

Three Thirteen

Welcome to Three-Thirteen, aka 3-13 or Nickels

Players: Two to four players

Cards: Traditional playing cards (aka French playing cards). Use one deck for two players, two decks for three to four players.

Rounds: The game is played in eleven rounds. At the start of the game, each person receives three cards and 3s are wild. In the next round, four cards are dealt and 4s are wild. In the next round, five cards are dealt and 5s are wild. And so forth... When eleven cards are dealt, jacks are wild; when twelve cards are dealt, queens are wild; and in the last round, when thirteen cards are dealt, kings are wild.

Object: The object of the game: In the round when you have three cards, the object is to get three-of-a-kind. For four cards, the object is four-of-a-kind, and with five cards it's five-of-a-kind. For six cards, the object is to get two combinations. Combinations are made up of three or more cards in a run or three-of-a-kind. For example, here's are the type of hands that you could win with when you have six cards:

- 2 three-of-a-kinds (for example, 3 sevens, and 3 queens)
- 2 runs. A run is a minimum of three cards in a row of the same suit, such as 2 Δ , 3 Δ , 4 Δ , and 7 n , 8 n , 9 n . Some people call a "run" a "sequence."
- 1 run and 1 three-of-a-kind

For all rounds after six, you will be going for combinations. In this way, the game is similar to gin or rummy. It has some similarities to poker too, but there are differences—unlike poker, a pair is nothing in this game, and also if you have a three cards that are in a row but of different suits (example: 5 Δ , 6 \blacklozenge , 7 n) that is nothing in this game.

Aces: In this game, they are a low card. Meaning that Ace \blacklozenge , 2 \blacklozenge , 3 \blacklozenge is a run, but Queen \blacklozenge , King \blacklozenge , Ace \blacklozenge is not a run.

The play: In each round, after cards are dealt, the remaining pile of cards goes in the middle. The top card is turned face-up and placed next to the pile, which is called the "discard pile." On her turn, each player has the choice to pick up a card from the discard pile and then place a card from her hand face-up in the discard pile, OR to pick a card from the deck and then place a card from her hand face-up in the discard pile. This is a similar set-up to many other games, including gin, rummy, Uno, crazy 8's, and go fish.

Ending the round: Once you reach the object of the round, you announce that you are "out" and show your cards. Each player gets one more turn for that round. Then you score the round.

Scoring: The person who wins the round has zero. For the other players, any cards not part of a combination counts as penalty points, except wild cards, which are zero points. (For example, if you had 7♦, 8♦, 9♦, Jack ♠, 2♠, 6♠, the diamonds would not count as penalty points because they are a run, but the Jack, 2 and 6 would count as penalty points.) Each face card is ten points, aces are one point, and number cards are that number of points (example: a six is 6 points). The scores are accumulated on a notepad. Also on the notepad, keep track of who wins each round (can put a star next to their score.)

Ending the game: There are two winners: the person who won the most rounds, and the person with the lowest score. (Sometimes the same person.)

Variations:

For tonight, it's best to stick to these rules, but if you enjoy this game you might enjoy variations of it. Below are some different rules that some folks play use. (There are also folks that play with money, which we will not be doing. (Cards & Conversation games are just for fun, and also gambling is not allowed in Middlesex Lounge.)

- Aces as high or low
- Jacks as 11 points, Queens as 12, Kings as 13
- Jokers as wild cards
- Additional wild cards

Five Crowns is a game from the makers of Set that is similar to Three Thirteen except it has five suits. Phase 10 is also a similar game.