

# **ROBERT'S RULES OF POKER**

## **VERSION 11**

“Robert’s Rules Of Poker” is authored by Robert Ciaffone, better known in the poker world as Bob Ciaffone, a leading authority on cardroom rules. He is the person who has selected which rules to use, and formatted, organized, and worded the text. Nearly all these rules are substantively in common use for poker, but many improved ideas for wording and organization are employed throughout this work. A lot of the rules are similar to those used in the rulebook of cardrooms where he has acted as a rules consultant and rules drafter. Ciaffone authored the rulebook for the Poker Players Association (founded in 1984, now defunct), the first comprehensive set of poker rules for the general public. He has done extensive work on rules for the Las Vegas Hilton, The Mirage, and Hollywood Park Casino, and assisted many other cardrooms. Ciaffone is a regular columnist for Card Player magazine, and can be reached through that publication. This rulebook will be periodically revised, so suggestions are welcome.

Poker rules are widely used and freely copied, so it is impossible to construct a rulebook without using many rules that exist as part of a rule set of some cardroom. If such a rule is used, no credit is given to the source (which is unlikely to be the original one for the rule).

The goal of this rulebook is to produce the best set of rules in existence, and make it generally available, so any person or cardroom can use it who so desires. The purpose is the betterment of poker.

The general philosophy used in this rulebook is to make the rules sufficiently detailed so a decision-maker will know what the proper ruling is in each situation. A rule should do more than produce the right ruling. It should be stated so the decision-maker can refer to specific language in the rulebook, to have the ruling is accepted as correct.

The author has strongly supported uniform poker rules, and applauds the work done in this direction by the Tournament Director’s Association (TDA). Nearly all the rules herein are compatible with the TDA rules, although there are some slight differences in wording.

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## **THIS IS THE OFFICIAL RULEBOOK FOR OUR CARDROOM**

Welcome to our cardroom. Your presence in our establishment means that you agree to abide by our rules and procedures. By taking a seat in one of our card games, you are accepting our management to be the final authority on all matters relating to that game.

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## **SECTION 1 - PROPER BEHAVIOR**

### **CONDUCT CODE**

Management will attempt to maintain a pleasant environment for all our customers and employees, but is not responsible for the conduct of any player. We have established a code of conduct, and may deny the use of our cardroom to violators. The following are not permitted:

Collusion with another player or any other form of cheating.

Verbally or physically threatening any patron or employee.

Using profanity or obscene language.

Creating a disturbance by arguing, shouting, or making excessive noise.

Throwing, tearing, bending, or crumpling cards.

Destroying or defacing property.

Using an illegal substance.

Carrying a weapon.

### **POKER ETIQUETTE**

The following actions are improper, and grounds for warning, suspending, or barring a violator:

Deliberately acting out of turn.

Deliberately splashing chips into the pot.

Agreeing to check a hand out when a third player is all-in.

Softplaying by refusing to bet against a certain opponent whenever heads-up.

Reading a hand for another player at the showdown before it has been placed faceup on the table.

Telling anyone to turn a hand faceup at the showdown.

Revealing the contents of a live hand in a multihanded pot before the betting is complete.

Revealing the contents of a folded hand before the betting is complete. Do not divulge the contents of a hand during a deal even to someone not in the pot, so you do not leave any possibility of the information being transmitted to an active player.

Needlessly stalling the action of a game.

Deliberately discarding hands away from the muck. Cards should be released in a low line of flight, at a moderate rate of speed (not at the dealer's hands or chip-rack).

## **1-PROPER BEHAVIOR**

Stacking chips in a manner that interferes with dealing or viewing cards.

Making statements or taking action that could unfairly influence the course of play, whether or not the offender is involved in the pot.

Using a cell phone at the table.

### **TOBACCO USE**

(These rules are for an establishment that does not completely bar smoking.)

The seat on each side of the dealer is a nonsmoking seat.

Cigar or pipe smoking is not allowed in the cardroom.

Smoking by a guest or spectator is not allowed.

## **SECTION 2 - HOUSE POLICIES**

### **DECISION-MAKING**

1. Management reserves the right to make decisions in the spirit of fairness, even if a strict interpretation of the rules may indicate a different ruling.
2. Decisions of the shift supervisor are final.
3. The proper time to draw attention to a mistake is when it occurs or is first noticed. Any delay may affect the ruling.
4. If an incorrect rule interpretation or decision by an employee is made in good faith, the establishment has no liability.
5. A ruling may be made regarding a pot if it has been requested before the next deal starts (or before the game either ends or changes to another table). Otherwise, the result of a deal must stand. The first riffle of the shuffle marks the start for a deal.
6. If a pot has been incorrectly awarded and mingled with chips that were not in the pot, and the time limit for a ruling request given in the previous rule has been observed, management may determine how much was in the pot by reconstructing the betting, and then transfer that amount to the proper player.
7. To keep the action moving, it is possible that a game may be asked to continue even though a decision is delayed. The delay could be to check the overhead camera tape, get the shift supervisor to give the ruling, or for some other good reason. In such circumstances, a pot or portion of it may be impounded by the house while the decision is pending.
8. The same action may have a different meaning, depending on who does it, so the possible intent of an offender will be taken into consideration. Some factors here are the person's amount of poker experience and past record.
9. A player, before he acts, is entitled to request and receive information as to whether any opposing hand is alive or dead, or whether a wager is of sufficient size to reopen the betting.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. Only one person may play a hand.
2. No one is allowed to play another player's chips.
3. Management will decide when to start or close any game.

## 2-HOUSE POLICIES

4. Collections (seat rental fees) are paid in advance. In all time-collection games, the dealer is required to pick up the collection from each player before dealing. A player not wishing to pay collection may play one courtesy hand in stud, and may play until the blind in button games, provided no one is waiting for the game. If there is more than one person on the list for that game when the collection becomes due, everyone must pay collection. A new player is not required to pay if there is either no list or only one person waiting.
5. Cash is not allowed on the table. All cash should be changed into chips in order to play. If a player seems unaware of this rule and tries to play unnoticed cash that was on the table during a pot, the dealer may let the cash play if no one in the pot objects, then have all the cash changed into chips after the hand. Any chips from another cardroom are not permitted on the table, do not play in the game, and when found will be treated similarly to unnoticed cash. [See Section 16 – “Explanations,” discussion #5, for more information on this rule.]
6. Money and chips may be removed for security purposes when leaving the table. The establishment is not responsible for any shortage or removal of chips left on the table during a player’s absence, even though we will try to protect everyone as best we can. All removed funds must be fully restored when returning to the game.
7. If you return to the same game within one hour of cashing out, your buy-in must be equal to the amount removed when leaving that game.
8. All games are table stakes (except “playing behind” as given in the next rule). Only the chips in front of a player at the start of a deal may play for that hand, except for chips not yet received that a player has purchased. The amount bought must be announced to the table, or only the amount of the minimum buy-in plays. Awareness of the amount being in play for each opponent is an important part of poker. All chips and money must be kept in plain view.
9. "Playing behind" is allowed only for the amount of purchased chips while awaiting their arrival. The amount in play must be announced to the table, or only the amount of the minimum buy-in plays.
10. Playing out of a rack is not allowed.
11. Permission is required before taking a seat in a game.
12. Playing over without permission from the floorperson is not allowed. A playover box is required. Permission from the absent player is not necessary.
13. Pushing bets (“saving” or “potting out”) is not allowed.
14. Pushing an ante or posting for another person is not allowed.

## 2-HOUSE POLICIES

15. Splitting pots will not be allowed in any game. Chopping the big and small blind by taking them back when all other players have folded is allowed in button games.
16. Insurance propositions are not allowed. Dealing twice (or three times) when all-in is permitted at big-bet poker.
17. The game's betting limit will not be changed if two or more players object. Raising the limit is subject to management approval.
18. Players must keep their cards in full view. This means above table-level and not past the edge of the table. The cards should not be covered by the hands in a manner to completely conceal them.
19. Any player is entitled to a clear view of an opponent's chips. Higher denomination chips should be easily visible.
20. Your chips may be picked up if you are away from the table for more than 30 minutes. Your absence may be extended if you notify a floorperson in advance. Frequent or continuous absences may cause your chips to be picked up from the table.
21. A lock-up in a new game will be picked up after five minutes if someone is waiting to play. No seat may be locked up for more than ten minutes if someone is waiting to play.
22. A new deck must be used for at least a full round (once around the table) before it may be changed, and a new setup must be used for at least an hour, unless a deck is defective or damaged, or cards become sticky.
23. Looking through the discards or deck stub is not allowed.
24. After a deal ends, dealers are asked to not show what card would have been dealt.
25. A player is expected to pay attention to the game and not hold up play. Activity that interferes with this such as reading at the table is discouraged, and the player will be asked to cease if a problem is caused.
26. A non-player may not sit at the table.
27. In non-tournament games, you may have a guest sit behind you if no one in the game objects. It is improper for a guest to look at any hand other than your own.
28. Speaking a foreign language during a deal is not allowed.

## 2-HOUSE POLICIES

### SEATING

1. You must be present to add your name to a waiting list.
2. It is the player's responsibility to be in the playing area and hear the list being called. A player who intends to leave the playing area should notify the list-person, and can leave money for a lockup. The lockup amount is \$20.
3. When there is more than one game of the same stakes and poker form, and a must-move is not being used, the house will control the seating of new players to best preserve the viability of existing games. A new player will be sent to the game most in need of an additional player. A transfer to a similar game is not allowed if the game being left will then have fewer players than the game being entered.
4. A player may not hold a seat in more than one game.
5. The house reserves the right to require that any two players not play in the same game (husband and wife, relatives, business partners, and so forth).
6. When a button game starts, active players will draw a card for the button position. The button will be awarded to the highest card by suit for all high and high-low games, and to the lowest card by suit for all low games.
7. To avoid a seating dispute, a supervisor may decide to start the game with one extra player over the normal number. If so, a seat will be removed as soon as someone quits the game.
8. In a new game, the player who arrives at the table the earliest gets first choice of remaining seats. If two players want the same seat and arrive at the same time, the higher player on the list has preference. A player playing a pot in another game may have a designated seat locked up until that hand is finished. Management may reserve a certain seat for a player for a good reason, such as to assist reading the board for a person with a vision problem.
9. To protect an existing game, a forced move may be invoked when an additional game of the same type and limit is started. The must-move list is maintained in the same order as the original waiting list. If a player refuses to move into the main game, that player will be forced to quit, and cannot play in the must-move game or get on that list for one hour.
10. In all button games, a player going from a must-move game to the main game may play until due for the big blind. The player must then enter the game as a new player, and may either post an amount equal to the big blind or wait for the big blind. In all stud games, a player may play only one more hand before moving.



## 2-HOUSE POLICIES

11. You must play in a new game or must-move game to retain your place on the list, if with your playing there would be three or fewer empty seats.
12. A player who is already in the game has precedence over a new player for any seat when it becomes available. However, no change will occur after a new player has been seated, or after that player's buy-in or marker has been placed on the table, unless that particular seat had been previously requested. For players already in the game, the one who asks the earliest has preference for a seat change.
13. In all button games, a player voluntarily locking up a seat in another game must move immediately if there is a waiting list of two or more names for the seat being vacated, except that the player is entitled to play the button if a blind has already been taken. Otherwise, a player may play up to the blind before moving. In a stud game, a player changing tables may play only the present hand if someone is waiting for the seat being vacated, or one more hand when no one is waiting.
14. When a game breaks, each player may draw a card to determine the seating order for a similar game. The floormen draw a card for an absent player. If the card entitles the absent player to an immediate seat, the player has until due for the big blind in a button game to take the seat (two hands in a stud game), and will be put first up on the list if not back in time.

## **SECTION 3 - GENERAL POKER RULES**

### **THE BUY-IN**

1. When you enter a game, you must make a full buy-in. At limit poker, a full buy-in is at least ten times the maximum bet for the game being played, unless designated otherwise.
2. You are allowed to make only one short buy-in for a game. Adding to your stack is not considered a buy-in, and may be done in any quantity between hands.
3. A player coming from a broken game or must-move game to a game of the same limit may continue to play the same amount of money, even if it is less than the minimum buy-in. A player switching games voluntarily must have the proper buy-in size for the new game. A player switching games is not required to buy in for any more than the minimum amount.

### **MISDEALS**

1. Once action begins, a misdeal cannot be called. The deal will be played, and no money will be returned to any player whose hand is fouled. In button games, action is considered to occur when two players after the blinds have acted on their hands. In stud games, action is considered to occur when two players after the forced bet have acted on their hands.
2. The following circumstances cause a misdeal, provided attention is called to the error before two players have acted on their hands.
  - (a) The first or second card of the hand has been exposed by a dealer error.
  - (b) Two or more cards have been exposed by the dealer.
  - (c) Two or more boxed cards (improperly faced cards) are found.
  - (d) Two or more extra cards have been dealt in the starting hands of a game.
  - (e) An incorrect number of cards has been dealt to a player, except the top card may be dealt if it goes to the player in proper sequence.
  - (f) Any card has been dealt out of the proper sequence (except an exposed card may be replaced by the burncard).
  - (g) The button was out of position.
  - (h) The first card was dealt to the wrong position.
  - (i) Cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player not entitled to a hand.
  - (j) A player has been dealt out who is entitled to a hand. This player must be present at the table or have posted a blind or ante.

### **3-GENERAL POKER RULES**

#### **DEAD HANDS**

1. Your hand is declared dead if:
  - (a) You fold or announce that you are folding when facing a bet or a raise.
  - (b) You throw your hand away in a forward motion causing another player to act behind you (even if not facing a bet).
  - (c) In stud, when facing a bet, you pick your upcards off the table, turn your upcards facedown, or mix your upcards and downcards together.
  - (d) The hand does not contain the proper number of cards for that particular game (except at stud a hand missing the final card may be ruled live, and at lowball and draw high a hand with too few cards before the draw is live). [See Section 16 - "Explanations," discussion #4, for more information on the stud portion of this rule.]
  - (e) You act on a hand with a joker as a holecard in a game not using a joker. (A player who acts on a hand without looking at a card assumes the liability of finding an improper card, as given in Irregularities, rule #8.)
  - (f) You have the clock on you when facing a bet or raise and exceed the specified time limit.
2. Cards thrown into the muck may be ruled dead. However, a hand that is clearly identifiable may be retrieved and ruled live at management's discretion if doing so is in the best interest of the game. An extra effort should be made to rule a hand retrievable if it was folded as a result of incorrect information given to the player.
3. Cards thrown into another player's hand are dead, whether they are faceup or facedown.

#### **IRREGULARITIES**

1. In button games, if it is discovered that the button was placed incorrectly on the previous hand, the button and blinds will be corrected for the new hand in a manner that gives every player one chance for each position on the round (if possible).
2. You must protect your own hand at all times. Your cards may be protected with your hands, a chip, or other object placed on top of them. If you fail to protect your hand, you will have no redress if it becomes fouled or the dealer accidentally kills it.
3. If a card with a different color back appears during a hand, all action is void and all chips in the pot are returned to the respective bettors. If a card with a different color back is discovered in the stub, all action stands.

### 3-GENERAL POKER RULES

4. If two cards of the same rank and suit are found, all action is void, and all chips in the pot are returned to the players who wagered them (subject to next rule).
5. A player who knows the deck is defective has an obligation to point this out. If such a player instead tries to win a pot by taking aggressive action (trying for a freeroll), the player may lose the right to a refund, and the chips may be required to stay in the pot for the next deal.
6. If there is extra money in the pot on a deal as a result of forfeited money from the previous deal (as per rule #5), or some similar reason, only a player dealt in on the previous deal is entitled to a hand.
7. A card discovered faceup in the deck (boxed card) will be treated as a meaningless scrap of paper. A card being treated as a scrap of paper will be replaced by the next card below it in the deck, except when the next card has already been dealt facedown to another player and mixed in with other downcards. In that case, the card that was faceup in the deck will be replaced after all other cards are dealt for that round.
8. A joker that appears in a game where it is not used is treated as a scrap of paper. Discovery of a joker does not cause a misdeal. If the joker is discovered before a player acts on his or her hand, it is replaced as in the previous rule. If the player does not call attention to the joker before acting, then the player has a dead hand.
9. If you play a hand without looking at all of your cards, you assume the liability of having an irregular card or an improper joker.
10. One or more cards missing from the deck does not invalidate the results of a hand.
11. Before the first round of betting, if a dealer deals one additional card, it is returned to the deck and used as the burncard.
12. Procedure for an exposed card varies with the poker form, and is given in the section for each game. A card that is flashed by a dealer is treated as an exposed card. A card that is flashed by a player will play. To obtain a ruling on whether a card was exposed and should be replaced, a player should announce that the card was flashed or exposed before looking at it. A downcard dealt off the table is an exposed card.
13. If a card is exposed due to dealer error, a player does not have an option to take or reject the card. The situation will be governed by the rules for the particular game being played.
14. If you drop any cards out of your hand onto the floor, you must still play them.
15. If the dealer prematurely deals any cards before the betting is complete, those cards will not play, even if a player who has not acted decides to fold.

### 3-GENERAL POKER RULES

16. If the dealer fails to burn a card or burns more than one card, the error should be corrected if discovered before betting action has started for that round. Once action has been taken on a boardcard, the card must stand. Whether the error is able to be corrected or not, subsequent cards dealt should be those that would have come if no error had occurred. For example, if two cards were burned, one of the cards should be put back on the deck and used for the burncard on the next round. On the last round, if there was no betting because a player was all-in, the error should be corrected if discovered before the pot has been awarded, provided the deck stub, boardcards, and burncards are all sufficiently intact to determine the proper replacement card.
17. If the deck stub gets fouled for some reason, such as the dealer believing the deal is over and dropping the deck, the deal must still be played out, and the deck reconstituted in as fair a way as possible.

#### BETTING AND RAISING

1. The smallest chip that may be wagered in a game is the smallest chip used in the antes, blinds, rake, or collection. (Certain games may use a special rule that does not allow chips used only in house revenue to play.) Smaller chips than this do not play even in quantity, so a player wanting action on such chips must change them up between deals. If betting is in dollar units or greater, a fraction of a dollar does not play. A player going all-in must put all chips that play into the pot.
2. Check-raise is permitted in all games, except in certain forms of lowball.
3. In no-limit and pot-limit games, unlimited raising is allowed.
4. In limit poker, for a pot involving three or more players who are not all-in, these limits on raises apply:
  - (a) A game with three or more betting rounds allows a maximum of a bet and three raises.
  - (b) A game with two betting rounds (such as lowball or draw) allows a maximum of a bet and four raises. [See “Section 16 - Explanations,” discussion #6, for more information on this rule.]
5. Unlimited raising is allowed in heads-up play except in tournaments. This applies any time the action becomes heads-up before the raising has been capped. Once the raising is capped on a betting round, it cannot be uncapped by a subsequent fold that leaves two players heads-up. (For tournament play in limit events there will be a limit to raises even when heads-up until the tournament is down to two players.)

### 3-GENERAL POKER RULES

6. Any wager not all-in must be at least the size of the previous bet or raise in that round.
7. In limit play, an all-in wager of less than half a bet does not reopen the betting for any player who has already acted and is in the pot for all previous bets. A player who has not yet acted (or had the betting reopened to him by another player's action), facing an all-in wager of less than half a bet, may fold, call, or complete the wager. An all-in wager of a half a bet or more is treated as a full bet, and a player may fold, call, or make a full raise. (An example of a full raise on a \$20 betting round is raising a \$15 all-in bet to \$35.) Multiple all-in wagers, each of an amount too small to individually qualify as a raise, still act as a raise and reopen the betting if the resulting wager size to a player qualifies as a raise.
8. In limit poker, if you make a forward motion with chips and thus cause another player to act, you may be forced to complete your action.
9. A verbal statement in turn denotes your action, is binding, and takes precedence over a differing physical action.
10. Rapping the table with your hand is a pass.
11. Deliberately acting out of turn will not be tolerated. A player who checks out of turn may not bet or raise on the next turn to act. A player who has called out of turn may not change his wager to a raise on the next turn to act. An action or verbal declaration out of turn is binding unless the action to that player is subsequently changed by a bet or raise. If there is an intervening call, an action may be ruled binding.

### 3-GENERAL POKER RULES

12. To retain the right to act, a player must stop the action by calling “time” (or an equivalent word). Failure to stop the action before three or more players have acted behind you may cause you to lose the right to act. You cannot forfeit your right to act if any player in front of you has not acted, only if you fail to act when it legally becomes your turn. Therefore, if you wait for someone whose turn comes before you, and three or more players act behind you, this still does not hinder your right to act.
13. A player who bets or calls by releasing chips into the pot is bound by that action and must make the amount of the wager correct. (This also applies right before the showdown when putting chips into the pot causes the opponent to show the winning hand before the full amount needed to call has been put into the pot.) However, if you are unaware that the pot has been raised, you may withdraw that money and reconsider your action, provided that no one else has acted after you. At pot-limit or no-limit betting, if there is a gross misunderstanding concerning the amount of the wager, see Section 14, Rule 8.
14. String raises are not allowed. The dealer should enforce obvious infractions to this string-raise law without being asked. To protect your right to raise, you should either declare your intention verbally or place the proper amount of chips into the pot. Putting a full bet plus a half-bet or more into the pot is considered to be the same as announcing a raise, and the raise must be completed. (This does not apply in the use of a single chip of greater value.)
15. If you put a single chip in the pot that is larger than the bet, but do not announce a raise, you are assumed to have only called. Example: In a \$3-\$6 game, when a player bets \$6 and the next player puts a \$25 chip in the pot without saying anything, that player has merely called the \$6 bet.
16. All wagers and calls of an improperly low amount must be brought up to proper size if the error is discovered before the betting round has been completed. This includes actions such as betting a lower amount than the minimum bring-in (other than going all-in) and betting the lower limit on an upper limit betting round. If a wager is supposed to be made in a rounded off amount, is not, and must be corrected, it shall be changed to the proper amount nearest in size. No one who has acted may change a call to a raise because the wager size has been changed.

#### THE SHOWDOWN

1. To win any part of a pot, a player must show all of his cards faceup on the table, whether they were used in the final hand played or not.

### 3-GENERAL POKER RULES

2. Cards speak (cards read for themselves). The dealer assists in reading hands, but players are responsible for holding onto their cards until the winner is declared. Although verbal declarations as to the contents of a hand are not binding, deliberately miscalling a hand with the intent of causing another player to discard a winning hand is unethical and may result in forfeiture of the pot. (For more information on miscalling a hand see “Section 11 - Lowball,” Rule 15 and Rule 16.)
3. Any player, dealer, or floorperson who sees an incorrect amount of chips put into the pot, or an error about to be made in awarding a pot, has an ethical obligation to point out the error. Please help keep mistakes of this nature to a minimum.
4. All losing hands will be killed by the dealer before a pot is awarded.
5. Any player who has been dealt in may request to see any hand that was eligible to participate in the showdown, even if the opponent's hand or the winning hand has been mucked. However, this is a privilege that may be revoked if abused. If a player other than the pot winner asks to see a hand that has been folded, that hand is dead. If the winning player asks to see a losing player's hand, both hands are live, and the best hand wins.
6. Show one, show all. Players are entitled to receive equal access to information about the contents of another player's hand. After a deal, if cards are shown to another player, every player at the table has a right to see those cards. During a deal, cards that were shown to an active player who might have a further wagering decision on that betting round must immediately be shown to all the other players. If the player who saw the cards is not involved in the deal, or cannot use the information in wagering, the information should be withheld until the betting is over, so it does not affect the normal outcome of the deal. Cards shown to a person who has no more wagering decisions on that betting round, but might use the information on a later betting round, should be shown to the other players at the conclusion of that betting round. If only a portion of the hand has been shown, there is no requirement to show any of the unseen cards. The shown cards are treated as given in the preceding part of this rule.
7. If there is a side pot, the winner of that pot should be decided before the main pot is awarded. If there are multiple side pots, they are decided and awarded by having the pot with the players starting the deal with the greatest number of chips settled first, and so forth.



### 3-GENERAL POKER RULES

8. If everyone checks (or is all-in) on the final betting round, the player who acted first is the first to show the hand. If there is wagering on the final betting round, the last player to take aggressive action by a bet or raise is the first to show the hand. In order to speed up the game, a player holding a probable winner is encouraged to show the hand without delay. If there are one or more side pots (because someone is all-in), players are asked to aid in determining the pot winner by not showing their cards until a pot they are in is being settled. A player may opt to throw his hand away after all the betting for the deal is over, rather than compete to win the pot. However, the other players do not lose the right to request the hand be shown if he does so.

#### TIES

1. The ranking of suits from highest to lowest is spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs. Suits never break a tie for winning a pot. Suits are used to break a tie between cards of the same rank (no redeal or redraw).
2. Dealing a card to each player is used to determine things like who moves to another table. If the cards are dealt, the order is clockwise starting with the first player on the dealer's left (the button position is irrelevant). Drawing a card is used to determine things like who gets the button in a new game, or seating order coming from a broken game.
3. An odd chip will be broken down to the smallest unit used in the game.
4. No player may receive more than one odd chip.
5. If two or more hands tie, an odd chip will be awarded as follows:
  - (a) In a button game, the first hand clockwise from the button gets the odd chip.
  - (b) In a stud game, the odd chip will be given to the highest card by suit in all high games, and to the lowest card by suit in all low games. (When making this determination, all cards are used, not just the five cards that constitute the player's hand.)
  - (c) In high-low split games, the high hand receives the odd chip in a split between the high and the low hands. The odd chip between tied high hands is awarded as in a high game of that poker form, and the odd chip between tied low hands is awarded as in a low game of that poker form. If two players have identical hands, the pot will be split as evenly as possible.
  - (d) All side pots and the main pot will be split as separate pots, not mixed together.

## **SECTION 4 - BUTTON AND BLIND USE**

In button games, a non-playing dealer normally does the actual dealing. A round disk called the button is used to indicate which player has the dealer position. The player with the button is last to receive cards on the initial deal and has the right of last action on all but the first betting round. The button moves one seat clockwise after a deal ends to rotate the advantage of last action. One or more blind bets are usually used to stimulate action and initiate play. Blinds are posted before the players look at their cards. Blinds are part of a player's bet (unless a certain structure or situation specifies otherwise). A blind other than the big blind may be treated as dead (not part of the poster's bet) in some structures, as when a special additional "dead blind" for the collection is specified by a cardroom. With two blinds, the small blind is posted by the first player clockwise from the button and the big blind is posted by the second player clockwise from the button. With more than two blinds, the smallest blind is normally left of the button (not on it). On the initial betting round, action starts with the first player to the left of the blinds. On all subsequent betting rounds, the action starts with the first active player to the left of the button.

### **RULES FOR USING BLINDS**

1. The minimum bring-in and allowable raise sizes for the opener are specified by the poker form used and blind amounts set for a game. They remain the same even when the player in the blind does not have enough chips to post the full amount.
2. Each round every player must get an opportunity for the button, and meet the total amount of the blind obligations. Either of the following methods of button and blind placement may be designated to do this:
  - (a) Moving button – The button always moves forward to the next player and the blinds adjust accordingly. There may be more than one big blind.
  - (b) Dead button – The big blind is posted by the player due for it, and the small blind and button are positioned accordingly, even if this means the small blind or the button is placed in front of an empty seat, giving the same player the privilege of last action on consecutive hands. [See "Section 16 – Explanations," discussion #1, for more information on this rule.]
3. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is on the button. When play becomes heads-up, the player who had the big blind the most recently is given the button, and his opponent is given the big blind.
4. A new player entering the game has the following options:
  - (a) Wait for the big blind.
  - (b) Post an amount equal to the big blind and immediately be dealt a hand. (In lowball, a new player must either post an amount double the big blind or wait for the big blind.)

#### 4-BUTTON AND BLIND USE

5. A new player who elects to let the button go by once without posting is not treated as a player in the game who has missed a blind, and needs to post only the big blind when entering the game.
6. A person playing over is considered to be a new player, and must post the amount of the big blind or wait for the big blind.
7. A new player cannot be dealt in between the big blind and the button. Blinds may not be made up between the big blind and the button. You must wait until the button passes. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #5, for more information on this rule.]
8. Chips posted by the big blind are treated as a bet.
9. A player posting a blind in the game’s regular structure has the option of raising the pot at the first turn to act. This option to raise is retained if someone goes all-in with a wager of less than the minimum raise.
10. A player who misses any or all blinds can resume play by either posting all the blinds missed or waiting for the big blind. If you choose to post the total amount of the blinds, an amount up to the size of the minimum opening bet is live. The remainder is taken by the dealer to the center of the pot and is not part of your bet. When it is your next turn to act, you have the option to raise.
11. If a player who owes a blind (as a result of a missed blind) is dealt in without posting, the hand is dead if the player looks at it before putting up the required chips, and has not yet acted. If the player acts on the hand and plays it, putting chips into the pot before the error is discovered, the hand is live, and the player is required to post on the next deal.
12. A player who goes all-in and loses is obligated to make up the blinds if they are missed before a rebuy is made. (The person is not treated as a new player when reentering.)
13. These rules about blinds apply to a newly started game:
  - (a) Any player who drew for the button is considered active in the game and is required to make up any missed blinds.
  - (b) A new player will not be required to post a blind until the button has made one complete revolution around the table, provided a blind has not yet passed that seat.
  - (c) A player may change seats without penalty, provided a blind has not yet passed the new seat.
14. If you move closer to the big blind, you can be dealt in without any penalty.

#### **4-BUTTON AND BLIND USE**

15. In all multiple-blind games, a player who changes seats will be dealt in on the first available hand in the same relative position. Example: If you move two active positions away from the big blind, you must wait two hands before being dealt in again. If you do not wish to wait and have not yet missed a blind, then you can post an amount equal to the big blind and receive a hand. (Exception: At lowball you must kill the pot, wait for the same relative position, or wait for the big blind; see "Section 11 – Lowball," rule #7.)
16. A player who "deals off" (by playing the button and then immediately getting up to change seats) can allow the blinds to pass the new seat one time and reenter the game behind the button without having to post a blind.
17. A live "straddle bet" is not allowed at limit poker except in specified games.

## SECTION 5 - HOLDEM

In holdem, players receive two downcards as their personal hand (holecards), after which there is a round of betting. Three boardcards are turned simultaneously (called the “flop”) and another round of betting occurs. The next two boardcards are turned one at a time, with a round of betting after each card. The boardcards are common cards used by all players, and a player may use any five-card combination from among the board and personal cards. A player may even use all of the boardcards and no personal cards to form a hand (play the board). A dealer button is used. The usual structure is to use two blinds, but it is possible to play the game with one blind, multiple blinds, an ante, or combination of blinds plus an ante.

### RULES

These rules deal only with irregularities. See the previous chapter, “Button and Blind Use,” for rules on that subject.

1. If the initial holecard dealt to the first or second player is exposed, a misdeal results. The dealer will retrieve the card, reshuffle, and recut the cards. If any other holecard is exposed due to a dealer error, the deal continues. The exposed card may not be kept. After completing the hand, the dealer replaces the card with the top card on the deck, and the exposed card is then used for the burncard. If more than one holecard is exposed, this is a misdeal and there must be a redeal.
2. If the dealer mistakenly deals the first player an extra card (after all players have received their starting hands), the card will be returned to the deck and used for the burncard. If the dealer mistakenly deals more than one extra card, it is a misdeal.
3. If the flop contains too many cards, it must be redealt. (This applies even if it were possible to know which card was the extra one.)
4. If the dealer failed to burn a card before dealing the flop, or burned two cards, the error should be rectified by using the proper burncard and flop, if no boardcards were exposed. The deck must be reshuffled if any boardcards were exposed.
5. If the dealer burns and turns before a betting round is complete, the card(s) may not be used, even if all subsequent players elect to fold. Nobody has an option of accepting or rejecting the card. The betting is then completed, and the error rectified in the prescribed manner for that situation.

## 5-HOLD'EM

6. If the dealer fails to burn a card or burns more than one card, the error should be corrected if discovered before betting action has started for that round. Once action has been taken on a boardcard by any player, the card must stand. Whether the error is able to be corrected or not, subsequent cards dealt should be those that would have come if no error had occurred. For example, if two cards were burned, one of the cards should be put back on the deck and used for the burncard on the next round. If there was no betting on a round because a player was all-in, the error should be corrected if discovered before the pot has been awarded.
7. If the flop needs to be redealt for any reason, the boardcards are mixed with the remainder of the deck. The burncard remains on the table. After shuffling, the dealer cuts the deck and deals a new flop without burning a card. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #4, for more information on this rule.]
8. A dealing error for the fourth boardcard is rectified in a manner to least influence the identity of the boardcards that would have been used without the error. The dealer burns and deals what would have been the fifth card in the fourth card’s place. After this round of betting, the dealer reshuffles the deck, including the card that was taken out of play, but not including the burncards or discards. The dealer then cuts the deck and deals the final card without burning a card. If the fifth card is turned up prematurely, the deck is reshuffled and dealt in the same manner. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #4, for more information on this rule.]
9. You must declare that you are playing the board before you throw your cards away. Otherwise, you relinquish all claim to the pot. (The rule for tournament play is you must retain your hand and show it if asked, in order to win part of the pot.)

## **SECTION 6 - OMAHA**

Omaha is similar to hold'em in using a three-card flop on the board, a fourth boardcard, and then a fifth boardcard. Each player is dealt four holecards (instead of two) at the start. In order to make a valid hand, a player must use precisely two holecards with three boardcards. The betting is the same as in hold'em, using a preflop, flop, turn, and river betting rounds. At the showdown, the entire four-card hand should be shown to receive the pot.

### **RULES OF OMAHA**

1. All the rules of hold'em apply to Omaha except the rule on playing the board, which is not possible in Omaha (because you must use two cards from your hand and three cards from the board).

## **SECTION 7 - OMAHA HIGH-LOW**

Omaha is often played high-low split. The player may use any combination of two holecards and three boardcards for the high hand and another (or the same) combination of two holecards and three boardcards for the low hand.

The rules governing kill pots are listed in “Section 13 – Kill Pots.”

### **RULES OF OMAHA HIGH-LOW**

1. All the rules of Omaha apply to Omaha high-low split except as below.
2. A qualifier of 8-or-better for low is used. This means to win the low half of the pot, a player's hand at the showdown must have five cards of different ranks that are an eight or lower in rank. (An ace is the highest card and also the lowest card.) If there is no qualifying hand for low, the best high hand wins the whole pot.
3. Straights and flushes do not impair the low value of a hand.



## **SECTION 8 - SEVEN-CARD STUD**

Seven-card stud is played with a starting hand of two downcards and one upcard dealt before the first betting round. There are then three more upcards and a final downcard, with a betting round after each, for a total of five betting rounds on a deal played to the showdown. The best five-card poker hand wins the pot. In all fixed-limit games, the smaller bet is wagered for the first two betting rounds, and the larger bet is wagered for the last three betting rounds (on the fifth, sixth, and seventh cards). If there is an open pair on the fourth card, any player has the option of making the smaller or larger bet. Deliberately changing the order of your upcards in a stud game is improper because it unfairly misleads the other players.

### **RULES OF SEVEN-CARD STUD**

1. If your first or second holecard is accidentally turned up by the dealer, then your third card will be dealt down. If both holecards are dealt up, you have a dead hand and receive your ante back. If the first card dealt faceup would have been the lowcard, action starts with the first hand to that player's left. That player may fold, open for the forced bet, or open for a full bet. (In tournament play, if a downcard is dealt faceup, a misdeal is called.)
2. The first round of betting starts with a forced bet by the lowest upcard by suit. On subsequent betting rounds, the high hand on board initiates the action (a tie is broken by position, with the player who received cards first acting first).
3. The player with the forced bet has the option of opening for a full bet.
4. If the player with the lowcard is all-in for the ante (or any player designated to start the action on a round of betting is all-in), betting action proceeds to the first active player to the left of the all-in player. If the player with the lowcard has only enough chips for a portion of the forced bet, the wager is made. All other players must enter for at least the normal amount in that structure.
5. When the wrong person is designated as low and bets, if the next player has not yet acted, the action will be corrected to the real lowcard, who now must bet. The incorrect lowcard takes back the wager. If the next hand has acted after the incorrect lowcard wager, the wager stands, action continues from there, and the real lowcard has no obligations.
6. Increasing the amount wagered by the opening forced bet up to a full bet does not count as a raise, but merely as a completion of the bet. For example: In \$15-\$30 stud, the lowcard opens for \$5. If the next player increases the bet to \$15 (completes the bet), up to three raises are then allowed when using a three-raise limit.

## 8-SEVEN-CARD STUD

7. In all fixed-limit games, when an open pair is showing on fourth street (second upcard), any player has the option of betting either the lower or the upper limit. For example: In a \$5-\$10 game, if you have a pair showing and are the high hand, you may bet either \$5 or \$10. If you bet \$5, any player then has the option to call \$5, raise \$5, or raise \$10. If a \$10 raise is made, then all other raises must be in increments of \$10. If the player high with the open pair on fourth street checks, then subsequent players have the same options that were given to the player who was high.
8. If you are not present at the table when it is your turn to act, you forfeit your ante and your forced bet, if any. If you have not returned to the table in time to act, the hand will be killed when the betting reaches your seat. (In tournament play, the dealer is instructed to kill the hand of any absent player as soon as everyone has received their entire starting hand.)
9. If a hand is folded when there is no wager, that seat will continue to receive cards until the hand is killed as a result of a bet (so the fold does not affect who gets the cards to come).
10. When facing a wager, picking up your upcards without calling is a fold. This act has no significance at the showdown because betting is over; the hand is live until discarded.
11. A card dealt off the table is treated as an exposed card.
12. The dealer announces the lowcard, the high hand, all raises, and all pairs. Dealers do not announce possible straights or flushes (except for specified low-stakes games).
13. If the dealer burns two cards for one round or fails to burn a card, the cards will be corrected, if at all possible, to their proper positions. If this should happen on a final downcard, and either a card intermingles with a player's other holecards or a player looks at the card, the player must accept that card.
14. If the dealer burns and deals one or more cards before a round of betting has been completed, the card(s) must be eliminated from play. After the betting for that round is completed, an additional card for each remaining player still active in the hand is also eliminated from play (to later deal the same cards to the players who would have received them without the error). After that round of betting has concluded, the dealer burns a card and play resumes. The removed cards are held off to the side in the event the dealer runs out of cards. If the prematurely dealt card is the final downcard and has been looked at or intermingled with the player's other holecards, the player must keep the card, and on sixth street betting may not bet or raise (because the player now has all seven cards).

## 8-SEVEN-CARD STUD

15. If there are not enough cards left in the deck for all players, all the cards are dealt except the last card, which is mixed with the burncards (and any cards removed from the deck, as in the previous rule). The dealer then scrambles and cuts these cards, burns again, and delivers the remaining downcards, using the last card if necessary. If there are not as many cards as players remaining without a card, the dealer does not burn, so that each player can receive a fresh card. If the dealer determines that there will not be enough fresh cards for all of the remaining players, then the dealer announces to the table that a common card will be used. The dealer will burn a card and turn one card faceup in the center of the table as a common card that plays in everyone's hand. The player who is now high using the common card initiates the action for the last round.
16. An all-in player should receive holecards dealt facedown, but if the final holecard to such a player is dealt faceup, the card must be kept, and the other players receive their normal card.
17. If the dealer turns the last card faceup to any player, the hand now high on the board using all the upcards will start the action. The following rules apply to the dealing of cards:
  - (a) If there are more than two players, all remaining players receive their last card facedown. A player whose last card is faceup has the option of declaring all-in before betting action starts, meaning that the player does not put any more chips into the pot and subsequent betting by the other active players will be on the side.
  - (b) If there are only two players remaining and the first player's final downcard is dealt faceup, the second player's final downcard will also be dealt faceup, and the betting proceeds as normal. In the event the first player's final card is dealt facedown and the opponent's final card is dealt faceup, the player with the faceup final card has the option of declaring all-in (before betting action starts).
18. A hand with more than seven cards is dead. A hand with less than seven cards at the showdown is dead, except any player missing a seventh card may have the hand ruled live. [See "Section 16 – Explanations," discussion #2, for more information on this rule.]
19. A player who calls a bet even though beaten by an opponent's upcards is not entitled to a refund. (The caller receives information about the opponent that is not available for free.)

## **SECTION 9 - SEVEN-CARD STUD LOW (RAZZ)**

The lowest-ranking hand wins the pot. Aces are low only, and two aces are the lowest pair. The high card (aces are low) is required to make the forced bet on the first round; the low hand acts first on all subsequent rounds. Straights and flushes have no adverse effect on the low value of a hand, so the best possible hand is 5-4-3-2-A. An open pair does not affect the betting limit.

### **RULES OF RAZZ**

1. All seven-card stud rules apply in razz except as otherwise noted.
2. The highest card by suit starts the action with a forced bet. The low hand acts first on all subsequent rounds. If the low hand is tied, the first player clockwise from the dealer starts the action.
3. Fixed-limit games use the lower limit on third and fourth streets and the upper limit on subsequent streets. An open pair does not affect the limit.
4. The dealer announces all pairs the first time they occur, except pairs of facecards, which are never announced.

## **SECTION 10 - SEVEN-CARD STUD HIGH-LOW**

A qualifier of 8-or-better for low applies to all high-low split games. To win for low, a player's hand at the showdown must have five cards of different ranks that are an eight or lower. If there is no qualifier for low, the best high hand wins the whole pot. Any five cards may be used to make the best high hand, and the same or any other five cards to make the best low hand.

### **RULES OF SEVEN-CARD STUD HIGH-LOW**

1. All rules for seven-card stud apply to seven-card stud high-low split, except as noted.
2. A player may use any five cards to make the best high hand and any five cards, whether the same as the high hand or not, to make the best low hand.
3. An ace is the highest card and also the lowest card.
4. The low card by suit initiates the action on the first round, with an ace counting as a high card for this purpose. On subsequent rounds, the high hand initiates the action. If the high hand is tied, the first player in the tie clockwise from the dealer acts first. If the high hand is all-in, action proceeds clockwise as if that person had checked.
5. Straights and flushes do not affect the value of a low hand.
6. Fixed-limit games use the lower limit on third and fourth streets and the upper limit on subsequent rounds. An open pair on fourth street does not affect the limit.
7. Splitting pots is determined only by the cards, and not by agreement among players.
8. When there is an odd chip in a pot, the chip goes to the high hand. If two players split the pot by tying for both the high and the low, the pot shall be split as evenly as possible, and the player with the highest card by suit receives the odd chip. When making this determination, all cards are used, not just the five cards used for the final hand played.
9. When there is one odd chip in the high portion of the pot and two or more high hands split all or half the pot, the odd chip goes to the player with the high card by suit. When two or more low hands split half the pot, the odd chip goes to the player with the low card by suit.

## **SECTION 11 - LOWBALL**

Lowball is draw poker with the lowest hand winning the pot. Each player is dealt five cards facedown, after which there is a betting round. Players are required to open with a bet or fold. The players who remain in the pot after the first betting round now have an option to improve their hand by replacing cards in their hands with new ones. This is the draw. The game is normally played with one or more blinds, sometimes with an ante added. Some betting structures allow the big blind to be called; other structures require the minimum open to be double the big blind. In limit poker, the usual structure has the limit double after the draw (Northern California is an exception). The most popular forms of lowball are ace-to-five lowball (also known as California lowball), and deuce-to-seven lowball (also known as Kansas City lowball). Ace-to-five lowball gets its name because the best hand at that form is 5-4-3-2-A. Deuce-to-seven lowball gets its name because the best hand at that form is 7-5-4-3-2 (not of the same suit). For a further description of the forms of lowball, please see the individual section for each game. All rules governing kill pots are listed in “Section 13 – Kill Pots.”

### **RULES OF LOWBALL**

1. The rules governing misdeals for holdem and other button games will be used for lowball. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #7, for more information on this rule.] These rules governing misdeals are reprinted here for convenience.

“The following circumstances cause a misdeal, provided attention is called to the error before two players have acted on their hands:

- (a) The first or second card of the hand has been exposed by a dealer error.
- (b) Two or more cards have been exposed by the dealer.
- (c) Two or more extra cards have been dealt in the starting hands of a game.
- (d) An incorrect number of cards has been dealt to a player, except the button may receive one more card to complete a starting hand.
- (e) The button was out of position.
- (f) The first card was dealt to the wrong position.
- (g) Cards have been dealt out of the proper sequence.
- (h) Cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player not entitled to a hand.
- (i) A player has been dealt out who is entitled to a hand. This player must be present at the table or have posted a blind or ante.”

## 11-LOWBALL

2. In limit play, a bet and four raises are allowed in multihanded pots. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #6, for more information on this rule.]
3. As a new player, you have two options:
  - (a) To wait for the big blind.
  - (b) To kill the pot for double the amount of the big blind.
4. In a single-blind game, a player who has less than half a blind may receive a hand. However, the next player is obligated to take the blind. If the all-in player wins the pot or buys in again, that player will then be obligated to either take the blind on the next deal or sit out until due for the big blind.
5. In single-blind games, half a blind or more constitutes a full blind.
6. In single-blind games, if you fail to take the blind, you may only be dealt in on the blind.
7. In multiple-blind games, if the big blind passes your seat, you may either wait for the big blind or kill the pot in order to receive a hand. This does not apply if you have taken all of your blinds and changed seats. In this situation, you may be dealt in as soon as your position relative to the blinds entitles you to a hand (the button may go by you once without penalty).
8. Before the draw, whether an exposed card must be taken depends on the form of lowball being played; see that form. (The player never has an option.)
9. On the draw, an exposed card cannot be taken. The draw is completed to each player in order, and then the exposed card is replaced.
10. A player may draw up to four consecutive cards. If a player wishes to draw five new cards, four are dealt right away, and the fifth card after everyone else has drawn cards. If the last player wishes to draw five new cards, four are dealt right away, and a card is burned before the player receives a fifth card. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #9, for more information about this rule.]
11. You may change the number of cards you wish to draw, provided:
  - (a) No card has been dealt off the deck in response to your request (including the burncard).
  - (b) No player has acted, in either the betting or indicating the number of cards to be drawn, based on the number of cards you have requested.

## 11-LOWBALL

12. Five cards constitute a playing hand; more or fewer than five cards after the draw constitutes a fouled hand. Before the draw, if you have fewer than five cards in your hand, you may receive additional cards, provided no action has been taken by the first player to act (unless that action occurs before the deal is completed). However, the dealer position may still receive a missing fifth card, even if action has taken place. If action has been taken, you are entitled on the draw to receive the number of cards necessary to complete a five-card hand.
13. If you are asked how many cards you drew by another active player, you are obligated to respond until there has been action after the draw, and the dealer is also obligated to respond. Once there is any action after the draw, you are no longer obliged to respond and the dealer cannot respond.
14. Rapping the table in turn constitutes either a pass or the declaration of a pat hand that does not want to draw any cards, depending on the situation.
15. Cards speak (cards read for themselves). However, you are not allowed to claim a better hand than you hold. (Example: If a player calls an "8", that player must produce at least an "8" low or better to win. But if a player erroneously calls the second card incorrectly, such as "8-6" when actually holding an 8-7, no penalty applies.) If you miscall your hand and cause another player to foul his or her hand, your hand is dead. If both hands remain intact, the best hand wins. If a miscalled hand occurs in a multihanded pot, the miscalled hand is dead, and the best remaining hand wins the pot. For your own protection, always hold your hand until you see your opponent's cards.
16. Any player spreading a hand with a pair in it must announce "pair" or risk losing the pot if it causes any other player to foul a hand. If two or more hands remain intact, the best hand wins the pot.

### ACE-TO-FIVE LOWBALL

In ace-to-five lowball, the best hand is any 5-4-3-2-A. An ace is the lowest-ranking card. For hands with a pair, A-A beats 2-2. Straights and flushes do not count against your hand.

1. If a joker is used, it becomes the lowest card not present in your hand. The joker is assumed to be in use unless the contrary is posted.
2. In limit play, check-raise is not permitted (unless the players are alerted that it is allowed).
3. In limit ace-to-five lowball, before the draw, an exposed card of seven or under must be taken, and an exposed card higher than a seven must be replaced after the deal has been completed. This first exposed card is used as the burncard. [See "Section 16 – Explanations," discussion #8, for more information on this rule.]



## 11-LOWBALL

4. In limit play, the “sevens rule” is assumed to be in use (the players should be alerted if it is not). If you check a seven or better and it is the best hand, all action after the draw is void, and you cannot win any money on any subsequent bets. You are still eligible to win whatever existed in the pot before the draw if you have the best hand. If you check a seven or better and the hand is beaten, you lose the pot and any additional calls you make. If there is an all-in bet after the draw that is less than half a bet, a seven or better may just call and win that bet. However, if another player overcalls this short bet and loses, the person who overcalls receives the bet back. If the seven or better completes to a full bet, this fulfills all obligations.

### DEUCE-TO-SEVEN LOWBALL

In deuce-to-seven lowball (sometimes known as Kansas City lowball), in most respects, the worst conventional poker hand wins. Straights and flushes count against you, crippling the value of a hand. The ace is used only as a high card. Therefore, the best hand is 7-5-4-3-2, not all of the same suit. The hand 5-4-3-2-A is not considered to be a straight, but an ace-5 high, so it beats other ace-high hands and pairs, but loses to king-high. A pair of aces is the highest pair, so it loses to any other pair.

The rules for deuce-to-seven lowball are the same as those for ace-to-five lowball, except for the following differences:

1. The best hand is 7-5-4-3-2 of at least two different suits. Straights and flushes count against you, and aces are considered high only.
2. Before the draw, an exposed card of 7, 5, 4, 3, or, 2 must be taken. Any other exposed card must be replaced (including a 6).
3. Check-raise is allowed on any hand after the draw.
4. After the draw, a seven or better is not required to bet.

## 11-LOWBALL

### NO-LIMIT AND POT-LIMIT LOWBALL

1. All the rules for no-limit and pot-limit poker (see Section 14 - No-limit and Pot-limit) apply to no-limit and pot-limit lowball. All other lowball rules apply, except as noted.
2. A player is not entitled to know that an opponent does not hold the best possible hand, so these rules for exposed cards before the draw apply:
  - (a) In ace-to-five lowball, a player must take an exposed card of A, 2, 3, 4, or 5, and any other card must be replaced.
  - (b) In deuce-to-seven lowball, the player must take an exposed card of 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7, and any other card including a 6 must be replaced.
3. After the draw, any exposed card must be replaced.
4. After the draw, a player may check any hand without penalty (The sevens rule is not used).
5. Check-raise is allowed.

## **SECTION 12 - DRAW HIGH**

There are two betting rounds, one before the draw and one after the draw. The game is played with a button and an ante. Players in turn may check, open for the minimum, or open with a raise. After the first betting round the players have the opportunity to draw new cards to replace the ones they discard. Action after the draw starts with the opener, or next player proceeding clockwise if the opener has folded. The betting limit after the draw is twice the amount of the betting limit before the draw. Some draw high games allow a player to open on anything; others require the opener to have a pair of jacks or better.

### **RULES OF DRAW HIGH**

1. A maximum of a bet and four raises is permitted in multihanded pots. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #6, for more information on this rule.]
2. Check-raise is permitted both before and after the draw.
3. The rules governing misdeals for hold’em and other button games will be used for draw.
4. Any card that is exposed by the dealer before the draw must be kept.
5. Five cards constitute a playing hand. Less than five cards for a player (other than the button) before action has been taken is a misdeal. If action has been taken, a player with fewer than five cards may draw the number of cards necessary to complete a five-card hand. The button may receive the fifth card even if action has taken place. More or fewer than five cards after the draw constitutes a fouled hand.
6. A player may draw up to four consecutive cards. If a player wishes to draw five new cards, four are dealt right away, and the fifth card after everyone else has drawn cards. If the last player wishes to draw five new cards, four are dealt right away, and a card is burned before the player receives a fifth card. [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #9, for more information about this rule.]
7. You may change the number of cards you wish to draw, provided:
  - (a) No cards have been dealt off the deck in response to your request (including the burncard).
  - (b) No player has acted, in either the betting or indicating the number of cards to be drawn, based on the number of cards you have requested.
8. On the draw, an exposed card cannot be taken. The draw is completed to each player in order, and then the exposed card is replaced.

## **12-DRAW HIGH**

9. If you are asked how many cards you drew by another active player, you are obligated to respond until there has been action after the draw, and the dealer is also obligated to respond. Once there is any action after the draw, you are no longer obliged to respond and the dealer cannot respond.
10. Rapping the table in turn constitutes either a pass or the declaration of a pat hand that does not want to draw any cards, depending on the situation. A player who indicates a pat hand by rapping the table, not knowing the pot has been raised, may still play his or her hand.
11. You may not change your seat between hands when there are multiple antes or forfeited money in the pot.
12. You have the right to pay the ante (whether single or multiple) at any time and receive a hand, unless there is any additional money in the pot that has been forfeited during a hand in which you were not involved.
13. If the pot has been declared open by an all-in player playing for just the antes, all callers must come in for the full opening bet.
14. If you have only a full ante and no other chips on the table, you may play for just the antes. If no one opens and there is another ante, you may still play for that part of the antes that you have matched, without putting in any more money.

## **THE JOKER**

1. The players will be alerted as to whether the joker is in use.
2. The joker may be used only as an ace, or to complete a straight, flush, or straight flush. (Thus it is not a completely wild card.)
3. If the joker is used to make a flush, it will be the highest card of the flush not present in the hand.
4. Five aces is the best possible hand (four aces and joker).

## **SECTION 13 - KILL POTS**

To kill a pot means to post an overblind that increases the betting limit. A full kill is double the amount of the big blind, and doubles the betting limits. A half kill is one-and-a-half times the big blind, and increases the betting limits by that amount. A kill may be optional in a game, and is often used at lowball when a player wants to be dealt in right away instead of waiting to take the big blind. A kill may be required in a game for any time a specified event takes place. In high-low split games using a required kill, a player who scoops a pot bigger than a set size must kill the next pot. In other games using a required kill, a player who wins two consecutive pots must kill the next pot. In this type of kill game, a marker called a “kill button” indicates which player has won the pot, and the winner keeps this marker until the next hand is completed. If the player who has the kill button wins a second consecutive pot and it qualifies monetarily, that player must kill the next pot.

### **RULES OF KILL POTS**

1. The kill button is neutral (belonging to no player) if:
  - (a) It is the first hand of a new game.
  - (b) The winner of the previous pot has quit the game.
  - (c) The previous pot was split and neither player had the kill button.
2. In a kill pot, the killer acts in proper turn (after the person on the immediate right).
3. There is no pot-size requirement for the first pot or "leg" of a kill. For the second "leg" to qualify for a kill, you must win at least one full bet for whatever limit you are playing, and it cannot be any part of the blind structure.
4. If a player with one "leg up" splits the next pot, that player still has a "leg up" for the next hand. If the player who split the pot was the kill in the previous hand, then that player must also kill the next pot.
5. A person who leaves the table with a “leg up” toward a kill still has a “leg up” upon returning to the game.
6. A player who is required to post a kill must do so that same hand even if wishing to quit or be dealt out. A player who fails to post a required kill blind will not be allowed to participate in any game until the kill money is posted.
7. Kill blinds are considered part of the pot. If a player with a required kill wins again, then that player must kill it again (for the same amount as the previous hand).

### 13 KILL POTS

8. When a player wins both the high and the low pot (“scoops”) in a split-pot game with a kill provision, the next hand will be killed only if the pot is at least five times the size of the upper limit of the game.
9. If you are unaware that the pot has been killed and put in a lesser amount, If it is a required kill pot with the kill button faceup, you must put in the correct amount. If not, you may withdraw the chips and reconsider your action.
10. In lowball, an optional rule is allowing players to look at their first two cards and then opt whether to kill the pot. The pot may no longer be killed if any player in the game has received a third card. In order to kill the pot voluntarily, you must have at least four times the amount of the kill blind in your stack. For example: If the big blind is two chips, and the kill blind is four chips, the voluntary killer must have at least 16 chips prior to posting the kill. If this rule is used, it is in conjunction with having the killer act last on the first betting round rather than in proper order.
11. Only one kill is allowed per deal.
12. A new player is not entitled to play in a killed pot, but may do so by agreeing to kill the next pot.
13. Broken game status is allowed only for players of the same limit and game type. For this purpose, a game with a required kill is considered a different type of game than an otherwise similar game without a required kill.

## SECTION 14 - NO LIMIT AND POT-LIMIT

A no-limit or pot-limit betting structure for a game gives it a different character from limit poker, requiring a separate set of rules in many situations. All the rules for limit games apply to no-limit and pot-limit games, except as noted in this section. No-limit means that the amount of a wager is limited only by the table stakes rule, so any part or all of a player's chips may be wagered. The rules of no-limit play also apply to pot-limit play, except that a bet may not exceed the pot size. The player is responsible for determining the pot size at no-limit, not the dealer. The dealer is responsible for determining the pot size at pot-limit, and should enforce the pot-size cap on wagers without waiting to be asked to do so by a player. For those rules that apply only to no-limit and pot-limit lowball, see the sub-section at the end of "Section 11 – Lowball."

### NO-LIMIT RULES

1. The number of raises in any betting round is unlimited.
2. The minimum bet size is the amount of the minimum bring-in, unless the player is going all-in. The minimum bring-in is the size of the big blind unless the structure of the game is preset by the house to some other amount (such as double the big blind). The minimum bet remains the same amount on all betting rounds. If the big blind does not have sufficient chips to post the required amount, a player who enters the pot on the initial betting round is still required to enter for at least the minimum bet (unless going all-in for a lesser sum) and a preflop raiser must at least double the size of the big blind. At all other times, when someone goes all-in for less than the minimum bet, a player has the option of just calling the all-in amount. If a player goes all-in for an amount that is less than the minimum bet, a player who wishes to raise must raise at least the amount of the minimum bet. For example, if the minimum bet is \$100, and a player goes all-in on the flop for \$20, a player may fold, call \$20, or raise to at least a total of \$120.
3. All raises must be equal to or greater than the size of the previous bet or raise on that betting round, except for an all-in wager. Example: Player A bets 100 and player B raises to 200. Player C wishing to raise must raise at least 100 more, making the total bet at least 300. A player who has already acted and is not facing a fullsize wager may not subsequently raise an all-in bet that is less than the minimum bet or less than the full size of the last bet or raise. (The half-the-size rule for reopening the betting is for limit poker only.)
4. Multiple all-in wagers, each of an amount too small to qualify as a raise, still act as a raise and reopen the betting if the resulting wager size to a player qualifies as a raise. Example: Player A bets \$100 and Player B raises \$100 more, making the total bet \$200. If Player C goes all in for less than \$300 total (not a full \$100 raise), and Player A calls, then Player B has no option to raise again, because he wasn't fully raised. (Player A could have raised, because Player B raised.)

## 14 NO-LIMIT AND POT-LIMIT

5. "Completing the bet" is a limit poker wager type only, and not used at big-bet poker.
6. At non-tournament play, a player who says "raise" is allowed to continue putting chips into the pot with more than one move; the wager is assumed complete when the player's hands come to rest outside the pot area. (This rule is used because no-limit play may require a large number of chips be put into the pot.) In tournament play, the TDA rules require that the player either use a verbal statement giving the amount of the raise or put the chips into the pot in a single motion, to avoid making a string-bet.
7. A wager is not binding until the chips are actually released into the pot, unless the player has made a verbal statement of action.
8. If there is a discrepancy between a player's verbal statement and the amount put into the pot, the bet will be corrected to the verbal statement.
9. If a call is short due to a counting error, the amount must be corrected, even if the bettor has shown down a superior hand.
10. A bet of a single chip or bill without comment is considered to be the full amount of the chip or bill allowed. However, a player acting on a previous bet with a larger denomination chip or bill is calling the previous bet unless this player makes a verbal declaration to raise the pot. (This includes acting on the forced bet of the big blind.)
11. If a player tries to bet or raise less than the legal minimum and has more chips, the wager must be increased to the proper size (but no greater). This does not apply to a player who has unintentionally put too much in to call.
12. Because the amount of a wager at big-bet poker has such a wide range, a player who has taken action based on a gross misunderstanding of the amount wagered may receive some protection by the decision-maker. A "call" or "raise" may be ruled not binding if it is obvious that the player grossly misunderstood the amount wagered, provided no damage has been caused by that action. Example: Player A bets \$300, player B reraises to \$1200, and Player C puts \$300 into the pot and says, "call." It is obvious that player C believes the bet to be only \$300 and he should be allowed to withdraw his \$300 and reconsider his wager. A bettor should not show down a hand until the amount put into the pot for a call seems reasonably correct, or it is obvious that the caller understands the amount wagered. The decision-maker is allowed considerable discretion in ruling on this type of situation. A possible rule-of-thumb is to disallow any claim of not understanding the amount wagered if the caller has put eighty percent or more of that amount into the pot.



## 14 NO-LIMIT AND POT-LIMIT

Example: On the end, a player puts a \$500 chip into the pot and says softly, "Four hundred." The opponent puts a \$100 chip into the pot and says, "Call." The bettor immediately shows the hand. The dealer says, "He bet four hundred." The caller says, "Oh, I thought he bet a hundred." In this case, the recommended ruling normally is that the bettor had an obligation to not show the hand when the amount put into the pot was obviously short, and the "call" can be retracted. Note that the character of each player can be a factor. (Unfortunately, situations can arise at big-bet poker that are not so clear-cut as this.)

13. All wagers may be required to be in the same denomination of chip (or larger) used for the minimum bring-in, even if smaller chips are used in the blind structure. If this is done, the smaller chips do not play except in quantity, even when going all-in.
14. Since all a player's chips may be put at risk on a hand, the house has the right to set a maximum amount for the buy-in to help control the effective size of a game.
15. In non-tournament games, one optional live straddle is allowed. The player who posts the straddle has last action for the first round of betting and is allowed to raise. To straddle, a player must be on the immediate left of the big blind, and must post an amount twice the size of the big blind. A straddle bet sets a new minimum bring-in; it is not treated as a raise.
16. In all no-limit and pot-limit games, the house has the right to place a maximum time limit for taking action on your hand. The clock may be put on someone by the dealer as directed by a floorperson, if a player requests it. If the clock is put on you when you are facing a bet, you will have one additional minute to act on your hand. You will have a ten-second warning, after which your hand is dead if you have not acted.
17. The cardroom does not condone "insurance" or any other "proposition" wagers. The management declines to make decisions in such matters, and the pot will be awarded to the best hand. Players are asked to refrain from instigating proposition wagers in any form. The players are allowed to agree to deal twice (or three times) when someone is all-in. "Dealing twice" means the pot is divided in two, with each portion being dealt for separately.

## 14 NO-LIMIT AND POT-LIMIT

### POT-LIMIT RULES

A bet may not exceed the pot size. The maximum amount a player can raise is the amount in the pot after the call is made. Therefore, if a pot is \$100, and someone makes a \$50 bet, the next player can call \$50 and raise the pot \$200, for a total wager of \$250.

1. If a wager is made that exceeds the pot size, the surplus will be given back to the bettor as soon as possible, and the amount will be reduced to the maximum allowable.
2. The dealer or any player in the game can and should call attention to a wager that appears to exceed the pot size (this also applies to heads-up pots). The oversize wager may be corrected at any point until all players have acted on it.
3. If an oversize wager has stood for a length of time with someone considering what action to take, that person has had to act on a wager that was thought to be a certain size. If the player then decides to call or raise, and attention is called at this late point to whether this is an allowable amount, the floorperson may rule that the oversize amount must stand (especially if the person now trying to reduce the amount is the person that made the wager).
4. In pot-limit play, it is advisable in many structures to round off the pot size upward to produce a faster pace of play. This is done by treating any odd amount as the next larger size. For example, if the pot size was being kept track of with \$25 units, then a pot size of \$80 would be treated as a pot size of \$100.
5. In pot-limit hold'em and pot-limit Omaha money games, many structures treat the little blind as if it were the same size of the big blind in computing pot size. In such a structure, a player can open for a maximum of four times the size of the big blind. For example, if the blinds are \$5 and \$10, a player may open with a raise to \$40. (The range of options is to either open with a call of \$10, or raise in increments of five dollars to any amount from \$20 to \$40.) Subsequent players also treat the \$5 as if it were \$10 in computing the pot size, until the big blind is through acting on the first betting round. This rule of treating the little blind as if it were the size of the big blind is especially desirable in a structure where the little blind uses a lower-denomination chip than the big blind, as in using blinds of \$10 and \$25 (two \$5 chips and a \$25 chip). At tournament play, strict pot-limit rules are normally used, so there the maximum opening wager is 3.5 times the size of the big blind.
6. In pot-limit, a player who puts a chip or a bill larger than the pot size into the pot without comment is considered to be making a bet of the pot size (unless he is facing a bet).

## SECTION 15 - TOURNAMENTS

By participating in a tournament, you agree to abide by the rules and behave in a courteous manner. A violator may be verbally warned, suspended from play for a specified length of time, or disqualified from the tournament. Chips from a disqualified participant will be removed from play. Players, whether in the hand or not, may not discuss the hands until the action is complete. Players are obligated to protect the other players in the tournament at all times. Discussing cards discarded or hand possibilities is not allowed. A penalty may be given for discussion of hands during the play.

1. Whenever possible, all rules are the same as those that apply to live games.
2. Initial seating is determined by random draw or assignment. (For a one-table satellite event, cards to determine seating may be left faceup so the earlier entrants can pick their seat, since the button is assigned randomly.)
3. A change of seat is not allowed after play starts, except as assigned by the director.
4. The appropriate starting amount of chips will be placed on the table for each paid entrant at the beginning of the event, whether the person is present or not.
5. If a paid entrant is absent at the start of an event, at some point an effort will be made to locate and contact the player. If the player requests the chips be left in place until arrival, the request will be honored. If the player is unable to be contacted, the chips may be removed from play at the discretion of the director anytime after a new betting level is begun or a half-hour has elapsed, whichever occurs first.
6. A starting stack of chips may be placed in a seat to accommodate late entrants (so all antes and blinds have been appropriately paid). An unsold seat will have such a stack removed at a time left to the discretion of the director.
7. A no-show or absent player is always dealt a hand. That player's stack will post chips for blinds and antes, and have the forced lowcard bet put into the pot at stud.
8. In all tournament games using a dealer button, the starting position of the button is determined by the players drawing for the high card.
9. Limits and blinds are raised at regularly scheduled intervals.
10. If there is a signal designating the end of a betting level, the new limits apply on the next deal. (A deal begins with the first riffle of the shuffle.)

## 15-TOURNAMENTS

11. The lowest denomination of chip in play will be removed from the table when it is no longer needed in the blind or ante structure. All lower-denomination chips that are of sufficient quantity for a new chip will be changed up directly. The method for removal of odd chips is to deal one card to a player for each odd chip possessed. Cards are dealt clockwise starting with the 1-seat, with each player receiving all cards before any cards are dealt to the next player. A player may not be eliminated from the event by the chip-change process. If a player has no chips after the race has been held, he will be given a chip of the higher denomination before anyone else is awarded a chip. Next, the player with the highest card by suit gets enough odd chips to exchange for one new chip, the second-highest card gets to exchange for the next chip, and so forth, until all the lower-denomination chips are exchanged. If an odd number of lower-denomination chips are left after this process, the player with the highest card remaining will receive a new chip if he has half or more of the quantity of lower-denomination chips needed, otherwise nothing.
12. A player must be present at the table to stop the action by calling "time."
13. A player must be at the table by the time all players have their complete starting hands in order to have a live hand for that deal. (The dealer has been instructed to kill the hands of all absent players immediately after dealing each player a starting hand.)
14. As players are eliminated, tables are broken in a pre-set order, with players from the broken tables assigned to empty seats at other tables.
15. In button games, if a player is needed to move from a table to balance tables, the player due for the big blind will be automatically selected to move, and will be given the earliest seat due for the big blind if more than one seat is open.
16. New players to a table as a result of balancing tables are dealt in immediately unless they are in the small blind or button position, where they must wait until the button has passed to the player on their left.
17. The number of players at each table will be kept reasonably balanced by the transfer of a player as needed. With more than six tables, table size will be kept within two players. With six tables or less, table size will be kept within one player.
18. In all events, there is a redraw for seating when the field is reduced to three tables, two tables, and one table. (Redrawing at three tables is not mandatory in small tournaments with only four or five starting tables.)

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19. If a player lacks sufficient chips for a blind or a forced bet, the player is entitled to get action on whatever amount of money is left in his stack. A player who posts a short blind and wins does not need to make up the blind.
20. A player who declares all in and loses the pot, then discovers that one or more chips were hidden, is not entitled to benefit from this. That player is eliminated from the tournament if the opponent had sufficient chips to cover the hidden ones (A rebuy is okay if allowable by the rules of that event). If another deal has not yet started, the director may rule the chips belong to the opponent who won that pot, if that obviously would have happened with the chips out in plain view. If the next deal has started, the discovered chips are removed from the tournament.
21. All players must leave their seat immediately after being eliminated from an event.
22. Showing cards from a live hand during the action injures the rights of other players still competing in an event, who wish to see contestants eliminated. A player in a multihanded pot may not show any cards during a deal. Heads-up, a player may not show any cards unless the event has only two remaining players, or is winner-take-all. If a player deliberately shows a card, the player may be penalized (but his hand will not be ruled dead). Verbally stating one's hand during the play may be penalized.
23. The limitation on the number of raises at limit poker is also applied to heads-up situations (except the last two players in a tournament are exempted from a limitation on raises).
24. At pot-limit and no-limit play, the player must either use a verbal statement giving the amount of the raise or put chips into the pot in a single motion. Otherwise, it is a string bet.
25. Non-tournament chips are not allowed on the table.
26. Higher-denomination chips must be placed where they are easily visible to all other players.
27. All tournament chips must remain visible on the table throughout the event. Chips taken off the table will be removed from the event, and a player doing this may be disqualified.
28. Inappropriate behavior like throwing cards that go off the table may be punished with a penalty such as being dealt out for a length of time or number of hands. A severe infraction such as abusive or disruptive behavior may be punished by eviction from the tournament.
29. The decks is changed only when dealers change, unless a card is damaged.
30. The dealer button remains in position until the appropriate blinds are taken. Players must post all blinds every round. Because of this, last action may be given to the same player for two

## 15-TOURNAMENTS

consecutive hands by the use of a “dead button.” [See “Section 16 – Explanations,” discussion #1, for more information on this rule.]

31. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is on the button. When play becomes heads-up, the player who had the big blind the most recently is given the button, and his opponent is given the big blind.
32. At stud, if a downcard on the initial hand is dealt faceup, a misdeal is called.
33. If a player announces the intent to rebuy before cards are dealt, that player is playing behind and is obligated to make the rebuy.
34. All hands will be turned faceup whenever a player is all-in and betting action is complete.
35. If multiple players go broke on the same hand, the player starting the hand with the larger amount of chips finishes in the higher place for prize money and any other award. Players eliminated on the same deal who start their final hand with an equal amount of chips receive equal prize money, with the best hand on that deal receiving any non-divisible award.
36. Management is not required to rule on any private deals, side bets, or redistribution of the prize pool among finalists.
37. Private agreements by remaining players in an event regarding distribution of the prize pool are not condoned. (However, if such an agreement is made, the director has the option of ensuring that it is carried out by paying those amounts.) Any private agreement that does not include one or more active competitors is improper by definition.
38. A tournament event is expected to be played until completion. A private agreement that removes all prize money from being at stake in the competition is unethical.
39. Management retains the right to cancel any event, or alter it in a manner fair to the players.

## SECTION 16 - EXPLANATIONS

1. The only place in this set of rules that an alternative is mentioned other than in this section is in the method of button and blind placement. That rule (the first rule in “Section 4 – Button and Blind Use”) is repeated in an abbreviated version below for convenience.

“Each round all players must get the button, and meet the total amount of the blind obligations. Either of the following methods of button and blind placement may be used:

- (a) Moving button – The button always moves forward to the next player and the blinds adjust accordingly. There may be more than one big blind.
- (b) Dead button – The big blind is posted by the player due for it, and the small blind and button are positioned accordingly, even if this means the small blind or the button is placed in front of an empty seat, giving a player last action on consecutive hands.”

Poker tradition has a lot to do with the fact that both of these methods are in widespread use, but neither method is superior in all situations. The moving button makes sure no player gets the advantage of last action twice on a round (a big advantage at no-limit or pot-limit play). On the other hand, a player may get to post a blind when on the button, which is more advantageous than posting in front of the button. The moving button creates a situation where two big blinds may be posted on a deal, which speeds up the action. At tournament play this speed-up can be undesirable, as when dealing is being done hand-for-hand to balance the pace of play between two remaining tables. A cardroom may either decide for the sake of simplicity to use only one method, or decide to tailor the method to the game and situation.

2. Most poker rule sets say you have a dead hand at the showdown if you do not have the proper number of cards for that game. At stud, this rule is too strict. An inexperienced player sometimes does not pay sufficient attention to the final card when holding a big hand like a flush or full house (where improvement is neither likely to happen nor be needed), and fails to protect that card. If the dealer erroneously puts that final card into the muck after the player fails to take it in, the rules should give the decision-maker an option to rule such a hand live. Rule 18 in “Section 8 – Seven-card Stud” reads as below:

“A hand with more than seven cards is dead. A hand with less than seven cards at the showdown is dead, except any player missing a seventh card may have the hand ruled live.”

3. This rulebook requires all cash to be changed into chips. In some cardrooms this may be impractical. If the cardroom chooses to allow cash, only \$100 bills should be permitted.

## 16-EXPLANATIONS

4. The rules given for rectifying a holdem situation where the dealer has dealt the flop or another boardcard before all the betting action on a round are inferior, because the dealer is told to not burn a card on a redeal. Since the “no burn” rule is so common, there was no choice but to use it here. It would be better for poker if the rule were changed to always burning a card. Here are these rules (the third rule and fourth rule in “Section 5 – Holdem”).

“If the cards are flopped before the betting is complete, or if the flop contains too many cards, the boardcards are mixed with the remainder of the deck. The burncard remains on the table. After shuffling, the dealer cuts the deck and deals a new flop without burning a card.”

“If the dealer turns the fourth card on the board before the betting round is complete, the card is taken out of play for that round, even if subsequent players elect to fold. The betting is then completed. The dealer burns and turns what would have been the fifth card in the fourth card’s place. After this round of betting, the dealer reshuffles the deck, including the card that was taken out of play, but not including the burncards or discards. The dealer then cuts the deck and turns up the final card without burning a card.

The portion of this rule saying the dealer does not burn a card on the redeal is inferior. It is harder for the dealer to control the card to be dealt if a burn is required. The sentence in the rule should read, “The dealer then cuts the deck, burns a card, and turns the final card.”

The present method for handling a premature dealing on the turn is used to have what would have been the last board-card used on the turn, and not reshuffling the deck until just before the last card is dealt. This method has four-fifths of the boardcards remaining the same, albeit in a different order. It would be better to reshuffle before the turn, preserving the chance of receiving the prematurely dealt card on either of the last two cards, as opposed to cutting that chance in half. The superiority of reshuffling right away is illustrated if the prematurely dealt card makes a gutshot straight-flush for a player.

5. Rule seven in “Section 4 – Button and Blind Use” says, “A new player cannot be dealt in between the big blind and the button. Blinds may not be made up between the big blind and the button. You must wait until the button passes.” This rule is standard practice, but allowing a new player or player making up blinds to come in between the blinds is better (if dealers are trained how to handle the resulting situations), because it gets players eager to join or rejoin the game into action faster.



## 16-EXPLANATIONS

6. Most poker rulebooks follow the usual California practice in multihanded pots at limit poker of allowing a bet and six raises for lowball and draw high. The number of allowable raises for those games is given in this rulebook as a bet and four raises because this cuts down on the effect of collusion between players, and more raises than four are hardly ever needed to define the strength of two hands when another player is calling.
7. Lowball has historically had less stringent demands on the order of cards or acceptability of exposed cards than in most other poker forms. This rulebook follows the modern trend at lowball regarding misdeals of requiring the cards to be dealt facedown and in proper order.
8. At ace-to-five limit lowball, an exposed card rule used less often, but probably a superior rule, is to not let a player take an exposed six or seven (the rule for no-limit ace-to-five lowball). If a player gets to keep only a card that might make a perfect hand, having a card exposed is less advantageous, and the opponent must consider the chance of a perfect hand.
9. At lowball and draw high, some rule sets allow a player to draw five consecutive cards. The rule used here disallowing this makes cheating more difficult. Our rule #10 in lowball and rule #5 in draw high says, "A player may draw up to four consecutive cards. If a player wishes to draw five new cards, four are dealt right away, and the fifth card after everyone else has drawn cards. If the last player wishes to draw five new cards, four are dealt right away, and a card is burned before the player receives a fifth card."

## GLOSSARY

**ACTION:** A fold, check, call, bet, or raise. For certain situations, doing something formally connected with the game that conveys information about your hand may also be considered as having taken action. Examples would be showing your cards at the end of the hand, or indicating the number of cards you are taking at draw.

**AGGRESSIVE ACTION:** A wager that could enable a player to win a pot without a showdown; a bet or raise.

**ALL-IN:** When you have put all of your playable money and chips into the pot during the course of a hand, you are said to be all-in.

**ANTE:** A prescribed amount posted before the start of a hand by all players.

**BET:** (1) The act of making a wager before anyone else on a betting round. (2) The chips used by a player to bet, call, or raise.

**BIG BLIND:** The largest regular blind in a game.

**BLIND:** A required bet made before any cards are dealt.

**BLIND GAME:** A game which utilizes a blind.

**BOARD:** (1) The board on which a waiting list is kept for players wanting seats in specific games. (2) Cards faceup on the table common to each of the hands.

**BOARDCARD:** A community card in the center of the table, as in hold'em or Omaha.

**BOXED CARD:** A card that appears faceup in the deck where all other cards are facedown.

**BROKEN GAME:** A game no longer in action.

**BURNCARD:** After the initial round of cards is dealt, the first card off the deck in each round that is placed under a chip in the pot, for security purposes. To do so is to burn the card; the card itself is called the burncard.

**BUTTON:** A player who is in the designated dealer position. See dealer button.

**BUTTON GAMES:** Games in which a dealer button is used.

**BUY-IN:** The minimum amount of money required to enter any game.

**CALIFORNIA LOWBALL:** Ace-to-five lowball with a joker.

**CARDS SPEAK:** The face value of a hand in a showdown is the true value of the hand, regardless of a verbal announcement.

## GLOSSARY

**CAPPED:** Describes the situation in limit poker in which the maximum number of raises on the betting round have been reached.

**CHECK:** To waive the right to initiate the betting in a round, but to retain the right to act if another player initiates the betting.

**CHECK-RAISE:** To waive the right to bet until a bet has been made by an opponent, and then to increase the bet by at least an equal amount when it is your turn to act.

**COLLECTION:** The fee charged in a game (taken either out of the pot or from each player).

**COLLECTION DROP:** A fee charged for each hand dealt.

**COLOR CHANGE:** A request to change the chips from one denomination to another.

**COMMON CARD:** A card dealt faceup to be used by all players at the showdown in the games of stud poker whenever there are insufficient cards left in the deck to deal each player a card.

**COMMUNITY CARDS:** The cards dealt faceup in the center of the table that can be used by all players to form their best hand in the games of hold'em and Omaha.

**COMPLETE THE BET:** To increase an all-in bet or forced bet to a full bet in limit poker.

**CUT:** To divide the deck into two sections in such a manner as to change the order of the cards.

**CUT-CARD:** Another term for the card used to shield the bottom of the deck.

**DEAD CARD:** A card that is not legally playable.

**DEAD COLLECTION BLIND:** A fee posted by the player having the dealer button, used in some games as an alternative method of seat rental.

**DEAD HAND:** A hand that is not legally playable.

**DEAD MONEY:** Chips that are taken into the center of the pot because they are not considered part of a particular player's bet.

**DEAL:** To give each player cards, or put cards on the board. As used in these rules, each deal refers to the entire process from the shuffling and dealing of cards until the pot is awarded to the winner.

**DEALER BUTTON:** A flat disk that indicates the player who would be in the dealing position for that hand (if there were not a house dealer). Normally just called "the button."

**DEAL OFF:** To take all the blinds and the button before changing seats or leaving the table. That is, participate through all the blind positions and the dealer position.

## GLOSSARY

**DEAL TWICE:** When there is no more betting, agreeing to have the rest of the cards to come determine only half the pot, removing those cards, and dealing again for the other half of the pot.

**DECK:** A set of playing-cards. In these games, the deck consists of either:

(1) 52 cards in seven-card stud, hold'em, and Omaha.

(2) 53 cards (including the joker), often used in ace-to-five lowball and draw high.

**DISCARD(S):** In a draw game, to throw cards out of your hand to make room for replacements, or the card(s) thrown away; the muck.

**DOWNCARDS:** Cards that are dealt facedown in a stud game.

**DRAW:** (1) The poker form where players are given the opportunity to replace cards in the hand. In some places like California, the word "draw" is used referring to draw high, and draw low is called "lowball." (2) The act of replacing cards in the hand. (3) The point in the deal where replacing is done is called "the draw."

**FACECARD:** A king, queen, or jack.

**FIXED LIMIT:** In limit poker, a betting structure where the bet size on each round is pre-set.

**FLASHED CARD:** A card that is partially exposed.

**FLOORPERSON:** A casino employee who seats players and makes decisions.

**FLOP:** In hold'em or Omaha, the three community cards that are turned simultaneously after the first round of betting is complete.

**FLUSH:** A poker hand consisting of five cards of the same suit.

**FOLD:** To throw a hand away and relinquish all interest in a pot.

**FOURTH STREET:** The second upcard in seven-card stud or the first boardcard after the flop in holdem (also called the turn card).

**FOULED HAND:** A dead hand.

**FORCED BET:** A required wager to start the action on the first betting round (the normal way action begins in a stud game).

**FREEROLL:** A chance to win something at no risk or cost.

**FULL BUY:** A buy-in of at least the minimum amount of chips needed for a particular game.

**FULL HOUSE:** A hand consisting of three of a kind and a pair.

## GLOSSARY

**HAND:** (1) All a player's personal cards. (2) The five cards determining the poker ranking. (3) A single poker deal.

**HEADS-UP PLAY:** Only two players involved in play.

**HOLECARDS:** The cards dealt facedown to a player.

**INSURANCE:** A side agreement when someone is all-in for a player in a pot to put up money that guarantees a payoff of a set amount in case the opponent wins the pot.

**JOKER:** The joker is a "partly wild card" in high draw poker and ace-to-five lowball. In high, it is used for aces, straights, and flushes. In lowball, it is the lowest unmatched rank in a hand.

**KANSAS CITY LOWBALL:** A form of draw poker low also known as deuce-to-seven, in which the best hand is 7-5-4-3-2 and straights and flushes count against you.

**KICKER:** The highest unpaired card that helps determine the value of a five-card poker hand.

**KILL (OR KILL BLIND):** An oversize blind, usually twice the size of the big blind and doubling the limit. Sometimes a "half-kill" increasing the blind and limits by fifty percent is used. A kill can be either voluntary or mandatory. The most common requirements of a mandatory kill are for winning two pots in a row, or for scooping a pot in high-low split.

**KILL BUTTON:** A button used in a lowball game to indicate a player who has won two pots in a row and is required to kill the pot.

**KILL POT:** A pot with a forced kill by the winner of the two previous pots, or the winner of an entire pot of sufficient size in a high-low split game. (Some pots can be voluntarily killed.)

**LEG UP:** Being in a situation equivalent to having won the previous pot, and thus liable to have to kill the following pot if you win the current pot.

**LIVE BLIND:** A blind bet giving a player the option of raising if no one else has raised.

**LIST:** The ordered roster of players waiting for a game.

**LOCK-UP:** A chip marker that holds a seat for a player.

**LOWBALL:** A draw game where the lowest hand wins.

**LOWCARD:** At seven-card stud, the lowest upcard, which is required to bet.

**MISCALL:** An incorrect verbal declaration of the ranking of a hand.

**MISDEAL:** A mistake on the dealing of a hand which causes the cards to be reshuffled and a new hand to be dealt.

**MISSED BLIND:** A required bet that is not posted when it is your turn to do so.

## GLOSSARY

**MUCK:** (1) The pile of discards gathered facedown in the center of the table by the dealer. (2) To discard a hand.

**MUST-MOVE:** In order to protect the main game, a situation where the players of a second game must move into the first game as openings occur.

**NO-LIMIT:** A betting structure allowing players to wager any or all of their chips in one bet.

**OPENER:** The player who made the first voluntary bet.

**OPENER BUTTON:** A button used to indicate who opened a particular pot in a draw game.

**OPENERS:** In jacks-or-better draw, the cards held by the player who opens the pot that show the hand qualifies to be opened. Example: You are first to bet and have a pair of kings; the kings are called your openers.

**OPTION:** The choice to raise a bet given to a player with a blind.

**OVERBLIND:** Also called oversize blind. A blind used in some pots that is bigger than the regular big blind, and usually increases the stakes proportionally.

**PASS:** (1) Decline to bet. In a pass-and-out game, this differs from a check, because a player who passes must fold. (2) Decline to call a wager, at which point you must discard your hand and have no further interest in the pot.

**PAT:** Not drawing any cards in a draw game.

**PLAY BEHIND:** Have chips in play that are not in front of you (allowed only when waiting for chips that are already purchased). This differs from table stakes.

**PLAY THE BOARD:** Using all five community cards for your hand in hold'em.

**PLAY OVER:** To play in a seat when the occupant is absent.

**PLAYOVER BOX:** A clear plastic box used to cover and protect the chips of an absent player when someone plays over that seat.

**POSITION:** (1) The relation of a player's seat to the blinds or the button. (2) The order of acting on a betting round or deal.

**POT-LIMIT:** The betting structure of a game in which you are allowed to bet up to the amount of the pot.

**POTTING OUT:** Agreeing with another player to take money out of a pot, often to buy food, cigarettes, or drinks, or to make side bets.

**PROPOSITION BET:** A side bet not related to the outcome of the hand.

## GLOSSARY

**PROTECTED HAND:** A hand of cards that the player is physically holding, or has topped with a chip or some other object to prevent a fouled hand.

**PUSH:** When a new dealer replaces an existing dealer at a particular table.

**PUSHING BETS:** The situation in which two (or more) players make an agreement to return bets to each other when one of them wins a pot in which the other plays. Also called saving bets.

**RACK:** (1) A container in which chips are stored while being transported. (2) A tray in front of the dealer, used to hold chips and cards.

**RAISE:** To increase the amount of a previous wager. This increase must meet certain specifications, depending on the game, to reopen the betting and count toward a limit on the number of raises allowed.

**RERAISE:** To raise someone's raise.

**SAVING BETS:** Same as pushing bets.

**SCOOP:** To win the entire pot in a high-low split game by a wager or showdown.

**SCRAMBLE:** A facedown mixing of the cards.

**SETUP:** Two new decks, each with different colored backs, to replace the current decks.

**SIDE POT:** A separate pot formed when one or more players are all in.

**SHORT BUY:** A buy-in that is less than the required minimum buy-in.

**SHOWDOWN:** The showing of cards to determine the pot-winner after all the betting is over.

**SHUFFLE:** The act of mixing the cards before a hand.

**SMALL BLIND:** In a game with multiple blind bets, the smallest blind.

**SOFTPLAY:** To show favoritism to a particular opponent by checking throughout a deal whenever heads-up. This refusal to bet with a good hand or bluff with a bad hand when facing a certain person, however motivated, is still improper poker behavior. Softplaying is actually a form of collusion, and may be penalized as such.

**SPLIT POT:** A pot that is divided among players, either because of a tie for the best hand or by agreement prior to the showdown.

**SPLITTING BLINDS:** When no one else has entered the pot, an agreement between the big blind and small blind to each take back their blind bets instead of playing the deal (chopping).

**SPLITTING OPENERS:** In high draw jacks-or-better poker, dividing openers in hopes of making a different type of hand (such as breaking aces to draw at a flush).

## GLOSSARY

**STACK:** Chips in front of a player.

**STRADDLE:** An additional blind bet placed after the forced blinds, usually double the big blind in size or in lowball, a multiple blind game.

**STRAIGHT:** Five cards in consecutive rank.

**STRAIGHT FLUSH:** Five cards in consecutive rank of the same suit.

**STREET:** Cards dealt on a particular round in stud games. For instance, the fourth card in a player's hand is often known as fourth street, the sixth card as sixth street, and so on.

**STRING RAISE:** A wager made in more than one motion, without announcing a raise before going back to your stack for more chips (not allowed).

**STUB:** The portion of the deck which has not been dealt.

**SUPERVISOR:** A cardroom employee qualified to make rulings, such as a floorperson, shift supervisor, or the cardroom manager.

**TABLE STAKES:** (1) The amount of money you have on the table. This is the maximum amount that you can win or lose on a hand. (2) The requirement that players can wager only the money in front of them at the start of a hand, and can only buy more chips between hands.

**“TIME”:** An expression used to stop the action on a hand. Equivalent to “Hold it.”

**TIME COLLECTION:** A fee for a seat rental, paid in advance.

**TURNCARD:** The fourth board-card in hold'em or Omaha.

**UPCARDS:** Cards that are dealt faceup for opponents to see in stud games.

**WAGER:** (1) To bet or raise. (2) The chips used for betting or raising.



**CHANGES MADE BY THIS CARDROOM**