

# BLACK MAMBA

*Black Mamba is a competitive two-player Rummy game designed for increased player interaction.*

**PLAYERS:** Two players seated across from each other. Players choose a color (RED or BLACK) for determining the starting player of a round.

**DECK:** One standard French-suited deck with the Jacks, Jokers, and Red Kings (♥♦) removed. Ace can be either 1 or 11. Queens are wild cards that can substitute for any rank card of the same suit of the Queen. Ex. **Q♠ = 3♠**. The two Black Kings (♠♠) are called the **BLACK MAMBAS** and have no rank or suit, they only eliminate the points scored by a combination that contains one.

**SETUP:** Shuffle the deck. Deal each player a hand of 12 cards in alternating groups of 3 cards. Players keep their hands hidden from each other. Place the remaining cards face down in a draw pile known as the STOCK. Turn the top stock card faceup on the table to start the DISCARD PILE. Players leave space in front of themselves for a MELD AREA where they will place cards during the round.

**OVERVIEW:** Players take turns drawing a card, placing one card face up in a meld area, then discarding one card. After 12 turns, each player will have 12 cards in their meld area which determine their score for the round. Multiple rounds are played until one player reaches 120 points. The player with the highest points wins the game.

**FIRST PLAYER:** The suit color of the card that starts the discard pile determines the player who takes the first turn in a round. **Red = ♥♦ Black = ♠♠.**

**TURN STEPS:** (steps explained in detail below)

1. **DRAW:** draw one of the following cards:

- Top card of stock
- Top card of discard
- Solo opponent meld card

2. **SWAP:** (OPTIONAL) exchange a card from your hand with:

- One card in your meld area
- Any wild Queen in any player's meld area

3. **MELD:** place one card in meld area.

- Player can rearrange cards in their meld area during this step.

4. **DISCARD:** discard one card one of the following areas:

- The discard pile
- The opponent's meld area

**DRAW STEP:** At the start of a turn, the player has the choice to draw the top card of the stack, the top card of the discard pile, or any cards in the opponent's meld area that are SOLO, meaning the card is not in a GROUP or a MELD with any other cards (see below for rules). If a Queen or Black Mamba is the top discard it cannot be drawn by any player.

**SWAP STEP (OPTIONAL):** After drawing, a player may take ONE of the following swap actions per turn:

- They may take one card from their own meld area and replace it with one card from their hand. If the swapped card is part of a group, the exchanged card does not have to be added to that same group.
- They may exchange any Queen that is in either player's meld area with a card that the Queen is meant to substitute. If a Queen is part of a legal meld (see below for rules), the card exchanged with the Queen can be any card that would keep that group as a legal meld.
- A Black Mamba can be exchanged with any Queen that is in any player's meld area.

**MELD STEP:** A MELD is a group of 3 or 4 cards that are either all the same rank, or in sequential order in the same suit. During the meld step, the player places one card per turn in their own meld area. Cards in the meld area can be arranged into GROUPS of two or more cards that may potentially create a meld. Cards cannot be grouped together if they would not eventually be able to make a legal meld. Groups can be rearranged during the player's meld step. Any card in the meld area that is not grouped with any other cards is called a SOLO card and can be drawn by the opponent on their turn. A 3-card meld is called a TREY and a 4-card meld is a QUAD. A Black Mamba can only be added to a group, it cannot be placed as a SOLO in your meld area.

**DISCARD STEP:** Player chooses one card from their hand to discard, ending their turn. If a player drew a card from the stock or the discard to start their turn, they must discard a card face up on the discard pile. If the player started their turn by drawing a card from the opponent's meld area, then they must discard to their opponent's meld area. A player may not rearrange their opponent's meld cards, however if the discard can be legally added to an existing group with two or more cards already, it LOCKS that group. The player places the card horizontally on top of the rest of the cards in the group and that group is LOCKED for the remainder of the round, meaning the cards in that group cannot be rearranged or added to for the remainder of the round. A Black Mamba cannot be added to an opponent's group by discarding, it can only be added to an opponent's group by swapping with a Queen during the SWAP step above.

**UNLOCKING A GROUP:** If a player's group has been unlocked, they can UNLOCK that group by swapping the card that locked the group with a Queen of the same suit.

**ROUND END:** After 12 turns, each player will have 12 cards in their meld areas and no cards in their hands. The round ends at this point after the second player discards their last card.

**SCORING A ROUND:** Players score points based on the melds they were able to make and the prize cards.

- Each TREY adds 3 points
- Each QUAD adds 7 points
- Four Queen QUAD adds 10 points
- Add 10 bonus points for four TREYS or three QUADS
- Any meld with Black Mambas adds zero points
- Add 50 points if player has no possible legal melds that score points (melds with Black Mambas do not score points so they may score this bonus)

**WINNING THE GAME:** During scoring, the round winner's score is added to their cumulative score first, then the round loser's score is added to their cumulative score. If a round is a tie, then the player with the lowest score adds their score first. The first person to reach at least 120 points immediately wins the game.

**RUMMY COMPARISON:** Black Mamba is an attempt to use rummy elements in a new way that increases the player interaction. Because of this there are a number of differences that Rummy (or Gin or Canasta) players should take note of, as they may feel unintuitive to play:

- Players do not lay down completed melds, they must place exactly one card per turn into a meld area.
- Scoring Melds can only contain either 3 or 4 cards.
- Players can draw opponent's meld cards into their own hands, and play cards onto opponent's melds that lock any further action on that meld.
- This game is not a race to see who can complete a hand first, the round is over after exactly 12 turns.