See below for specifying the number of deals per set.) You can select the rules you want to play by before starting a tournament.

At the end of each set (except the last one), the low scorer is out of the tournament and (if that isn't you) is replaced by another computer player. Early in the tournament you will come up against some of the weaker players. As the tournament progresses, you will run into tougher players such as Vicious Vicky and even Cheatin' Chuck. (Don't forget to use the You Cheated!! menu option if you think you have caught Chuck cheating.)

In the last set, your opponents will be Mystery Guests and you have to figure out their playing styles and the best way to combat them. At the end of the last set, the high scorer is the winner of the tournament.

If you are the low scorer, you are out of the tournament, so the tournament is effectively over. You will be told how much money you lost to each of the other players. Bring your wallet!

After a tournament ends, to start another tournament, you must click on "Rules" and "Play a Tournament" again. Notice that you can select any rules you wish for the tounament, but you cannot use any of the "cheat" menu options, such as skipping a deal, viewing the other player's hands, etc.

Two Tournament Rules are used to "encourage" each player, whether high scorer or low scorer, to continue to bid and play his or her cards to the hilt. The first rule is that the low scorer has to pay the other players $1 for each point by which they outscore him. This only takes place in your imagination, of course, but the idea is that the low scorer cannot afford to take foolish risks, such as bidding Nil without a good Nil hand just to try to get back in the game, since going set on risky bids increases the amount he (or you) has to pay the other players.

The second rule is more tangible: the 2nd and 3rd place players in each set start the next set with a minus score based on the difference between their scores and the 1st place finishers.

For example, at the end of a set of deals, player #3 has 200 points, #1 has 176, #2 has 80, and #4 has 60.

Player #4 is low scorer and so is out of the tournament. Player #1 starts the next set with the difference between his score and #3's score divided by 2, which is (176 - 200) / 2 = -12.

Player #2 starts the next set with (80 - 200) / 2 = -60. Both the high scorer and the new opponent start with 0.

The reason for dividing the difference in the scores by 2 is that while we want to provide SOME incentive for players to keep bidding and playing the cards properly, we don't want the players to start the next round so far in the hole that they can't get out, just because they lost by a few tricks.

SPECIFYING THE NUMBER OF DEALS

After clicking on "Play a Tournament", you will be asked how many deals you want per set. You can enter any number. Five or ten deals are good for a fast tournament. Twenty to 30 gives you a better chance to overcome a temporary run of bad breaks and/or bad cards and thus make it through to the end of the tournament.

DUPLICATE MODE IN A TOURNAMENT

For an even greater challenge, you can combine <u>Duplicate Play</u> with a tournament.

Change Game Goal

Lets you change the score to which the game is played. Default is 500.

Next Leader

You can select the player to lead first. This function is primarily of use when you are setting up a previously played game and you need to have the same player lead first again.

"Show" Menu

This menu lets you control whether or not various features of the program are displayed.

SHOW:
<u>Explanation of Bids/Plays</u>
<u>All Hands</u>
<u>Suit Counts</u>

<u>Scores</u>
<u>Show Winning %'s</u>

Explanation of Bids/Plays

This option displays the explanation for the computer players' bids and plays. The best way to study how the computer plays is to turn on AutoPlay, turn on Show All Hands, and turn on Explanation of Bids/Plays.

You can also see the explanation of bids/plays by clicking on <u>View Deal Record</u>.

Show All Hands

This options lets you see the cards of the other players. During **Duplicate Play**, this option is automatically turned on, making Duplicate Play a good way to study how the computer plays.

Show Suit Counts

This option will display the number of cards remaining in each suit during the play of a deal.

The ability to remember the number of cards out in each suit is a significant advantage which the computer players have, as you know if you have ever led a suit and taken points when nobody else could follow suit.

If you have trouble beating the computer and you cannot keep count in your head the number of cards out in each suit, turn this display on. You can toggle it on/off by pressing Ctrl-F9.

Show Scores

Some people prefer to play by rules that do not allow you to see the scores (mainly who has already taken Hearts) during play. This menu item will toggle the score display off and on.

Scores will be displayed at the end of each hand, even if the score box is toggled off during play.

Show Winning %'s

This menu option converts the scores in the "Wins" column to percentages. If you have selected <u>Scaled Scoring</u>, you will be shown the percentage of total points that each player has won; otherwise, you will see the percentage of total games won.

You can toggle the Percents display off and on by pressing Ctrl-P or by clicking "Show Winning %'s" in the "Rules" menu.

Zip Button

The Zip Button replaces the <u>Hint Button</u> when in the <u>AutoPlay</u> mode.

This option will cause the program to zip straight through a deal without any pausing until the end. It plays all four hands. This can be used to generate a game record for a particular deal number.

Zip can also be used during The CardShark's turn at <u>Duplicate Play</u> if you are not interested in studying the play of The CardShark and just want to generate its scores.

This option is turned off at the end of each deal to prevent unintentional playing into the next deal.

When Zip is turned on, the button caption appears in all caps ("ZIP"). When it is turned off, it appears as "Zip".

Hint Button

The Hint Button replaces the <u>Zip Button</u> when not in the <u>AutoPlay</u> mode.

If you would just like to see what The CardShark would play or bid in a particular situation, click the Hint button at the bottom of the screen.

During bidding, the computer's bid will appear in the bid box. Click Ok to accept it, or change it to something else before clicking Ok.

During play, the card that the computer selects will pop up. You can put it back in your hand by clicking on the card, then click on the card you want. To accept the computer's suggestion, click the Ok button.

You cannot ask for a hint if you have already clicked on a card and raised it up. Put it back down first.

Changing Player Names, Faces, Styles, Sounds, etc.

Skill level assignments, player names, the text of players' comments, and WAV file assignments can easily be changed with the CSS_CFG program, which you get when paying for CardShark Spades.

Since this is a cosmetic feature not required for playing the game, CSS_CFG is provided only as a bonus for paid-up users. Once you are licensed, the "Configure" option appears in the "File" menu.

See Also:
  Drawing New Faces

Drawing New Faces

The faces for CS-Spades are stored in the file FACES.BMP. If you want to try your hand at creating new faces, you can edit the file with any 256-color bit-mapped graphics editor. Shareware programs of this type include VGACad, Desktop Paint 256, Improces, and 256 Draw and are available from PsL (713-524-6394), BBS's, and other shareware sources.

Before editing the FACES.BMP file, be sure to have a backup copy stored somewhere else.

There are 11 faces with two poses for each - one with mouths closed and the other with mouths open. Animation is created by alternating between the two poses. In order for this to work, you can neither decrease nor increase the overall size of the BMP file and the faces must be perfectly aligned.

As a rule, you should confine new faces to the rectangular space used by the present ones, top-to-bottom and side-to-side. Tip: drawing programs let you cut-and-paste areas of a graphic, so you can draw the top face and copy it to the space for the bottom face and then make your changes to it, such as re-doing the mouth.

The easiest way to try out your new faces is with the CSH-CFG program that comes on the Bonus Disk. (See Benefits of Paying for CardShark Spades.)

If you make a new set of faces, I would be interested in seeing them and possibly distributing them with the program.

Reporting Problems

CardShark Spades is a very complex program that must allow for even the most unlikely distribution of cards and plays. All known bugs have been fixed and traps have been put in to try to capture and fix unknown bugs on the fly.

However, if you do run into a problem of any kind, the most important thing to do is View the Deal Record as soon as possible. You can print the record and mail it to me or email the file to me at "71355.470@compuserve.com". This will allow me to reproduce and fix the problem.

Licensed users reporting problems will receive free fixes if there is a program error in the current version. If you still have an old version, you can order the latest version for $5 plus shipping with the order form at the end of the file, or you can download new versions from our Web page at http://206.109.101.6 or from America OnLine.

Your registration number will let you convert shareware versions to registered version for minor updates (those that have the same number to the left of the decimal). For major updates, you must order the update from PsL and you will be given a new registration code.

Benefits of Paying for CardShark Spades

To pay for CardShark Spades, print the order form when you exit the program, or by clicking on Help - About CS-Spades, or call PsL at 800-2424-PsL or 713-524-6394 or FAX: 713-524-6398 or CIS: 71355,470.

NOTE: The full version of CardShark Spades can ONLY be ordered from PsL.

Several benefits are provided for those who pay, although as with all shareware, use of the program beyond a reasonable evaluation period requires payment be made whether you want the extra benefits or not.

When you order, you will also receive the following:

The latest version
Bonus disk with the configuration program and other programs
Option to get sounds disks at reduced rates

The Latest Version

The play of the game is frequently improved and new features added.

When you order, you will, of course, be sent the very latest version. You will also be able to download minor updates from our Web page. (Major upgrades, as well as minor updates if you don't wish to download, can be ordered from PsL for a nominal fee.) You also get free updates when reporting bugs or playing errors.

Bonus Disk

The Bonus disk includes the CardShark Spades Configuration Program.

Also on the Bonus Disk is a utility for changing Wallpaper, manually or at a specified interval, a file and text finder, a Windows "pause" button utility, CardShark Bridge Tutor, and more.

Sounds Discounts

If you do not have a large variety of WAV files, the sounds can get old quickly. But if you DO have a lot of different sounds, they add a lot of enjoyment to the game.

You can easily add your own WAV files to CardShark Spades with the <u>Configuration Program</u>. However, for just $4 (when you order the licensed version of CardShark Spades), you can get over 5 MB of of WAV files especially selected for use with CardShark Spades. Of course, you can also use these sounds in Windows or anywhere else you would use WAV files. They make great system response sounds.

The sound files come compressed onto 3 high-density disks with a program for installing them. If you are not ready to order CS-Spades, but would like to get the WAV files to try, they are $9.99 for the three-disk set plus $4 shipping.

You can also order CardShark Spades on CD-ROM, pre-installed with all the sound files plus thousands of the latest freeware and shareware programs -- inluding CardShark Hearts!. When ordering CardShark Spades for $15 plus shipping, you can get this CD at the same time for just $10 - only $6 more than just getting the sound files alone on floppies. The regular price of the PsL CD-ROM is $29.95, so you can actually register CS-Spades and get the CD for what it normally costs just to buy the CD! Print the order form for details.