

“Super Wild” 4D Rummikub Variations

Original Rummikub Rules:

Rummikub is based on the “Rummy” card game and is sometimes called “Tile Rummy”. It replaces playing cards Ace to King in four “suits” with plastic tiles numbered 1 to 13 in four “colors”: red, blue, black and orange (or sometimes yellow) but with two each of the four colors. Besides these 104 numbered tiles, two wild “Joker” (☺) tiles are added to make a complete four-player game of 106 plastic tiles and four racks to hold the tiles. Each player selects fourteen tiles to place on their rack without seeing the value of the tiles beforehand.

The object of the game is to end the game by being the first to “play” all your tiles onto the board as legal groups of 3 or more tiles horizontally arranged as either “Sets” of 3 or 4 same numbered tiles of different colors (e.g., 5 5 5) or as “Runs” of 3 or more consecutively numbered tiles of the same color (e.g., 2 3 4).

The two Joker tiles (☺) are wild and can be played in place of any tile, and they can be “stolen” by another player who replaces the Joker by the tile it represents from their rack (or from freeing it) and uses it to form a legal group. A play can consist of merely adding tiles to those already played by others. Rearranging played tiles is allowed, so long as the remaining groups are all “legal”. Any player who can make a play may volunteer to play first if all agree, otherwise each player picks a tile from the unused ones, and the player with the highest numbered tile plays first. A player’s turn ends after they have stopped playing tiles, and play continues in clockwise rotation. If a player fails to play any tile, their turn ends, and they must draw another tile from the unused tiles as a **penalty** and cannot play that tile until their next turn. (Original rules forbid a player from playing until the sum of the numbers on the tiles they play adds to thirty or more, forbid runs that pass the 13 tile, and adds scoring unplayed tiles.)

Variations for More Fun:

The fun of Rummikub is playing tiles, so we increase the opportunities for playing tiles and drop the scoring:

Crisscross: When adding tiles to those already played, they can be added perpendicularly crossword style using the tile at the intersection as part of the new group. For example, add blue 7 and red 7 tiles vertically to a horizontal run of black 6, 7, and 8:

7
6 7 8
7
(Consider this “2-Dimensional” play.)

Extended Runs: Runs can pass 13. (e.g. 12 13 1 2)

Initial Duplicates: When first selecting tiles for a player’s rack, any exactly duplicated tile may be exchanged for another from the unused tiles but only before the first turn.

Immediate Play: On a player’s turn, they may play any tiles that form groups, without the original delay of 30 points.

Exhausted Unused Tiles: If a player needs to draw a **penalty** tile from the unused tiles but there are none left, that player’s turn ends and play passes to the next player.

Optional Play: On a player’s turn, they can play any number of tiles that complete legal groups or none at all as they wish. If they play no tile, they must draw a **penalty** tile. (A player may want to save a play for their next turn.)

Extended Turns: Although the game officially ends when one player plays their last tile and wins, the fun can be extended by continuing turns as desired. Here players can show their remaining tiles, and the other players can help find legal plays for them, providing more fun and instruction. The goal of this cooperative playing is to see all tiles played. An extra **challenge** for three or more players is to rearrange the tiles to avoid using any Joker (☺).

Additional Players: More than the original limit of four players are accommodated by adding additional racks as needed. For more than seven players, adding another color of twenty-six tiles and one joker is recommended, and perhaps beginning with only twelve tiles instead of the usual fourteen.

“No Duplicates” Version: Use only one 13-tile set of each color and the two Joker tiles for a set of only 54 tiles. Each player starts with only twelve tiles in their rack. The result play is simpler and quicker. (With 5, 6, 7, or 8 players, start with 9, 7, 6, or 5 tiles respectively in each rack.)

Starting: Before starting, a Joker (☺) wild card is placed in the center with more face-down tiles as needed to provide one tile for each player. After mixing the tiles, each player selects a tile for their fourteen tiles, and the player who chooses the Joker becomes the first player. The Jokers provide more fun and opportunities for making legal plays, but in many games, no joker is ever played. This starting method guarantees at least one Joker will be played.

Controversial Rules: The players should agree on whether to include these additional rules that some might consider too confusing:

Jokers Remain Wild: A Joker tile (☺) remains wild after being played, permitting the following legal plays: 2 3 ☺
 (Of course, “stealing” the Joker is now more difficult, because replacing it by a 7 would break the set of 7s, and replacing it by a 4 would break the set of 7s, and replacing it by a 7 would break the run, so tiles must be rearranged to ensure all groups are legal.)

These legal plays make the Joker “**Super Wild**”:

5
 5
 1 2 ☺ 12 13
 9
 10

Quick Starting: Place both Joker (☺) wild cards face-up on the board before starting.

Delayed Ending: To avoid games that end too quickly (i.e., ending before all players have had their turn), any player who plays all their tiles on their **FIRST** turn must draw a **penalty** tile, and play proceeds without winning or ending the game, unless they are the **LAST** player.

Descending Runs: Reverse order runs are allowed, so this is legal: 3 2 1 13 12

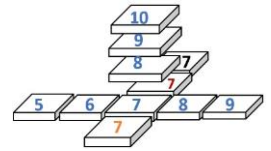
Sixes and Nines are identical: The 6 and 9 tiles are exactly the same, so these examples are legal: 6 9 6 and

4 5 6
 9

Adjoined Groups: Two groups can be adjoined if they share the same ending and beginning tiles. Example: 6
 3 4 5 5 5 6 7 7 7 7 8 9
 8

(Like “Crisscross”.) Note: Adjoined groups 7 7 7 7 form a “set” with a repeated color.

3-Dimensional Play: Besides playing tiles as horizontal or vertical groups, this rule allows playing tiles **upwards**, forming a tower on top of a base tile or **downwards** under a base tile.



This diagram shows a tower group of 7 8 9 10:

To build groups both up and down on the same base tile, place tiles diagonally on the base tile forming two towers as shown: (“Up” or “down” is irrelevant, and adjacent tiles at other levels are ignored.)



A simpler (and easier to read) way to play a tower upwards is to place them on the major diagonal proceeding from the base tile toward the northeast, and downwards on that diagonal toward the southwest as shown in this example:



4-Dimensional Play: This rule allows playing tiles **inwards** or **outwards** from a base tile by placing them on the minor diagonal. Place outer tiles on the diagonal toward the northwest and inner tiles on the diagonal toward the southeast as shown in this example:



(Since the fourth dimension is normally considered to be **time**, the “**in**” and “**out**” directions can be considered “**previous**” and “**subsequent**”, or “**before**” and “**after**”, or even “**earlier**” and “**later**”.)