SNATCH rummy

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The Joker Turns Against You

A wild card usually helps the person holding it. It fills a gap, completes a combination, or gets an awkward hand moving. A negative joker gives you another possibility: use that flexibility to reduce the other team's score.

When negative jokers are enabled, they're worth **-10 points in secured scoring**. They still act as wild cards under the table's selected Joker rule. Finding somewhere to play one is only the beginning. Finding the right place is where the strategy comes in.

A little trouble for the other team

You can legally add a negative joker to an opponent's secured combination, provided it fits and the combination does not already contain a Joker. Those secured cards stay with the opposition - and so does the negative joker's -10-point value.

You are adding a card to their scoring area while making their score worse. The other team may have worked hard to collect those points. You can give them something they would rather not have.

Your own cards deserve a second look

A negative joker can also help complete your team's cards. That may be the right play, but look at the score before committing. Two 10-point face cards and a negative joker total **10 secured points**: 20 from the face cards, minus 10 for the joker.

Extending your own secured cards with one also reduces your secured score by 10. What does that play make possible next? Perhaps it helps you go out or earns a bonus play that leads to something better. Or perhaps the joker would do more damage across the table.

A starter is still unfinished business

Putting a negative joker into a starter does not automatically give its penalty to the other team. The starter has not been secured, and its eventual destination remains undecided.

A starter containing a 10-point face card and a negative joker has a signed card total of zero. But if it remains protected and unfinished at scoring, it costs your team **20 points**: 10 for the face card and 10 for the held negative joker. Zero signed value does not mean zero liability.

Your partner might complete that starter. Once exposed, an opponent might take it. Consider what you expect to happen and whether starting it improves your position.

Sometimes going out matters more

A negative joker need not always be played against the opposition. Using one in your own combination could empty your hand, earn the 20-point first-go-out award, and begin the final turns at a moment that suits your team.

Weigh the immediate score against the award, unfinished starters, cards left in hand, and opportunities remaining for everyone else. Its best use depends on the whole table.

Before playing one, look at both teams' secured cards and the available starters. Is this joker helping us finish, helping us go out, or making the other team's score a little less comfortable?

A wild card can open a door. This one can leave a little trouble behind.