

CAROUSEL

The Card Game

Introduction

Thank you for riding the Carousel! Please keep your hands and feet inside the ride at all times...wait...no... Please keep your hands flying and feet bouncing in this fast-paced, deck-slapping, card-collecting game for all ages!

This game is inspired by the history of the Carousel (a.k.a. Merry-Go-Round). First, I will tell you the history, and then how to play the game. Doing it this way develops greater understanding of what you're seeing, what you are doing during play, and why you're doing it.

History

The Carousel found its origins in the Middle-East. Crusaders observed a game of “carosella,” a game young Arabian men played on horseback. “Carosella” (or “little wars”) was actually a collection of events, but the one event in most records was a test of horse handling and multi-tasking. Riders would ride in a circle and toss a scented clay ball (some sources say a pottery ball filled with foul-smelling perfume) back and forth between each other and the riders who smelled least like the perfume on the ball were considered the best handlers and riders. The Crusaders took these ideas back to Europe. The French turned these games into a game involving the spearing of a small ring while charging on horseback, and was called Carousel. The English and Spanish turned this idea into Jousting and similar horseback games. A little while after this, someone got the idea for a contraption that would train young nobles and knights-to-be to play Carousel. This contraption, consisting of a wooden horse, metal frame, and a rope-pulley system, was man- or mule-powered and required the single rider to drive a lance through a small metal ring which was tied above them on one of the arms of the contraption. Eventually, this device became steam powered and took off from there. Larger contraptions were built which looked much closer to the ones we see today, and that evolved into the Merry-Go-Round/Carousel we know and love today! *You can even see golden rings in the decorations of some Merry-Go-Rounds (sometimes bordering mirrors or paintings in the central column).*

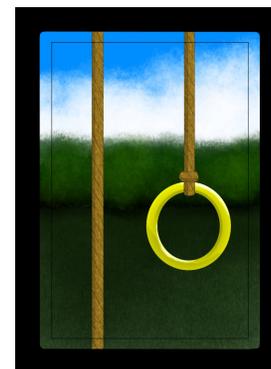
Components

36 cards (14 Empty Skies, 8 Red Flags, 4 Green People, 2 Clay Balls, and 8 Golden Rings)

- 1) **Empty Sky** – Scenery and rope for your wooden horse, but nothing extra.
- 2) **Flags** – A single red flag somewhere in the scene.
- 3) **Green People** – Green-colored people who are there to distract players.
- 4) **Clay Ball** – A ball on a purple background.
- 5) **Golden Rings** – Yellow ring on a rope, dangling from the top of the scene.

Overview and Requirements

Your goal in this game is to collect all of the cards by slapping the Golden Rings and collecting the pile that was being built. There are penalties and bonuses for slapping down on other cards, so you must be careful and pay close attention. This game is for 2 to 10 players, ages 12 and up, and can last between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on skill level.



Setup

Grab some friends and find a table at which everyone can sit with an equal reach to the center of the table. Now shuffle the deck a few times and deal cards out to the players. When dealing, a) it does not matter if a card lands face-up and people see it, but try to keep them face-down, and b) deal out the entire deck of cards. The starting piles may not be exactly even, based on the number of players, but that is okay – the tides are ever-changing in this game. After all of the cards have been dealt and everyone assembles their stacks of cards face-down in one of their hands, you are ready to begin play.

Playing the Game

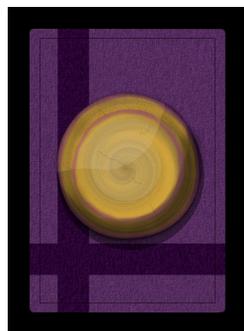
Play starts to the dealer's right and works counter-clockwise (right) around the table (*a nod to the direction in which most Carousels travel*). Each player flips over one card on a single, central pile for their turn. Flip it quickly, and facing away from you, to avoid seeing the card face prematurely (or being accused of cheating). Play can jump around, so it is possible for some players to get skipped on occasion (this is sometimes to their advantage).

As cards are played, players are watching for specific opportunities:

- When a **Golden Ring** is played, the *first* player to slap the central deck is awarded with the entire central pile. When they pick up, they start the next round by playing the starting card from the top of their pile.
- When a **Flag** is played, the *first* player to slap the central pile forces the player to *their left* who *still has cards* to play two cards on the pile. (NOTE: Only the *second* card they play can count for continued play—slapping the first card they play means nothing. If they only have one card left, however, when they're forced to play two, *this* card counts and may be slapped.)

Beware the Penalties:

- When a player slaps a Green Person card, *they* must play *two* cards. (NOTE: There are Green Person cards with Red Flags on them—this is still a Green Person card, designed to trick you into slapping.)
- When there's a Clay Ball, everyone slaps in. The *last* player to slap the Clay Ball has a price to pay: They must play one card at a time onto the central pile until they play a Golden Ring, Red Flag, Green Person, or they run out of cards.



In all these cases, play continues from the last person to play a card - the one who has to pay the penalty or picks up cards. This is how players can be skipped and play jumps around.

Winning the Game

The player who is quick enough to collect all of the cards from all players wins the game of Carousel!

Occasional Dilemmas and Other Rules

- Players who are out of cards are not necessarily out of the game—they can slap in at any time, if they choose, but they can *only* slap the Golden Rings to have an effect. For example, they cannot slap a Flag and have the next player play two cards, and they don't have to slap in for the Clay Ball. If they slap a Golden Ring and pick up cards, they are back in the game.
- Players may run into a situation where one or more players are constantly getting skipped. To remedy this, players can either switch seats periodically or you can play in such a way that no matter who has to pay what penalty or picks up, play continues without break. For example, Joe slaps a Flag, forcing Cindy to play two cards, but it was going to be Steven's turn before Joe slapped. Cindy plays two and then play returns to Steven and then back around the table.
- If the game is running too long, you can set a time limit and the player who has the most cards at the end of it wins the game.

Special Thanks

I would like to thank the Elliotts, the Ertsgaards, and the Dibbles for test-playing Carousel-The Card Game and providing constructive criticism and positive feedback for its development. I would also like to thank my wife, Kristin, for all her love, support, and encouragement throughout this project.