Rummy 500 Help Contents

Welcome to MeggieSoft Games' Rummy 500, formally known as "Five Hundred Rum".   Help is organized in the following sections.   Click on the one you require.   Alternatively, click on the search button above to look for information on a specific subject.

Introduction
How to Play Rummy 500
Understanding the Interface
Menus
Miscellaneous Information
About MeggieSoft Games

This help system is constructed so that you may cycle through each topic and return to this Contents panel. In this way you may easily review all the help information associated with one of the above topics.   Cycling is achieved by clicking the links at the top of each panel.   To return here from any topic panel, press the Contents button at the top.

Introduction

Rummy 500 adheres to the rules of "Five Hundred Rum" documented in Hoyle's Rules Of Games, and provides common rule variations.

Thirteen cards are dealt to each player.   The remaining cards are placed face down by the mat as the stock. The top card is turned face up on the mat to begin the discard pile.

Each player alternately starts their turn by taking either the top card of the stock, or one or more cards from the discard pile.   You may always take the last card of the discard pile as an alternative to taking a new card from the stock, unless the rule variation inhibiting this is in effect.   You continue your turn by playing melds to the mat, if you are able to and wish to.   You conclude your turn by discarding one of the cards in your hand, unless you have melded them all.

You may elect to take a card from the discard pile, other than the last, only if you are able to meld it.   The selected card, and any and all cards to the right of it, are added to your hand.   You must then meld the selected card.

A round ends when: (i) a player has discarded or melded their last card or (ii) there are no cards in the stock and the player whose turn it is elects not to take from the discard pile. Cards remaining in   hand are deducted from the round score.   The game ends when a player reaches 500 points.

How to Play Rummy 500

After the cards for a round have been dealt, the following is the sequence of each of player's turn, until one of the players discards the last card from their hand or no more cards remain in the stock:

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

Select a topic:

The Deal
Taking From The Stock
Taking From The Discard Pile
Melding Cards To The Mat
Discarding
Scoring
Getting Started
Watching a Game Being Played

The Deal

The first round is dealt automatically after you confirm that you will start the first round, or after the cut for deal (if this option is selected).

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

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

At any time, you may select "Redeal Game" from the Game menu.   In this case, the current game is abandoned, and the cards are reshuffled and redealt.   Alternatively, you can select "Restart Round", in which case the cards are not shuffled and the current round is restarted.

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

Taking From The Stock

You start you turn by taking the top card from the stock, or one or more cards from the discard pile.

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

Click down with either the left mouse button on the card.

The card will then be displayed face up for you to see it.   If you now release the mouse button, the stock card will be removed from the stock and added to your hand,   which will immediately be sorted.   Or you may drag the stock card directly to the discard pile, a meld, or your hand.

Taking From The Discard Pile

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

Unless the "Meld Last Discard" rule option is in effect, you may freely take the last card from the discard pile by clicking on it.   It will then be added to your hand, just as taking a new card from the stock would. However, you cannot discard the same card back to the discard pile at the end of your turn.   You may also drag the last discard directly to a meld or to your hand.

Alternatively, you may take any number of consecutively discarded cards, up to and including the last one discarded, provided that you meld the earliest discarded (that is, the leftmost) of these cards immediately after it is added to your hand. Rummy 500 will highlight this card in your hand and prohibit you from deselecting it or discarding until you have melded it.

To take a sequence of discards, position the mouse pointer over the card in the discard pile to be taken and melded, and click the left mouse button.

Melding Cards To The Mat

A meld comprises a minimum of three cards which, subject to selected rule options, may be either a run of three consecutive cards of the same suit, or three cards of the same rank (or value).

You may either create a new meld, or you may add one or more cards to an existing meld displayed on the mat.   You may add to any displayed meld, whether it originated from one of your turns or one of the opponent's.   Similarly, your opponent may add cards to melds you initiate.

You meld a card by clicking on it (it will then be highlighted, click on it again if you wish to deselect it), and then clicking on the meld area.   Or you may drag the card directly to the meld area.

To create a new meld, place the card on an exposed part of the mat.   To add to an existing meld, place the card on top of the meld.

Multiple cards may be melded in a group (select each first), or singly.   If you meld singly, you must complete the meld before starting another or discarding.   Use the "Undo" feature if you make an error.

You may meld as many times in a turn as you wish, until you discard or have melded all your cards.

Discarding

You end your turn by discarding any one of the cards in your hand.   The only exceptions being: (i) if you started your turn by taking the last card from the discard pile into your hand, you cannot discard it back again on the same turn, and (ii) if you can meld all the cards in your hand you may do so, unless the rule option specifying "Discard To Go Out" is selected.

To discard a card, position the mouse pointer over the card and click the RIGHT mouse button.   Alternatively, you may click the LEFT mouse button with the ALT key depressed.   Alternatively, you may drag and drop a card directly from your hand to the discard pile.

If you have selected "Discard Protect" under the "Player" tab of the "Preferences" menu option, a confirming popup menu will appear when you click on the right mouse button.

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

Scoring

Points are earned for each card melded to the table.   At the end of a round, any points remaining in the other player's hand are deducted from their score. Aces are always valued at 15 points for this purpose.   A player may realize a negative score.

The normal points values are:
1 Point : an ACE when melded at the low end of a run
Face Value : a TWO through NINE
10 Points : a TEN, JACK, QUEEN or KING
15 Points : an ACE when melded with other aces, or at the high end of a run

If you have selected Simplified Scoring, the points values are:
5 Points : an ACE when melded at the low end of a run
5 Points : a TWO through NINE
10 Points : a TEN, JACK, QUEEN or KING
15 Points : an ACE when melded with other aces, or at the high end of a run

Successive rounds are played until one of the players wins the game with 500 points.

Getting Started

When you first start Rummy 500, you will see a "Start" button in the status bar.   If you wish to make any menu option changes before starting, now is a good time to do this.   Then click on the start button.

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

If you elect to take a new card from the stock, you click down on the top of the stock.   The top card will then be turned face up for you to see, and, when you release the mouse button, will be automatically added to your hand.   Alternatively, if you want to take the card from the discard pile, click on it.

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

End your turn by discarding a card from your hand by clicking on it with the RIGHT mouse button.

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

At any time you can get assistance on what to do next by clicking on the leftmost button in the status bar.

Watching A Game Being Played

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

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

1   Select "AutoPlayer" from the "Assistant" menu
2   Select a skill level for the player.   "Expert" would be a good choice.   Press "OK"
3   Sit back and watch.
4   Press the "Stop AutoPlay" button on the status bar when you have watched for long enough.

Understanding the Interface

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

The scoresheet is displayed to the right of the mat.   If you have rule or bonus options selected, these will be shown to the left of the mat, under the stock.   The status bar along the bottom of the window displays information about the game in progress as well as providing shortcut buttons to facilitate hand adjustments and obtaining hints.

Select a topic:

Using the Mouse
Drag and Drop
Point and Click
Arranging Your Cards
Seeing Melded Cards
The Scoresheet
Status Bar Counters
Shortcut Buttons
Visual and Sound Effects

Using The Mouse

Rummy 500 supports both "Drag and Drop" and "Point and Click" mouse operations.   Point and Click operations are performed by single clicking.   Double-clicking is not supported.

For both methods of mouse operation, actions take effect when the mouse button is released, and are ignored if the mouse button is released in a different area from where it was depressed when the "No Drop" cursor is showing.   The only exception is when taking a new card from the stock when the card will move to the player's hand if the mouse button is released under the "No Drop" cursor.

The left mouse button must be used for all game operations except that of discarding from your hand.

The right mouse button is normally used to discard from your hand, although you may use the "Alt" key with the left button if you prefer.   Right-clicking on a melded card displays its description. Otherwise clicking the right button will display a convenient PopUp of common menu options. If "Discard Protect" is selected, the PopUp menu displayed over the player's hand will include discard confirmation as the first option.

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

Drag and Drop

"Drag and Drop" mouse operations are performed by clicking down on the mouse button above the card to be moved, dragging the mouse pointer to the destination, and then releasing the mouse button.   Unless suppressed, the card will be dragged with the mousepointer - in which case the top left corner of the card is considered to denote the pointer coordinates instead of the mousepointer itself.

The valid moves are:

- Stock card to: player's hand, discard pile, meld
- Discard pile to: player's hand, meld
- Player's hand to: discard pile, meld, another part of player's hand

Cards may be melded from the player's hand singly or as a group.   To move as a group, select the   cards using the point-and-click method and then drag one of the cards in the group to the meld destination.   You may meld cards to an existing meld or form a new meld.   To form a new meld, drag to an uncovered part of the mat.

Point and Click

"Point and Click" mouse operations are performed by clicking down and releasing the mouse button on the card to be moved and then clicking down and releasing the mouse button on the destination.

The valid moves are:

- Stock card to: player's hand, discard pile, meld
- Discard pile to: player's hand, meld
- Player's hand to: discard pile (right-click) or meld

Cards may be melded from the player's hand singly or as a group.   To move as a group, select each of the cards and then click on the meld destination.   You may meld cards to an existing meld or form a new meld. To form a new meld, click on an uncovered part of the mat.

Note that the stock card is displayed as soon as you click down on it.   When the button is released it will move to the player's hand.   Discarding is immediate upon a right click, unless "Discard Protect" is selected from the "Player" preferences tab.

Arranging Your Cards

By default, Rummy 500 automatically sorts and resorts the player's cards when dealt, and when new cards are added to it.   The default sortation is suit within rank.   When the "Sort By Suit" option is selected from the "Player" menu, the sortation is changed to be rank within suit.   All sorting is performed in the order: Clubs, Diamonds, Spades, Hearts.   This improves color differentiation of adjacently displayed suits.

You may chose to arrange the cards yourself by selecting the "No Sorting" option from the "Player" preferences tab.   In this case,   new cards are always added to the right of the hand.   You may Drag and Drop cards to the left and right within your hand to order them to your liking.

You may also establish a "reserved" set of cards which remains part of your hand, but is maintained separately to the right side of the main hand.   The reserved set is never sorted. To start a reserved set, drag a card past the right side of the hand, and drop it.   You may move cards between the reserved set and your hand at any time.   Cards can be selected, melded and discarded from the reserve just as they can from the main hand.

Remember that if you click on the left mouse button and release the button without moving the card, the card will be selected for melding.

Seeing Melded Cards

Because melded cards are overlapped in columns, it is sometimes not easy to determine what a particular card is, particularly in melds of the same rank.   It may help to remember that such melds are always arranged in the order: Hearts, Spades Diamonds, Clubs (from the top).

Rummy 500 includes a facility to precisely describe which card is which in the melds.   Clicking down on the right mouse button with the mouse pointer positioned over a melded card will display a description of the card (e.g., "Jack of Clubs").   Moving the mouse over the melds with the right button down will update the display as each card is traversed.   Release the mouse button to resume playing Rummy 500.

The Scoresheet

The information on the scoresheet to the right of the mat is displayed as follows:

- The scores for each completed round are added the scoresheet at the end of the round.
- Running totals are displayed in italics.   The running totals of points melded in the current round are displayed at the bottom of the scoresheet.   After the second round of a game is completed, the running points totals for the current game are displayed under the round scores.   If "Best Of 7 Rounds" scoring is in effect, the running totals are the number of rounds won.
- If the scoresheet is about to become full, earlier round scores will be consolidated into a single line, displayed in bold font.

Because the scoresheet is facing the player, it is maintained from the player's perspective - hence the player is "Me" and the opponent is "You".

Select the "View - Round Scores" menu option to see the full details (including date and skill level) of all rounds of the current game.   These round scores are always shown individually, even if   some have been consolidated on the scoresheet to make more room (see above).

Status Bar Counters

The following counters are displayed in the status bar:

- Stock: The number of card remaining in the stock.
- Player (optional):   The number of prior games won by the player.
- Opponent (optional):   The opponent skill level and the number of prior games won by the opponent.
- Round: The current round number within the current game.
- Turn: The turn number within the current round.
- Hand: The total points value of the cards in your hand.
- Net: The total points value of the cards in your hand less the points so far melded in this round.   This represents the round score you would achieve if the opponent were to go out on its next turn.

Shortcut Buttons

You may click on the parts of the status bar described below in order to achieve the associated actions.

- Error Messages: Click on an error message to clear it.
- Query Symbol: Click to get assistance on what you can do at this point of your turn.
- Light Bulb: Click to get a hint.
- Undo: Click to undo your current turn and start over.   Note that you cannot undo taking a new card from the stock.
- Card Alignment: Click to switch between normal and staggered display of the player's hand.
- Sort Order: Left-click on the sort order symbol to switch between rank sortation and suit sortation of the cards in the player's and opponent's hands. Right-click on the sort symbol to inhibit automatic sorting of the player's cards.   The symbol will then be dimmed with an "X" over it.   Right-click again to re-enable automatic sorting.
- Color Opponent Melds: Click on the tint symbol to switch between white backgrounds and tinted backgrounds for cards melded by the opponent.

Where a shortcut button is associated with a Preference setting, the change is not saved.   You must change the setting via the "Edit - Preferences" menu option if you wish a change to be saved permanently.

Visual and Sound Effects

Rummy 500 provides a number of visual effects and sound effects to improve realism and enhance your playing pleasure.   These are:

- Rounded card corners
- Customizable color schemes
- "Wallpaper" effects for the main table window and the mat
- Animation and visual card dragging
- Custom card-style mousepointers
- MIDI music support
- Sound effects
- Synthesized speech output

The above may be selected, customized, and deselected via the "Preferences" option under the "Edit" menu.

Note that these effects make intensive use of processor and graphics resources and can reduce responsiveness on slower or less graphics-capable systems.   If you find Rummy 500's interface to be sluggish, you should experiment with disabling some of the visual and sound effects.

Menus

The following drop-down menus are available:

Game Menu
Edit Menu
View Menu
Assist Menu
Help Menu

Game Menu

The following selections are available under the Game Menu:

AutoPlayer
Change Players
Restart Round
Redeal Game
Reset Scoreboard
Save Scoreboard
Exit

Edit Menu

The following selections are available under the Edit Menu:

Undo

Swap Cards

Music Playing

Preferences

View Menu

The following selections are available under the View Menu:

Round Scores
Game Scores
League Table
Hall Of Fame
Toggle Rules/Bonuses

Assist Menu

The following selections are available under the Assist Menu:

Explain
Suggest
Recall
Distribution

Help Menu

The following selections are available under the Help Menu:

- Help On Help: Displays help regarding the   use of the Microsoft Windows Help system.
- Main Contents: Displays the main Rummy 500 help window.
- Search Topics: Displays the Rummy 500 topics search window.
- Order Form: Displays a form for you to enter your name and address and print the order form to register Rummy 500.
- Enter Registration: Permits you to enter or re-enter your registration number. Should the Rummy 500 options data become missing, Rummy 500 will return to the unregistered status.   In this case, you will need to re-enter your registration details.
- ReadMe File (MeggieSoft Games): Displays the README.TXT file using the associated txt file program for your system.
- ReadMe File (Rummy 500): Displays the READ500.TXT file using the associated txt file program for your system.
- MeggieSoft Home Page: Accesses the MeggieSoft Games home page (Provided you have Internet capability and an associated web browser)
- About: Displays information about the version number and author, and the registration confirmation.

Explain

When selected, the "Assist!" window will appear.

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

You may move the Assist! window by dragging its title bar.

Suggest

When selected, Rummy 500 will examine your hand and display a reasonable series of actions for you to take. (Rummy 500 does not take advantage of this knowledge when determining subsequent turns for the opponent.)

When it is your turn to take a card, the display is a suggestion as to whether you should take a card from the stock or from the discard pile.   If the suggestion is to take a new card from the stock, that will be the entire suggestion.   (If you elect to "Do It", then the remaining suggestions will be given after the new card has been taken into account.)

You may select the "Do It" button when the suggestion box is displayed, and Rummy 500 will play the suggestion(s) for you.   If you select "Do It" and the first suggestion is to take a new card from the stock, then another suggestion box will be displayed after the new has been added to your hand.

Rummy 500 employs the same logic for providing the suggestion as it does for playing the opponent's hand. The method employed is the "Expert" skill level.

Recall

The Recall facility is a powerful aid to those who cannot remember which cards have been seen during play.   It is not intended to be used frequently as an alternative to concentration, but may help you develop improved powers of recall.

When this menu entry is selected, you will be asked if you wish to recall "Seen", "Unseen", or "Both".

"Seen" cards are listed in two parts: those in your hand that the opponent has seen you take from the discard pile, and those that you have seen the opponent take.

"Unseen" cards are all those cards which are: not in your hand, not in the discard pile, not melded, and not among those of the oppnent's cards that you have seen.   They are therefore the content of the stock and the unseen portion of the opponent's hand - but who knows which is where?

Distribution

Select this option to see a map of all the cards and their current locations (discard pile, melded, seen taken to opponent hand, etc.)   The display does not identify the location of cards that the player has not seen which are in the stock or in the opponent's hand.

Round Scores

Displays the winner, and the scores of the player and the opponent, for all previous rounds of the current game.

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

The text colors (blue for wins, red for losses) may be changed via the "Edit - Preferences" menu option.

Game Scores

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

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

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

The text colors (blue for wins, red for losses) may be changed via the "Colors" tab of the "Edit - Preferences" menu option.

League Table

When selected, Rummy 500 will display the following information for all players for whom a saved scoreboard file exists: Games Won, Games Lost, Points For, Points Against, Average (points for divided by games played)

Hall Of Fame

When selected, Rummy 500 will examine all saved scoreboards and display statistics such as highest and lowest scores for and against, narrowest and widest winning margins, etc.

Toggle Rules/Bonuses

When the Rules/Bonuses detail is displayed below the stock, selecting this menu option will toggle between the rules display and the bonus display.

You may also click on the Rules/Bonuses panel itself to achieve the same action.

Undo

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

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

If you started your turn by taking a new card from the stock, that card will not be returned to the stock (because you have already seen it).   You will restart your turn from immediately after you took the card.

If you started your turn by taking from the discard pile, that card, or those cards, will be returned to the discard pile and you will restart your turn by taking a new card from the stock, or selecting from the discard pile.

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

Swap Cards

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

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

Music Playing

Select this menu option to see what MIDI music track is currently playing.   You may then choose to skip or stop the current music track if you wish to.

Preferences

You may customize Rummy 500 to your taste by selecting Preferences from the Edit menu. The preference options are changed under the following tabbed panels.   If you want your changes saved for future sessions, ensure that the "Save Properties" box is checked.   Preferences are saved separately for each player.

[Screen](#)
[Colors](#)
[Cards](#)
[Card Back](#)
[Dealing](#)
[Animation](#)
[Sound](#)
[Music](#)
[Speech](#)
[Automatic](#)
[Messages](#)
[Player](#)
[Opponent](#)
[Rules](#)
[Bonuses](#)

Screen

The following preferences are available:

- Main Window Size: Depending upon your monitor resolution setting, up to five window sizes are available, the fifth of which is "Custom".   As an alternative to selecting a standard window size via preferences, you may also resize the main window by dragging the lower left corner.   The resulting size is held as the Custom setting so that you can return to it later.
- Table Effect: Select if you want the main table window to be "wallpapered" with a bitmap file (bmp or wmf) of your choosing.
- Mat Effect: Select if you want the mat to be "wallpapered" with a bitmap file (bmp or wmf) of your choosing.
- Suppress 3D Effect: Select if you wish to disable the 3D effects in the main window.
- Hide Rules/Bonuses: Select if you wish the rules/bonuses panel to not be displayed.
- Game Score Display: Select "Title Bar" or "Status Bar" to display game scores elsewhere than the default of in the main window.

Colors

The color preferences are used to provide on-screen adjustment of the colors displayed by Rummy 500.

First, in the upper part of the window, select the target area for which you want to change the color.   The current color is displayed below the "Target" selection frame.   If the target allows you to change both the text and the background colors, select the one desired.

Second, click on the "New Color" button to select the color to which you require to change the target.   The standard Windows color selection window will be displayed.   You will return to the color control window after you have made your new selection.

If you wish to preview the effect of the change, click the "Preview" button.   The revised color scheme will be dynamically displayed "on-screen" in the main Rummy 500 window.   If you cancel the preferences window after previewing, the previous color scheme will be reinstated.

The "Reset" selection frame allows you to set all colors to how they were before you selected "Preferences", or to the Rummy 500 default color scheme.

Cards

Provided that the required image files exist in the same directory as Rummy 500 and your available video memory resources permit, you may select any of four card display sizes.   Note that the font size displayed in Rummy 500's main window, and the size of the status bar and speed buttons, are adjusted to correspond with the card sizes larger than the regular size.

Alternatively, you may select either of the following:

- Do Not Automatically Resize: The card size will always be as specified, unless the window size is too small to accomodate the selection - in which case it will be automatically reduced.
- Resize Per Window Size: Card size varies automatically with corresponding window size.   (Custom window sizes will select the nearest appropriate size).
- Resize To Largest Possible: Card size varies one size larger than the corresponding window size.   (Custom window sizes will select the nearest appropriate size.)

Select "True Corners" for a more realistic card appearance with rounded instead of square corners.   This may result in a performance penalty when cards are displayed.

Select "Always Overlap Melds" to compress the meld display and avoid much of the dynamic compression which occurs when the meld display reaches the right side of the mat.

Card Back

There are six standard card back designs available, plus you may use bitmap image file (bmp or wmf) of your own design or choosing. Click on the Standard or Custom button to select the range required.   Use the drop-down list for standard cards or Browse to select a custom card design.

Rummy 500 does not provide graphic design capabilities, so it is assumed that you are able to scan, copy, or design any custom image file(s) you require using other tools.   You may also use other appropriately sized bitmap files on your system.

The size of the "regular" card image is 71 by 96 pixels.   If the image is larger, Rummy 500 will take the card back from the upper left part of the design.   Rummy 500 will automatically resize the card back design when card sizes other than "regular" are selected.

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

Dealing

The following preferences are available:

- Cut For Deal: When selected, each game will start with a cut for deal.   Otherwise, the player leads to the first and odd numbered games while the opponent leads to even numbered games.
- Persian Style: When selected, Rummy 500 uses a 56-card deck including four Jokers worth 20 points each. These may be melded as a rank meld, but not as part of a run.   Aces are always high.
- Deal 7 Cards: When selected, Rummy 500 deals seven cards to each player instead of the normal thirteen cards..
- Quick Deal: When selected, cards are dealt as a block instead of individually.   This speeds up the display at the start of the game, at the expense of realism.
- Quiet Deal: When selected, cards are dealt individually but the Place Card sound effect is inhibited during the deal.   This speeds up the display.

Animation

The following preferences are available:

- Animation Speed: Select the speed at which cards are moved automatically from source to destination.
- Suppress Card Animation: When selected, a card being moved automatically will disappear from the source and reappear at the destination, instead of floating from the source to the destination.
- Suppress Card Display When Dragging: When selected, a dragged card will not be displayed in motion under the mousepointer.
- Use Standard MousePointers: When selected, the standard Windows mousepointers are used instead of the special card-style mousepointers used by Rummy 500.

Note that the 32-bit version of Rummy 500 is unable to attractively support card display and special mousepointers when dragging cards.   This is a limitation of the Microsoft 32-bit operating environment. The 32-bit version therefore requires that one of the latter two options is selected.

Sound

This preference panel permits you to enable and disable sound effects, and to specify the sound effect files to be used.   Rummy 500 permits the optional association of a wav file with each of the   eight events shown.

If you do not have a sound card, the speak.exe driver is a freely available Microsoft product which uses your PC speaker to play (low quality) sound.

If your system has difficulty playing music and other sounds simultaneously, either do not enable the music feature, or do not enable sound and speech features.

To change a sound effect, select the corresponding button.   The name of the currently assigned file name will be displayed.   (If there is no associated sound file, [none] will be displayed.)   To test the sound, press "Test". To assign or change a sound file, press "Browse..." and select the required sound file.   To break the association between the file and the event, press "Clear".

Select "No Sound Synchronization" to prevent Rummy 500 waiting for silence between issuing sounds and/or processing certain actions.   When selected, processing will be faster, but sounds may cut each other off and not synchronize well with actions.   You should select this option only if your system is one that freezes as a result of Rummy 500's sound effects or speech processing.

Music

This preference panel permits you to enable and disable the playing of MIDI music files and to specify the music file(s) to be played.

If your system has difficulty playing music and other sounds simultaneously, either do not enable the music feature, or do not enable sound and speech features.

When music is playing, you may also select the "Music Playing" option (Edit menu) to display the name of the file being played, to skip to the next MIDI file in the filefolder, or stop the music.

To change the music file from that displayed, press "Browse..." and select the required MIDI music file.   (If there is no currently associated file, [none] will be displayed.)   To test the music, press "Test".   To clear the music file selection, press "Clear".

The available play modes are:

Single - the selected music file will be played once.
Repeat - the selected music file will be played repeatedly
Cycle - the music files in the filefolder will be played in sequence.
Random - the music files in the filefolder will be played in random order.

Speech

When enabled, Rummy 500 will speak to you.   The spoken phrases will include prompts, error messages, confirmations, and score summaries.   The facility will work with your PC's internal speaker (provided you have Microsoft's speak.exe driver installed), but the quality is much better with a sound card.

The dictionary file contains pronunciation rules for non-standard words.   If you wish to edit it you will need to use the dictionary editor provided with the diskette version of Rummy 500.

The voice font file defines the voice to be used.   The default voice font is distributed with Rummy 500. Alternative voice files may be available for download from PC WholeWare's web site.   There is a link to this site from the MeggieSoft Games web site (see "About" under the Help menu for the URL).

You may set the pitch, tempo, and volume of the voice to your liking.   Note that the "Test" Button is only operative when the Speak-ToMe feature is enabled.

MeggieSoft Games has licensed the WinSpeech technology from PC Wholeware for inclusion with Rummy 500. If the Speech System is not included with your installation, you may download a copy from the MeggieSoft Games web site or register for the diskette version.

Automatic

The following preferences are available:

- AutoStart: When selected, the "Start" button will not appear in the status bar at the start of a player's session.   Note that preference changes before the start of a session may only be made when this button is displayed.
- AutoResume: When selected and multiple players are defined, Rummy 500 will remember which player was playing when it exits, and will automatically start up for that player when Rummy 500 is next run.
- AutoMouse - Cards: When selected, the mouse pointer automatically moves: (i) to your hand when you take a new card from the stock or you take one or more cards from the discard pile, and (ii) back to the stock after you discard.
- AutoMouse - Dialogs: When selected, the mouse pointer automatically moves to any message or information windows which are displayed and, if "AutoMouse - Cards" is also selected, back to the player's hand or the stock after the dialog window is dismissed.   Some mouse drivers and add-in utilities also perform this function. Therefore this is a separately selectable option within Rummy 500.

The AutoMouse facilities are intended to reduce potential carpal tunnel strain for avid players of Rummy 500.

Messages

The following preferences are available:

- Display Error Box: When selected, error messages displayed by Rummy 500 are shown as dialog boxes (with an "OK" button) instead of in the status bar.
- Suppress Tool Tips: When selected, Tool Tips are not displayed when the mouse is positioned over one of the speed buttons in the status bar.
- Suppress Status Messages: When selected, status messages are not displayed in the status bar during play.   Error messages will continue to be displayed as appropriate.   Note that opting to have game scores displayed in the status bar automatically supresses status messages.
- No Start Reminders: When selected, the reminder of who starts the next round or game is suppressed.
- No Bell: When selected, the bell/beep sound associated with errors is suppressed.   It is recommended that the "Display Error Box" option be selected in this situation so that error messages don't go unnoticed.

Player

The following preferences are available:

- Discard Protect: When selected, the discard action requires confirmation from the resulting PopUp menu.
- Meldable Card Warning: When selected, confirmation will be requested if the player is about to discard a card which could be melded.
- Do Not Sort: When selected, the player's hand is not automatically sorted as cards are added to it.
- Sort Ace Low: When selected, the sort criterion is set such that aces will be sorted low, before twos. This option is automatically set with the "Ace Must Be Low" rule option.
- Sort By Suit: When selected, the sort criterion is set such that cards will be sorted by rank within suit.
- Stagger Hand: When selected, the cards in the player's hand will be displayed such that the suits are vertically offset from each other.

Opponent

The following preferences are available:

- Skill Level: Select the skill level required from the six ascending skill levels listed in the drop-down box.
- Quick Display: When selected, Rummy 500 does not enact the 400 millisecond pause between each of the opponent's actions.
- Suppress Discard Highlighting: When selected, the highlighting of cards taken from the discard pile during the opponent's turn will be suppressed.
- Suppress Stock Highlighting: When selected, the highlighting of a card taken from the stock by the opponent will be suppressed.
- Show Cards: When selected, shows the opponent's cards face up.
- Color Melded Cards: When selected, cards melded by the opponent will be displayed with a tinted, rather than white, card background. The tint color is selectable via the "Colors" tab.

Each of the latter two options are accompanied by an additional option which enacts the action only at the end of a round.   The use of the Show Cards option without selecting this additional option permits you to test for yourself the assertion that, when unobserved, the majority of people will cheat!

Rules

The following preferences are available:

- **Best Of 7 Rounds:**   Each game is won by the first player to win four rounds, irrespective of the points score.
- **Simplified Scoring:**   The cards 2 through 9 are scored with a points value of five, as is an Ace melded as part of an Ace-Two-Three run.
- **Ace Must Be Low:**   Aces may only be melded as part of an A-2-3 run, or as a meld of three or four Aces.
- **Meld Last Discard:**   The last card played to the discard pile may be taken only if it can be melded immediately.
- **Born To Meld:**   A player must take "must-meld" discards to play the first meld of a round.
- **Rank Melds Only:** The only melds that may be played by each player are those of the same rank.
- **Run Melds Only:**   The only melds that may be played by each player are runs.
- **Discard To Go Out:** The player or the opponent must discard a final card to "go out".

Bonuses

The following preferences are available:

- Two of Clubs: When selected, the Two of Clubs is worth 50 points - both when melded and when left in a player's hand at the end of a round.
- Queen of Spades: When selected, the Queen of Spades is worth 50 points - both when melded and when left in a player's hand at the end of a round.
- Four of a Kind: When selected, melds of four of a kind (for example, four Jacks) score double points.
- Going Out: When selected, a 50 point bonus is awarded to a player who ends the round by exhausting their hand.   If a round ends because the stock is depleted, then no bonus is awarded.

AutoPlayer

AutoPlayer puts Rummy 500 into a fully automatic mode whereby both the opponent's and the player's hands are played alternately by the computer.   AutoPlayer is a valuable learning facility for new users who wish to watch the game being played before playing it themselves.

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

You will be asked to define which of the six skill levels is to be used by the player. The opponent will play at the skill level in operation when AutoPlayer is selected.   After the player skill level has been selected and you have selected "OK", just sit back and enjoy the view.   When you have seen enough, press the "Stop AutoPlay" button in the middle of the status bar.

When it is stopped, AutoPlayer will permit you to display the game scoreboard for the AutoPlay session, if at least one game was completed.   After the AutoPlayer is dismissed, Rummy 500 returns to the previous player's game.

Change Players

Select this menu option to switch to another player, to add a new player, or to remove a player.

- Switch: Select the incoming player name, and press the "Switch" button.   You may select any named player except yourself (the current player).   When switching players, you will first be asked if the scoreboard for the outgoing player is to be saved, if it has changed since it was last saved.

- Add: When you first use Rummy 500, the only player is "Default".   Use the "Add" button to add more players.   When you select the "Add" button, a sub-window will appear, into which you will enter the name for the new player.   Press "OK" to create a scoreboard for the new player.   Enter players' names as 1-8 letters and numbers.   Spaces, punctuation marks, and special characters are not permitted.   Irrespective of how you specify upper and lower case, Rummy 500 will always display the player names in lower case with the first letter capitalized.   You may have up to 12 named players at any time

- Remove: Select the player name to be removed, and press the "Remove" button.   You may select any named player except yourself (the current player).   You will be asked to confirm that the player is to be removed, after which the scoreboard file and the saved options for the player will be permanently deleted from your system.

Restart Round

Select this menu option to to restart the current round.   Rummy 500 will abandon the current round and restart it from the beginning, without shuffling the cards.

Redeal Game

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

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

If you want to start over from the beginning of game 1, select "Reset Scoreboard".

Reset Scoreboard

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

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

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

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

Save Scoreboard

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

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

Exit

Terminates the session and exits from Rummy 500.

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

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

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

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

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

Miscellaneous Information

The following topics are included to help you learn more about Rummy 500, and enhance your enjoyment of the game:

About The Opponent
Skill Levels
How To...
Saved Information
Strategies
Increasing Performance
Troubleshooting
Technical Construction
Third Party Components

About The Opponent

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

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

When the opponent takes a new card from the stock, it will briefly highlight the stock as confirmation. When the opponent takes cards from the discard pile, it will briefly highlight the leftmost of the cards taken. If this is not the last discard, the opponent will also briefly highlight the card when it melds it so that you can be sure that the opponent is abiding by the rules.

The opponent also pauses briefly (about two fifths of a second) after taking a card and between each of multiple melds so that the actions of its turn can be clearly viewed.

If desired, the highlighting features and the pause can be turned off via the "Opponent" tab of the "Edit - Preferences" menu option.

Skill Levels

Six skill levels are available, in ascending order of difficulty from Carefree to Master.   The three higher levels are the most time consuming of the skill levels, and may be frustrating on a slow processor.   However, they make for the most challenging game and are relatively hard to beat.

When rounds and games are recorded on the scoreboard, the skill level of the opponent is also saved.   If the opponent skill level is changed during a round or game, then the skill level recorded is the highest that was used during the round or game.

Relative Performances

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

- Standard vs. Novice: 89 - 11   (47% more points)
- Expert vs. Standard: 76 - 24   (17% more points)
- Champion vs. Expert: 68 - 32   (15% more points)
- Master vs. Champion: 60 - 40   (6% more points)

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

How To ...

How to save personal preferences
All options changed via the "Edit - Preferences" menu option are saved when the "Save Preferences" option at the bottom of the Preferences window is checked.

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

Saved Information

Information is saved between Rummy 500 sessions in the Registry (32-bit version) or RUMMY500.INI (16-bit version) as follows:

Registration

If you are a registered user, your name and encoded registration are stored.

AutoResume

When AutoResume is active, the name of the last player is maintained.   Thus AutoResume always recovers the state that it was when the previous session exited.

Personal Options

The options (configuration, player, opponent, and rules) for each player are saved.   For example, Jane's options will be saved in the section named "Jane".

Personal Scoreboards

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

To clear the scoreboard completely, use the "Reset Scoreboard" option of the "Scoreboards" menu.

Strategies

Taking A Card

You should consider taking the last card from the discard pile as an alternative to a new card from the stock if the card increases the number of potential meld possibilities in your hand.   However, that the next unseen card from the stock may be equally or more useful.

Selecting Discards

Select and meld discards from the discard pile rather than taking a new card if the result will leave you with more net points (those you have melded less those left in your hand).   As a general rule, it is better to take and meld discards than to not do so.   You cannot score more than 100 points in a round if you only take from the stock.

Melding

The advantage of melding is that you get cards out of your hand to count for you, which would count against you if the opponent empties its hand first.   The disadvantage of melding is that you provide the means for the opponent to empty its hand faster, as and when it can play to your melds.

Discarding

Select which card to discard based upon which is the least useful in comparison to others in your hand, and which is probably less useful to your opponent.   If the opponent has only one or two cards left, consider discarding unmeldable high cards.

Increasing Performance

Rummy 500 includes Preference options that are intensive of graphics processing.   You should select these if you want more realism, but deselect them if graphics performance suffers unacceptably.   These options are:

- True Corners
- Card Dragging
- "Place Card" Sound Effect.
- Animation
- Table Effect and Mat Effect
- Tinting of Opponent Melds
- Staggered Hand

If the speed of the deal is the only aspect that you find frustrating, consider using the "Quick Deal" or "Quiet Deal" under the "Deal" preferences tab.   Also, consider selecting the "Quick Display" option under the "Opponent" preferences tab if the opponent is too slow for your liking.   This will remove the 0.4 second delay between the opponent's actions.   Selecting the respective "No Highlight" options under the "Opponent" tab will inhibit discard and stock highlighting and the associated 0.2 second delay.

Troubleshooting

Most problems encountered are a result of one of the following:

- Graphics driver conflict, usually manifested by the display of blank white cards.   Check that you have the latest drivers from your graphics card manufacturer.   Otherwise configure your system to use a graphics setting with fewer colors (256 or 16), or disable Table Effect and Mat Effect, and perhaps Custom Cardback, if you have these selected..

- Sound processing conflict.   If your system freezes when sound effects and/or speech is enabled, try setting "No Sound Synchronization" under the "Sound" preferences tab.   Note also that some sound cards may exhibit problems when attempting to play music and sounds/speech together.

- Corrupt scoreboard file.   Under the "Change Players" option of the "Game" menu, remove the player for whom the problem occurs and re-add.   Alternatively, exit Rummy 500 and delete the corresponding xxxxxx.scb file from the directory where Rummy 500 resides and then re-add the player from within Rummy 500.

If all else fails, delete the directory where Rummy 500 resides, and reinstall.

Technical Construction

Rummy 500 is programmed in Microsoft Visual Basic, Version 4.

Rummy 500 works from a bitmap of all the card images and makes extensive use of the Windows API BitBlt function.   Because of this, Rummy 500 is fast, but consumes some RAM and GDI resources.   Alternative methods of managing the user interface proved to be more processor intensive and less conducive to fluid play.   The trade-off was made for performance at the cost of resource consumption.

Rummy 500 is developed on a Pentium 60 with 48 MB of RAM.   Testing is performed both on this system under Windows 95, and (for the 16-bit version) on a 486-33 class system with 8MB of RAM under Windows 3.1.

Third Party Components

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

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

Visual Help is a shareware product licensed by the author.

The "Speak-To-Me" feature uses PC WholeWare's WinSpeech technology, which has been licensed by MeggieSoft Games for use with Rummy 500.

About MeggieSoft Games

MeggieSoft Games is committed to the development of quality two-handed card games for the Microsoft Windows environment.   We currently offer three games: Rummy 500 (first released in 1994), Gin Rummy (1995), and Pinochle (1996).

Select a topic:

Gin Rummy
Pinochle

For latest versions, news, etc., visit us on the Internet's Worldwide Web at: http://members.aol.com/meggiesoft

Gin Rummy

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

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

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

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

Pinochle

Pinochle combines elements of the Rummy and Whist families of games.   Each round is comprised of two phases.   During the first phase, players accumulate points from melding sets of cards in their hands.   During the second phase points are earned by taking tricks.

As the first phase of a round progresses, each player picks up and plays cards (similar to discarding in Gin Rummy or Rummy 500), with the following differences:

- The cards are played as tricks.   The higher card of each trick wins the trick.   Players may lay down a meld only after winning a trick.
- Melded cards remain part of the player's hand, and may be further melded (subject to certain restrictions) or played just as other cards in the players hand.
- After each trick (and meld if there is one), each player takes a card from the stock.   The next trick is then played.
- When the stock is depleted, the round moves into the second phase.

During the second phase, the remaining cards are played out as tricks with requirements to follow suit and trump when possible.