

Hearts Reference

Scoring, the rules of play, and what to track to win at Hearts.

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SCORING · POINTS ARE BAD

- Each ♥** Every **heart** you take is worth **1 point** (13 hearts → 13 points).
- Q♠** The **Queen of Spades** is worth **13 points** on its own — the single most dangerous card in the deck.
- 26 total** A round holds **26 penalty points** in all. Lowest score wins; you want to take as few as possible.
- Moon** **Shooting the moon:** take *all 26* points (every heart and the Q♠) and you score **0** while everyone else takes **+26**.

RULES OF PLAY

- 2♣ leads** Whoever holds the 2♣ must lead it to the very first trick.
- Follow suit** You **must follow the led suit** if you can. Only when you are void in it may you play another suit.
- 1st trick** **No points on the first trick** — you may not discard a heart or the Q♠ to it (unless points are all you hold).
- Breaking ♥** You cannot **lead** a **heart** until hearts are “broken” — i.e. a heart (or the Q♠) has been discarded on an earlier trick.
- Winner** The highest card *of the led suit* wins the trick; off-suit cards can never win. The winner leads the next trick.

CARDS TO TRACK

- Q♠** Track the **Queen of Spades** above all. Until it appears, the 13-point bomb is still live in someone’s hand.
- A♠ K♠** The high spades — A♠ and K♠ — are what force the Q♠ out. If you hold them, leading spades pressures the queen into the open; watch whether they have been played.
- Count ♥** Count the **hearts** that have fallen. Knowing how many of the 13 remain tells you how many points are still in play.
- Read voids** When a player discards off the led suit, they have revealed a **void** in it. A player void in ♠ can no longer be holding the Q♠ — voids let you place dangerous cards.