

Turntables

Players

The game can be played with as little as 2 players; however, 4 players is recommended. All instructions heretofore will be given assuming a 4-player game.

The Pack

4 Decks each containing 52 cards and both jokers (1 pack per player). Begin with Jokers removed. A single large coin is also needed.

Rank of Cards

(high) Joker, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, A (low)

Setup

1. Shuffle
 - Players begin by each shuffling their deck without the jokers and offering it to the player left of them to be cut.
2. Draw
 - Each player draws 10 cards from the top of their own deck. Cards are always drawn from the top.
3. Turn order
 - Next, to determine turn order, everyone turns the top card of their deck over. Highest rank starts with play continuing counter clockwise. In the event of a tie, all tied players continue turning over the next card on their decks until the tie is broken.
4. Shuffle
 - The over turned cards and jokers are now shuffled into the decks and offered to player's right to be cut.
5. Play
 - Play now begins starting with the 1st player as previously determined and continuing counterclockwise.

Object of the game

Control the station with the highest absolute score at the end of the game. The game ends when all cards have been played from all decks.

Stations

The Deck, hand, and position of the players at the table is not set. Rather, certain cards, as noted below, cause all players to change seats. The deck, hand and cards played at a given seat is referred to collectively as a station and do not move with the players. Stations never move.

Deck Orientation

The orientation of the deck and cards carries a great deal of significance in Turntables. When a deck is vertical, cards must be played at the station vertically, if the deck is horizontal, cards must be played horizontally. Vertical cards add to the station's score, while horizontal subtracts. However, the score of a station **need not be positive to win**, as it is only the absolute value of the station that is used to determine a winner. For example, if Station A has a score of -96 while station B has a score of 95, Station A is the winner since 96 is greater than 95.

Play

Play begins with all decks oriented vertically with respect to the player. Each station takes turns placing a card face up behind the deck. Each card is placed to the right of the one previously played at the station. Cards 2-10 add (or subtract as noted above) their face value to the station's score. Jo, K, Q, J & A are function cards and do not add or subtract points to the score by themselves. When all stations have 5 cards left in the hand, players draw another 5 and play continues as normal. When there are only 2 cards left in the deck, players do not redraw but rather play the entirety of their hand before drawing the final 2 cards.

Note that it is the stations, not the players, that take turns making plays. Since the players can change stations, it is possible to find oneself making two moves in a row, each at a different station, or not making a move for 5 or 6 plays.

Scoring and Function Cards

- **Standard scoring**
 - Whenever a player places a scoring card at their station (i.e. a card of rank 2-10), they add or subtract as appropriate the card's rank from the station's current score, must note the score on their score pad, and announce it to the opponents.
- **Runs**
 - If a sequential run of 3 cards or more is played in order (e.g. 3-4-5; 10-9-8) all cards in the run are scored for double, again added or subtracted as appropriate.
- **Flushes**
 - A flush of four cards or more likewise scores all cards in the flush as double.
 - Face cards, jokers, and aces may be used to complete a run or flush but are still considered worth 0 points. A run of 4 cards or more that is also a flush scores for octupole.
- **Doubles**
 - Playing two cards one after the other of the same rank constitutes a double and allows the player to choose to rotate any of the four decks. The player may also choose to not rotate any deck if so desired.
- **Sandwiches**
 - If a double is separated by exactly one card (not necessarily of a different rank) it is considered a sandwich, and allows the player to choose to rotate any of the four decks. The player may also choose to not rotate any deck if so desired.
- **Kings, Queens, and Jacks**

- Kings, Queens, and Jacks are called swap cards and force all players to move seats clockwise (left) if the card is played vertically, or counterclockwise (right) if played horizontally. Kings move 3 seats, Queens 2, and Jacks 1.
- If the face card is also “one-eyed,” the player may choose to rotate a deck *before* players swap seats.
- When a player plays a face card they may not, on their next turn, use another face card unless there are no other options in their hand.
- **Aces**
 - Aces allow the player to choose to rotate any of the four decks. The player may also choose to not rotate any deck if so desired, effectively passing.
- **Jokers**
 - When a joker is drawn from the deck, the player who drew the card must yell “Chinese fire drill” and immediately play the joker at the station. All players must immediately put their hands face down, stand up, and push in their chair as fast as possible. The player that drew the joker then takes the coin and spins it at the table’s center. Everyone must run around the table counterclockwise until the coin comes to rest or falls off the table accidentally, at which point they may sit at whichever station is closest. If a player is too slow and finds the station to the left and right of them already taken, they must take an empty station elsewhere.

Game

The game is concluded once all cards have been played. As noted above, when only 2 cards remain in the deck, all 10 cards in hand are played before the final 2 are drawn. Note in rare occasions the deck will instead have 3 or 4 cards left in the deck at the end if one or both jokers have not yet been drawn. If such is the case, be ready for a Chinese fire drill! Once the final card has been played, and everyone has finished swapping if necessary, whoever is sitting at the station with the highest absolute score is declared the winner.

In the Event of a tie, the tied players collect their station’s played cards, reshuffle, and offer to left for cut. If possible, non-tied players should shuffle the decks to help mitigate cheating. The players then continue to turn over the top card from the deck simultaneously until one player turns over a Joker. Whoever turns over the joker loses. If both players turn over a joker, play continues. If both players are still tied after all jokers have been played, the procedure is repeated until a winner emerges.

Optional Variations

- **Drinking:** Whenever a joker is drawn, all players take a half shot before the coin is spun.
- **Shortened:** players play with 4 decks of 26 cards and 1 joker. A deck of 52 cards can be quickly sorted into two equal halves by sorting the decks into a black and red deck.