CardShark-Hearts (tm)

Copyright 1992-1994 Nelson Ford, PsL

Contents:

Copyright Use & Distribution License

You should have received this program free from a friend or BBS or for a low fee through a shareware disk vendor for evaluation purposes only. You may use the program for a reasonable evaluation period. Payment to the author of the program is required for use beyond simple evaluation. Print out the order form when you exit the program for more information.

This program may be copied for others to try, so long as no changes are made to the program nor any of the accompanying files, including this one, and ONLY if you write to the author for permission. Vendors and BBS's who are current members in good standing of the Association of Shareware Professionals must still notify the author that you are distributing the program, but you do not have to wait for permission to begin distribution.

VENDORS and BBS's must agree to stop distributing this program when requested or automatically if your membership in A.S.P. is dropped for any reason.

CS-Hearts is written in Visual Basic. The Visual Basic runtime module, VBRUN300.DLL, is Copyright by Microsoft Corp.

VBCARDS.DLL, which contains the card faces and backs, was written by Richard R. Sands and is public domain. Programmers wanting to use this DLL in their own card games may contact Sands on CompuServe: 70274,103. Please do NOT call Nelson Ford for information about VBCARDS.DLL.

CARDSHARK HEARTS and the CARDSHARK card game name prefix are trademarks of Nelson Ford, PsL.

Installation

CS-Hearts requires Windows (3.1 for sounds) and is written for VGA color, although it may be possible to use it on EGA. (If you still have EGA, you may want to consider getting a SuperVGA card, which is less than $100.)

You can put the CS-Hearts files in any directory; HOWEVER, the VBCARDS.DLL file should be copied to some directory in your PATH, such as your Windows directory. If you already have a VBCARDS.DLL in your Windows directory, compare the size, date and time of that file to the one in this package. If they do not match, you may have to remove or temporarily rename the other file to use this one. You might try running CS-Hearts before doing so to see if it works with the files already in place.

CS-Hearts 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 CompuServe. GO MSBASIC, enter DL-5 at the Forum prompt, and BRO VBRUN*.* to find it. VBRUN300.DLL must also be in your Window's directory or other directory in your PATH.

After copying the CS-Hearts files to the directory of your choice, use Program Manager File-New menu options to add CS-Hearts' EXE file to one of your Program Groups, if you wish to have it readily available. Otherwise, you can run it with the File-Run option of Program Manager.

Sounds:

The Sounds will play through your PC's speaker if you have the Windows 3.1 sound driver installed. The quality will vary from poor to zilch. To enjoy the sounds, you really need a sound card with DAC support. These cards range from Thunderboard for Windows (about $110) to Media Vision's Pro-16 (about $229).

I have had some isolated reports from users of bizarre problems resulting from having sounds turned on. I am hoping that compiling with VB2 will resolve the problems. Otherwise, the problems are outside of my control. The only solution is to turn sounds off.

If you have sounds turned off and continue to get bizarre problems (such as the program kicking you out of Windows and back to DOS), blame Windows 3.0/1, not me. Try the program on a different machine, if possible. This should show you quickly whether or not a problem is a program problem or a Windows/Twilight Zone type problem.

Colors:

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

Overview

Introduction

Hearts is an addictive and interesting four-handed game (no partners). 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.

While there are MANY variations of the game of Hearts, the variation and rules used in this program are the most popular ones.

The goal in Hearts is to have the low score. You get one point for each Heart that you take and 13 points for the Queen of Spades ("QS"). Since you want to have the low score, the goal is to avoid taking Hearts and, at almost all costs, avoid taking the QS.

Shooting The Moon

One exception to the principle of avoiding taking points is that if you take the QS and all 13 of the Hearts, each of your opponents gets 26 points. This is called Shoot the Moon ("Shoot"), but it is difficult to do if playing good opponents. (It is very easy to end up with 25 points against you rather than giving everyone else 26 points, and a 51 point swing is difficult to overcome in a game to 100.)

Alternatively, if you Shoot, you can elect to have 26 points deducted from your score rather than added to everyone else's. Be sure to select this option from the Options menu before the final trick of your Shoot.

If another player's score is more than 26 points below yours, the program will automatically deduct the 26 points from your score whether you have selected that option or not. This reduces the chance that someone else will go over 100 while another opponent is still below your score.

Ten of Diamonds

Another feature added with Version 4.00 is the option to deduct ten points if you take the 10 of Diamonds. (Some people play the Jack of Diamonds is -10, but Hoyle says the 10, so I went with that as the default. You can change it to the Jack with a menu option. I'll refer to it here as the TD option.)

I did not put the TD option into the game initially because it complicates the analysis code and it greatly reduces the skill factor, in my opinion (based on many, many hours of debugging the code for it).

Taking Tricks

Unlike Bridge, Spades, and other games, there is no "trump" in Hearts. The high card played in the suit led always takes the trick.

You can elect to play to any number of points, but the default is 100. When one player goes over 100, the person with the lowest number of points at that time is the winner.

Why Another Hearts Game?

I wrote CardShark Hearts out of frustration with the weak play of existing Hearts games.

In writing it, I gained a deeper respect for the problems faced by the authors of the other games. Although tests have shown that CardShark Hearts can beat the other games, it is not as sophisticated as I had originally intended.

On the other hand, does anyone really want a game they can't possibly beat? Over 100+ games, most good players should have a winning percentage in the 30-40% range against the best skill level (#4 - "Aggressive").

If you have trouble ever winning a game, you may want to choose some less-skilled computer players. If you somehow manage to win too easily - quit cheating! - or play against 3 Cheatin' Chucks.

Mechanics of Play

A mouse is required to play CS-Hearts. In normal play mode (ie: not AutoPlay), cards are selected to pass or 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 pause period (0 to 7 seconds) to time-out.

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.

While it is a very minor (in my opinion) nuisance to have to click on the Ok button in addition to clicking on the card, I think it is worthwhile, based on my experience with other card games that give you no way of correcting an accidental selection or that make the confirming action so easy that you automatically blow by it.

I have several times been in the middle of a good game in other Hearts games and ruined it by accidentally clicking on the the wrong card.

If you cannot stand having to click the Ok button, you can wait a specified time for the computer to click Ok for you (in effect). See Interface Menu - Pause.

Rules of Play - Passing

After each of the four hands is dealt 13 cards, you must select three cards to pass to an opponent. The passing direction rotates on each deal: to the right, across, left, and no-pass ("hold"). Some people play other passing patterns, but this is the most widely used one. See Change Pass Order.

Cards are passed "face-down", so the other players do not see what you are passing.

Selecting the three cards to pass is AT LEAST as important as the actual play of the hand, if not more so. For example, if you are dealt the lone Queen of Spades ("QS") and do not pass it, then the first time spades are led (and the other players WILL attack spades right away), you will be forced to play it. The other players will play low (if they can) and force you to win the trick, thus taking 13 points.

Novices are often afraid to ever hold onto the QS, but you normally will want to hold it when you can adequately protect from having it led out of you.

Holding the QS gives you two advantages: nobody can drop it on you, and you can choose whom to drop it on -- normally the person with the lowest score.

How many spades is considered "adequate protection"? You will find that out through experience. (I don't want to spoil all your fun!)

Other considerations include passing low cards so that you can Shoot, passing low Hearts to keep other players from Shooting, and so on. Again, experience is the best teacher, but when you register CS-Hearts, the manual you get has a

section that tells you how to get the most out of your passing game.

In addition, you can use the Hint and Duplicate Play options to see how the computer would pass and play the cards you are dealt. This is also a good way to learn.

Rules of Play - Playing

If <u>Club Lead Required</u> is turned on, then the person with the Two of Clubs starts play by leading it; otherwise, the lead rotates and any card may be led except the Heart suit.

Play goes clockwise and each player must follow suit, if possible.

You can play the QS or a Heart at any time that you cannot follow suit, except that you cannot LEAD a Heart until they have been "broken". Hearts are broken when someone discards a Heart or the QS. Other than that, you can lead any suit. You CAN lead the QS before Hearts are broken, if you want to.

See "First Trick - Hearts Allowed" and "First Trick - Queen of Spades Allowed" for rules options. (<u>First Trick Rules</u>)

Some people play that if you only have Hearts and the QS left, you must lead the QS. In this game, you can lead a Heart if you wish. Also, some people play that you cannot play the QS on the first trick; in this game, you can.

There are numerous other variations on the rules of the game, but the rules followed in CS-Hearts are the ones normally used, and I have added many rules options suggested by registered users.

Strategy

How the Computer Plays
Ganging Up on the Low Hand
Stopping the Shoot
When NOT to Shoot
Panic Mode
The Computer Players

How The Computer Plays

CS-Hearts' 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.

However, what makes card games both interesting and difficult to program is that what's statistically correct can backfire at times, which can make the game look really stupid, when it really has chosen the correct line of play.

The game's main weaknesses are that it is not programmed for every possible situation that can arise, nor does it attempt to make inferences about card holdings based on how other hands play.

For example, with scores about even, if a hand doesn't follow suit on the first trick, nor does it play the QS, it is probably safe to assume that the hand does not have the QS, but the program does not try to make such assumptions. (As a matter of fact, other shareware card games, against which CS Hearts was tested, seem to withhold playing the QS at times for no apparent reason, so the assumption would be wrong in that case.)

This means that a human player with a good understanding of strategy and an excellent memory for what has been played should be able to beat the game, since you are better able to adapt to different situations as they arise.

It also means that like a human player, the computer may make a blunder some times (not very often, hopefully). If you would like to help with the improvement of this game, you can report blunders to me at the address on the order form or via CompuServe.

To report gross playing errors, load the file CSHEARTS.TMP into NOTEPAD and print it out, or send a copy of it to me on disk, or email it to me on CompuServe. See <u>View Deal Record</u>.

If you cannot do that, make a note of the Deal Number, the Passing Direction, and the Starting Scores, as well as the version of the program you have.

If you are a registered user with the current version and report a gross blunder or program error, you will be sent a corrected version for free.

No Cheating:

The computer plays each hand individually (except for Cheatin Chuck, obviously). For each hand, a list is kept of the cards every other hand may have and the play of each hand is based on its own list.

Since each hand removes the cards in its own hand from the list of cards that other hands may have, and since it knows what cards it passed to some other hand, each hand's lists of what the other hands may hold are different from every other hand's lists.

When deciding what to pass or play for one hand, the computer never "peeks" into the other hands.

Again, if you feel like the computer has cheated, send me the game record and I will be able to look at the code and tell you exactly why the computer made the play it did. (This service is for registered users only.)

The manual you get when you register contains many tips on playing. You do NOT need these tips to play and enjoy the

game, but they can help you win more, both against the computer and against human opponents. Here are a few of the more important ones:

Ganging Up on the Low Hand

One basic strategy is that if you are holding the QS with sufficient protection for it, then you should not just throw it at the first opportunity. Instead, try to give it to the low hand (assuming one player's score is at least 13 points lower than the others).

If you are low scorer, then

- If someone else is within 13 points or so of your score, try to give QS to them. If more than one player is within 13 points of your score, give it to the first one of the two hands that you can.

- If you can give the QS to a hand that will then go over the Goal, do it. (Remember to do this only if YOU have the low score, obviously.)

- If everyone's score is well above yours, dump the QS on the first person you can. There is no point in taking risks in that situation.

Even if you do not hold the QS, you may be able to control who gets it. If you are leading Spades, for example, and have enough Spades to force the QS out of the hand holding it, but that hand is not the one you want to get the points, then try leading a suit in which you have a lot of cards with good low ones to give the other player a chance to dump the QS on someone else. You may not want to risk this unless you have a very safe hand (ie: low cards in every suit).

Stopping the Shoot

Although taking the QS is costly, it is TWICE as costly to let someone shoot, so stopping the shoot is an important part of your strategy.

One way is to try to discard Hearts when you cannot follow the suit that has been led, trying to give a Heart to two different players ("splitting" Hearts). Until Hearts have been split, you should not discard your highest Heart, since you may need it to stop a Shoot. Once Hearts are split, discard your highest Hearts.

Another way is to try to take a trick that someone has discarded a Heart on, if Hearts haven't already been split. Novices are often afraid to take even a single point, but taking one point is a cheap way to insure that nobody else can Shoot and give you 26 points.

Once someone takes the QS, you should not rest easy until someone else has taken a Heart; otherwise, there is a risk that the person could Shoot. Because the penalty for allowing someone to shoot is so large, it is worth taking a few Hearts to prevent it, if necessary.

If the computer detects that you are always playing low on Hearts when you could play high and stop a Shoot, then the next time, it may play low too, and the other hand could get away with Shooting and you will lose, so don't just rely on the computer hands to stop other computer hands from Shooting.

However, if the hand on your right leads, say, the Four of Hearts and you have the Two and the Three in addition to some higher ones, it is usually all right to play low, since there is a strong probability that one of the other hands will

be forced to win the trick.

If the hand on the right leads, say, a Ten of Hearts and you have a higher one and don't play it and the other hands cannot beat it, that may have been the leader's only losing Heart and he may Shoot.

As you can see, stopping the Shoot is a major part of the game.

Change in Strategy:

CS-Hearts was originally written to ALWAYS take the first Heart led when the hand leading the Heart is the only one with points so far. This gave maximum protection against a Shoot and at worst, cost only 4 points.

However, many people have suggested that this makes it too easy for someone who has taken a point to get rid of a high Heart by leading it and, in fact, the computer hands use this strategy to get rid of high Hearts.

So by popular demand, the computer hands will duck a Heart lead a certain percentage of the time. However, there are many times when taking the Heart is good strategy apart from stopping the Shoot. So don't count on the computer hands ducking!

The Worst Way to Stop the Shoot:

...is to take the QS. Say that someone has taken all the hearts and the only points left are the 13 assigned to the QS. Whether or not you should take 13 yourself to avoid having to take 26 (along with everyone else) has to be decided by the score situation.

When NOT To Shoot

Poorly written Hearts games are frustrating, because one computer hand may make bad plays that let another computer hand win. It doesn't matter how good a player you are if the program is so poorly written that one computer hand gives the game away to one of the other computer hands.

A common flaw is for one hand to Shoot when Shooting lets another hand win the game. PsL Hearts' computer hands are designed not to try to Shoot if doing so will let another computer hand win. For example, say the scores for the hands are:

#1 - 80   (you)
#2 - 90
#3 - 50
#4 - 70

Some computer Hearts games would let player #2 Shoot the Moon. This would cause you to lose, but player #3 would be the winner since adding 26 to his 50 points would still leave him low hand. So in this case, player #2 would not try to Shoot in "real life", since the object is to be the low scorer when someone else goes over 100.

However, if player #4 Shoots, he would win the game, since his 70 points would be low after adding 26 to everyone else's score. And of course, player #3 would be happy to Shoot.

In fact, player #3 would make no attempt to stop players #1 and #2 from Shooting, since he wins if they Shoot!

[Note: Now that Deduct Shoot is available, the computer WILL

try to Shoot in the above situation if the Deduct Shoot option
is turned on.]

Panic Mode

#1 - 80   (you)
#2 - 90
#3 - 50
#4 - 70

The computer players are designed with a Panic Mode. Given the scores shown above, if faced with either having to take the QS or having to let player #2 take it, player #4 would take it. Otherwise, #2 will "go out" (get over 100 points) and player #3 would win with the low score.

If #3's score were only a few points below #4's, and there are plenty of Hearts left, #4 may let #2 take the QS in the above situation, hoping to stick #4 with enough Hearts to make up the difference.

The Computer Players

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:

Novice
Timid
Cautious
Aggressive
Wild
Vicious
Cheater
Surprise

<u>Players' Names</u>

Novice

Novice - has trouble keeping track of the cards that have been played. Sometimes passes low Spades. Should be pretty easy to beat, but sometimes it doesn't work out that way. Try playing a few games against three Novice Nellie's.

Timid

Timid - is afraid of holding high Spades or Hearts and afraid to take a trick if it can be avoided, even if it looks like someone is Shooting, and he's afraid to try to Shoot, himself. Timid *is* easy to beat.

Cautious

Cautious - like ever style except Novice, remembers everything that's been played. Won't try to Shoot if it looks at all risky, and will always take a trick (even the QS) to stop a possible Shoot.

Aggressive

Aggressive - the best overall playing style. Will USUALLY take a Heart to stop a possible shoot, but may duck every now and then just to keep the other players honest. Will pass to shoot if possible (eg: if able to get rid of all low Hearts), but will not take foolish risks.

Wild

Wild - tries to Shoot whenever he can. He won't try if he is holding a LOT of low Hearts, of course. (He's crazy, not stupid!)

Vicious

Vicious - is out to get YOU! Will try to stick you with the Queen and with Hearts every time, even if it lets someone else win. Just wants to see YOU lose! Won't try to stop anyone else from Shooting but you.

Cheater

Cheater - peeks at everyone's cards! He can't always remember who had what, but he usually knows who has the Queen of Spades. If you are so good that no computerized card game can give you a challenge, invite Cheatin'n Chuck to play.

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 tell their playing style by their names. See <u>Changing Player Names, Styles, Sounds</u>

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

In earlier versions, there were only as many players as styles, but that meant if you wanted to play three top players, they all had to be named the CardShark. With the addition of faces in version 4.00, such duplication of names is even more boring, so additional aggressive players have been added simply for variety.

File Menu

The following options are available on the File menu:

[View Deal Record](#)
[View Last Deal](#)
[Change Scores](#)
[Zero Out Scores](#)
[New 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 Window's NOTEPAD.EXE program is required, or a substitute editor of the same name.)

The current deal record, is stored in CSHEARTS.TMP and the prior deal is in CSHEARTS.BAK.

In the Duplicate Play mode (See Duplicate Play.), the Computer's deal record is appended to the end of yours.

You can use Notepad to view, add comments to, and print the deal. You can also save it permanently by using the File-Save As menu in Notepad.

You can view a deal record with "View - Game Record" up until the passing has been done for the next game. Then it is copied into CSHEARTS.BAK (which you can view with the "View - Last Game" option) and the new game is written to CSHEARTS.TMP.

If you have a problem with CSHEARTS 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. With the deal record, I can recreate the deal and fix any problems.

View Last Deal

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

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 be the same, as well as setting the passing direction to be the same.

Zero Out Scores

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

New Deal

This allows you to abort play and get a new deal. If you have the Deal # Prompt turned on, you could enter the same deal number again to start the same deal over. If you replay the last deal, the resulting score is not added to the game score. If you replay some other deal, the score WILL be added to the game score. If you do not want it added, you will have to use the Change Scores option to change it back.

If you are trying to replay another hand, keep in mind that the scores and passing direction influence the play of the computer, so you should use Change Scores to set the scores to their starting values of the hand to be replayed before beginning play.

Exit Game

This quits the game of Hearts completely. The game-record files remain on your disk in the files CSHEARTS.TMP and .BAK and you can view those with Notepad.

All options you have selected during the session are saved, as well as your scores, and are used when you start the game again.

Interface Menu

The following options are available in the Interface menu:

[Comments](#)
[Card Backs](#)
[Faces](#)
[Pause](#)
[Sounds](#)
[Move Cards](#)
[New Name](#)

Comments

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 register lets you add, remove, and reassign sounds and comments.)

If you turn off all the options listed in this section, you will still hear important comments. If you want to get rid of all sounds, turn off Sounds ****

The following are comment-related options:

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

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 Animation.

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.

Pass Comments

The Pass Comments let you know to whom to you are passing and who is passing to you. Pass direction is shown in the bottom left corner of the playing area, so if you want to cut down on computer comments, this is a good place to start.

Razz Comments

These are comments made when you take a Heart or when you give the opponents a Heart.

Lead Comments

These comments let you easily spot who is leading and what suit is being led.

Take Comments

These comments let you easily see who took the trick. If "Move Cards" is on, the Take comments are not used, since you can see from the card motion who took the trick.

Card Backs

Lets you cycle through the available decorative card backs.

Faces

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

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.

If you select 0 or 1, the program will pause for 1.5 seconds anyway at critical points. For example, after selecting a card, you still have 1.5 seconds to click on it again to change your mind.

You can also elect to HAVE to click the Ok button to continue after selecting a card and at the end of each trick.

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, Show All Hands, and Pause and see how the computer plays each hand. (See Duplicate Play.)

Sounds

If you have Sounds checked, you'll get various comments and sound effects during the game. (Windows 3.1 required.)

If you do not have the sound files, you will still see the text of the sound files displayed.

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 register, 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 3.1 system sound files.)

If you are not ready to register but would like the complete set of sound files to try, you you can get this multi-disk set of WAV files with the order form which you can print when you exit the program.

You can also add wave files of your own. Many BBS's and shareware vendors have WAV files for Windows 3.1.

[If you used a version of CSHearts prior to 4.0, be aware that the method of adding WAV sound files has changed. See Changing Player Names.]

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 our outside of my control.

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, but it makes it even more obvious who took the trick.

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

New Name

This menu option only shows up when registered. In the unregistered version, the computer players refer to you as "USER". When registered, your first name is used. This feature allows you to change the name used by the other players.

Options Menu

[AutoPlay](#)
[Cash Out](#)
[Deal Number Prompt](#)
[Duplicate Play](#)
[Network Play](#)
[View All Hands](#)

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 all the points have been played or if the person with the lead has all winning cards left. If either of these is true, the program stops play, displays the remaining cards, and in the latter case, gives the remaining points to the person with the lead.

After all, if all the points are in, there is no reason to continue play. And if the person with the lead doesn't have a card left that is lower than those held by the other hands, there is likewise no point in playing it out.

One exception is that if only one trick is left, the program will not cash in, since it is usually 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 passing direction and the starting game scores must be the same as in the original deal. To set the scores back, select Change Game Scores.

Whether you select this option or not, the deal number is at the start of the game record, which you can view at any time. It is also displayed at the top 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 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 Change Scores option, below.

The Novice level uses random factors in playing and will probably not play the cards the same way the next time. All levels use a random factor in deciding whether or not to take a Heart that has been led when Hearts are not split yet and they may not play the same way the next time.

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 computer 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.

If either you or the Shark Shoots the Moon during their turn and the other of you doesn't, the one who made it gets a 26-point bonus.

At the end of the regular game, the "Dup Total" score is increased by one if you have outscored the computer in duplicate play (ie: "you done good") or decreased by one if the computer outscored you for the game.

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 Hearts, 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 Play

CardShark Hearts can be played with any network or any computer hook-up which allows multiple computers to access the same disk drive as a normal drive with a normal drive letter and directory, such as Z:.

From 2 to 4 people can play over a network. If less than 4 people play, the computer will play the missing hands.

To start a game, each player should start CardShark Hearts and select Network Play in the PlayOptions menu. The Network Play configuration window will come up.

Each player must select the same drive and path, but only one person (the "Starter" has to select the rules (agreed upon by the other players). This person selects the PostRules menu option after setting the rules; the other players select the Logon menu option. The cursor will turn into an hour glass until the Starter has posted the rules and everyone has logged on.

IMPORTANT: Before specifying a network drive and path to use, be sure that it is not already being used by someone else to play CSHearts. Look for files with persons' names and extensions like ".T1", ".T2", ".T3", and look for the files "CSHSETUP" and "CSH_DEAL". (Only the Starter should check for these files; otherwise, another player may delete files created by the Starter.)

After selecting Logon, each player will be sent the rules and starting deal number. Players should review the rules to make sure they are as agreed. If there is a problem, have the starter repost the rules and have EVERYONE Logon again.

When everyone has agreed on the rules and logged on, each player must click on Exit and the game will begin. Certain menu options in the game will be disabled during network play, including the Hint button, viewing all hands, and viewing current game record.

If you wish to change the rules after exiting the Network Play configuration window, each player will have to click on the Network Game menu option to de-select network play and then click on it again to restart network play and bring the Network Play menu up again. Any scores will be lost when a Network Game is restarted.

If you play solo CardShark Hearts and do not wish to lose your personal score history when a Network Game is played, write down the scores and the current deal number before starting a Network Game. When done with the Network Game, you can use the Change Scores menu option (under File) to reenter your personal score history.

If have selected Logon and some problem prevents logging on, click on the Exit menu option to abort the Network Game.

NOTE: When selecting the drive and path, be sure to double-click on the desired directory. If network setup does not seem to work (hangs up), try using a new, empty directory.

View All Hands

This is a good way to learn the game or to study the computer's strategy. Like the other options, it can be toggled on or off at any time, so you could turn it on if you feel a need to see the other hands for some reason, then turn it back off.

Rules Menu

First Trick Rules
Deduct Shoot
Deduct 10 for JD/TD
Hide Scores
Change Game Goal
Change Pass Order

NOTE: The quickest and easiest way to review and change the rules is to select Network Game under PlayOptions. A windows will pop up for reviewing and setting the rules for Network Play, but if you click on Exit without executing a network link-up, the rules changes will still take effect.

First Trick Rules

The following rules affect the play of the first trick:

Club Lead Required
Hearts Allowed
Queen of Spades Allowed

Club Lead Required

If "Club Lead Required" is turned ON, the player with the 2 of Clubs must lead it.

If "Club Lead Required" is turned OFF, any suit but Hearts may be led on the first trick. Since the 2 of Clubs is no longer required to be led, the lead rotates clockwise among the four players.

Hearts Allowed

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

Queen of Spades Allowed

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

Deduct Shoot

If you Shoot the Moon, you can elect to have the 26 points deducted from your score instead of added to everyone else's. You must select this option before the last trick is taken to be able to use it on the current deal.

If another player's score is more than 26 points lower than yours, this option will automatically be selected.

Deduct 10 for JD/TD

This option subtracts 10 points from the score of the player who takes the Ten of Diamonds. Because some people prefer the JACK of Diamonds, although Hoyle says the Ten, both options are offered.

If neither option is checked, there is no ten-point deduction in effect.

Hide 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.

Change Game Goal

Lets you change the score to which the game is played. Default is 100.

Change Pass Order

The following passing order options are available:

Right, Across, Left, Hold (no pass)
Left, Right, Across, Hold
Left, Across, Right, Hold
Left Only

"No Hold" is a separate option. You must select one of the four options above (#1 is the default). You may modify any of the first three options by doing away with the Hold option.

For example, if you select order #1 (Right, Across, Left, Hold) and turn on "No Hold", the order will be Right, Across, Left, and then Right, Across, Left again.

Not having a Hold turn removes some of the luck of the game and increases the skill element, but few people play this way among human players.

Pass [direction] Menu

This menu option lets you change the pass direction for one deal. It is primarily for use when replaying a specific deal.

In particular, if you replay a deal that you just finished (say, to see how the computer does in comparison to how you did), you must make sure that the direction of passing is the same.

Zip Button

The Zip Button replaces the Hint Button when in the AutoPlay mode.

This option will cause the program to zip straight through a deal without any pauses 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 Computer's turn at Duplicate Play if you are not interested in studying the play of the computer 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. If you turn on Zip during Duplicate mode, it will cut off at the end of the computer's turn and turn itself back on for the computer's next turn.

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 Zip Button when not in the AutoPlay mode.

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

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 to raise it up.

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 CSH-CFG program, which you get when registering.

Since this is a cosmetic feature not required for playing the game, CSH-CFG has not been included with the shareware version and is provided as bonus for registered users. Once you are registered, the "Configure" option appears in the "File" menu.

See Also:
  <u>Drawing New Faces</u>

Drawing New Faces

The faces for CSHearts 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 your 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 Registering.)

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 Hearts 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 Game Record as soon as possible. You can print the record and mail it to me or email the file to me on CompuServe. This will allow me to reproduce and fix the problem.

Registered 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 BBS's.

Your registration number will let you convert shareware versions to registered versions; however, when you order updates from PsL, you can also ask for the latest bonus disk for free.

Association of Shareware Professionals

The Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) is an organization of software authors committed to developing shareware as an acceptable alternative way of marketing software.

The author, Nelson Ford, is a member (and one of the founders) of the ASP. ASP wants to make sure that the shareware principle works for you. If you are unable to resolve a shareware-related problem with an ASP member by contacting the member directly, ASP may be able to help. The ASP Ombudsman can help you resolve a dispute or problem with an ASP member, but does not provide technical support for members' products. Please write to the ASP Ombudsman at 545 Grover Road, Muskegon, MI 49442 or send a CompuServe message via CompuServe Mail to ASP Ombudsman 70007,3536.

Benefits of Registering

To register, print the registration form when you exit the program, or call PsL at 800-2424-PsL or 713-524-6394 or FAX: 713-524-6398 or CIS: 71355,470.

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

When you register, you will also receive the following:

The latest version
Printed manual with tips on passing and playing
Bonus disk with the configuration program and other programs
Option to get sounds disks at reduced rates
Discounts on other materials

The Latest Version

I play this game almost every day. If I find weaknesses during play, I correct them, as well as any problems reported by users. So the game is constantly being improved.

When you register, you will, of course, be sent the very latest version. You will also be notifed of major upgrades with a chance to upgrade for a nominal fee.

Printed Manual

When you register, you will also receive a printed manual with a section on how to win at Hearts. There is a lot of strategy involved in passing and playing Hearts, and this booklet explains it in a clear and concise way.

Bonus Disk

The Bonus disk includes the <u>CardShark Hearts Configuration Program</u>.

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 Hearts with the Configuration Program. However, for just $.50 a disk (when you register), you can get disks full of WAV files especially selected for use with CardShark Hearts. Of course, you can also use these sounds in Windows or anywhere else you would use WAV files. They make great system response sounds.

There are two four-disk sets available. For just $2 per set when you register, you don't want to pass these up. If you are not ready to register but would like to get the WAV files to try, they are $6.99 per four-disk set plus $4 shipping per order.

Other Discounted Offers

PsL News:

When you register, we will also send you a free sample copy of the monthly shareware magazine, PsL News. (Or you can call or write for a free copy without registering.) If you register, you can subscribe to PsL News for just $12 for a year; that's one-third off the regular subscription price. John Dvorak said in PC Magazine: "PsL News pays for itself in software discoveries...".

Source Book of Free & Low-Cost Software:

Registered users can also get one-third off the price of the PsL Source Book and Reviews Disks. This 960-page book contains write-ups of over 7000 public domain and shareware files. PC Magazine called it "by far the most thorough and reliable guide to shareware and freeware anywhere." The six-disk Reviews Disk set contains the same write-ups, but our masters are updated monthly. (Free updates are available.) The price for the book and 6 disks is normally a bargain at just $19.95, but registered CardShark users can get the set for just $13.40 plus $4 shipping by using the order form.

PsL Monthly Shareware CD:

PsL has a Monthly Shareware CD containing all the new programs received by PsL from the authors in the prior 30 days. The first CD had over 500 new programs on it; the second, about 700 new programs plus additional bonus programs.

This is the best, most economical way to keep up with all the latest shareware. The excitement about this CD has been

tremendous -- the first month's CD sold out in two weeks.

Each CD contains write-ups of all the programs. CDs are BBS ready (file in ZIP format and in subdirectories by categories with FILES.BBS files) and are easy for anyone to use - install a program with a keypress while reading about it. Dozens of program screen shots are included.

CDs are $29.95 plus $4 shipping for single issues. They are $19.95 plus shipping on a subscription basis. Subscription CDs are invoiced monthly and you can cancel at any time.

If you subscribe to the PsL CD at the same time that you register CSHearts, you can get the first month for just $9.95 and no additional shipping. And if you are not happy with it for any reason, return it for a full $9.95 refund.

Even if you do not register, be sure to call and sign up to get your monthly PsL CD. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back.

What About "Store Versions"?

You may see versions of this program offered at retail locations for prices which are lower than the shareware registration fee.

To date, all such retail versions are NOT as powerful and full-featured as the shareware version you now have. These are basic versions of the program which usually include offers to upgrade to the version you now have.

In addition, I am constantly improving the shareware version while these retail versions are not usually upgraded at all.

I mention this only avoid a situation where a shareware customer buys a retail version and then gets mad when he finds out that it is not as advanced as the version he already has.