

Poker Rules

Friday Night Poker Club

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Please note: This document assumes the reader has no knowledge of Poker or its rules.

General Rules

Basic Terms

Ante – The amount required to be paid into the pot by each player to play a game. Any player may decide to not ante, and they sit out of that game.

Bet – The amount placed into the pot indicating that a player wishes to continue playing. The current bet is equal to the total of all the raises in the current round.

Call – To pay up to the current bet and not raise.

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.

Cut – To split the deck in two, placing the bottom part of the deck on top.

Discard – To throw away unwanted cards.

Flop – A number of common cards played face up in the middle of the table. Players then use the cards in the flop, and the cards in their hand to make the best five card hand they can.

Fold – You do not wish to continue in the current game. You take no further part in this game, and lose all monies that you have bet. To indicate that you Fold you place all your card face down in front of the dealer and clearly state that you are folding.

Highball – The aim of the game is to get the best possible poker hand. Most Poker games are Highball games.

Lowball – The aim of the game is not to get the best possible hand, but the worst possible hand. In these games an Ace is considered high in most cases. The worst possible hand is 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 or more than one suit. Some games play both Highball and Lowball, meaning there can be more than one winner.

Maximum Raise – The largest amount a bet can be raised by once.

Minimum Bet – The lowest amount (except for a check bet) that can be bet.

Pot – The total monies (ante plus all bets) in the centre of the table. The winner of the current game takes the pot. In some game the pot is shared by multiple winners.

Pot Limit – The largest the pot can grow to before the game is stopped.

Raise – To increase the amount of a previous bet.

Rank – The numerical value of the card. In most Poker games rank from lowest to highest is: 2 (aka Deuce), 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace. Some games and some hands state the Ace is lower than the deuce, with the King being the highest rank.

Suit – The symbol on the card, indicating which “family” it belongs to. These are Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs and Spades. In most Poker game Suit has no bearing on game, with two cards of equal rank and different suit being equal.

Wild – A Wild card is a card that is declared to be whatever the player of that card wishes it to be. In all games that involve the Joker, the Joker is Wild.

Basic Game Mechanics

Seating is determined by each player cutting the deck and drawing the top card. Lowest card chooses their seat first, with the highest player sitting last (Ace is considered high).

If multiple players draw the same rank, then they are seated at that position, with a redraw of cards to determine who sits first amongst them.

Deal starts with the drawer of the highest card, and then proceeds to his left after each game. Dealer chooses which game is played.

For each game, dealer states the game, and any variations on the basic rules. Every player who wishes to play they place an amount of chips equalling the ante into the pot.

Unless declared otherwise (in these rules or by the dealer), all games are an ante of one chip, a minimum bet of one chip, maximum raise of five chips, and no pot limit.

The dealer shuffles the deck, and then offers the deck to the player on his left. This player has the option of cutting the deck. If this player cuts the deck, then the player on his left also has the option of cutting the deck. This continues until a player does not wish to cut the deck, and then the dealer receives the deck back and begins play with the deck as is.

Order of Hands

From highest to lowest, the poker hands are:

0. Five of a Kind: Five cards of the same rank. Due to the fact there are only four of each rank in a standard deck, this hand is only legal in games using wild cards, or more than one deck. Higher rank beats lower rank.
1. Royal Flush: Ace, King, Queen, Jack and Ten of any one suit. All four Royal Flushes are considered equal, with no suit considered better than any other.
2. Straight Flush: Any five card sequence (eg 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) in the same suit. In a Straight Flush Aces can be considered high (making a Royal Flush) or low (Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5) in which case the 5 is considered the highest card. Highest card determines the better Straight Flush.
3. Four of a Kind: Four cards of the same Rank and another card. The four matching cards determine the higher Four of a Kind, and if multiple players have the same four (only possible with wild cards or more than one deck) then the fifth card determines the better hand.
4. Full House (aka A Boat): Three cards of one rank, and two cards of another rank. The three cards determine the higher Full House, and if multiple players have the same three cards (again, only possible with wild cards or more than one deck) then the other two determine the higher Full House.
5. Flush: Any five cards of the same suit, but not in sequence. The highest card is used to determine the higher Flush, then the second highest, then the third highest, etc. Suit does not determine highest Flush.
6. Straight: Any five card sequence (eg 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) not in the same suit. In a Straight Aces can be considered high (10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace) or low (Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5) in which case the 5 is considered the highest card. Highest card determines the better Straight.
7. Three of a Kind: Any three cards of the same Rank, and any other two cards that are not a pair.
8. Two Pair: Any two pairs of cards of the same Rank, and any one other card.
9. Pair: Any two cards of the same Rank, and any other three cards that do not have the same rank.

10. High Card: Any five cards of different Ranks, that do not make a Straight or a Flush. The highest card is used to determine the higher Flush, then the second highest, then the third highest, etc.

If two players have exactly the same hand of five cards, then the hand is considered a tie and the tied players split the pot. In games where players have more than five cards, only the best five cards are used. In games where there are less than five cards (and yes, it is possible) as many cards as the player has is used.

Please Note: All Poker games are considered to be “Cards Speak” games. This means that the hand is considered to be the best that it can be (or worst in the case of Lowball games), and not what the player declares. This means that if the player states they have a pair, and there is in fact a Royal Flush hiding in it, any person who sees this must declare it, and the hand is a Royal Flush, and not the declared pair.

The Three Basic Games

Five Card Draw

The Dealer deals one card at a time, face down, to each player around the table, beginning on the Dealer's left. The dealer continues dealing the cards until each player has 5 cards, all face down.

Players pick up their cards and assess their hand. The player to the Dealer's left opens the betting round by either placing a Bet, indicating a Check by placing no bet, or Folding by discarding their hand.

The next player to the left now can Call (match the existing bet), Raise (match the existing bet, and then add more) or Fold. The betting then moves to the next player on the left, then the next, and so on back to and including the Dealer. Betting continues until every remaining player has matched the bet without anyone else raising it.

Players may now discard any or all of their cards based on their hopes of building a better hand. Cards are discarded face down and collected by the Dealer.

Starting with the first active player to the dealers left, the required number of cards are dealt face down. This continues around the table until all players (including the dealer) have received their cards.

There is then a final round of betting. The player on the Dealer's left begins the betting and the betting proceeds around the table following the same basic rules as above.

Finally once betting is finished there is the showdown. The last player to raise shows his hand to all the remaining players. The other remaining players, beginning with the player to the left then have the option of revealing their hand. The highest revealed hand wins.

If multiple people have the same hand, then the pot is split amongst all the high hands.

Seven Card Stud

The dealer deals one card at a time around the table two face down cards and one face up card to each player. The face up cards must remain on the table, visible to all. The face down cards can only be seen by the player, until the Showdown.

At this point the dealer indicates which player will open the betting, determined by the lowest face up card. If there's a tie for low then the lowest face up to the left of the dealer goes first.

Once the initial cards have been dealt, the game begins. At this point we've got three cards on the table per player and that's called *Third Street*.

The player holding the lowest face up card opens the betting round by either placing a Bet, indicating a Check by placing no bet, or Folding by discarding their hand.

The next player to the left now can Call (match the existing bet), Raise (match the existing bet, and then add more) or Fold. The betting then moves to the next player on the left, then the next, and so on back to and including the Dealer. Betting continues until every remaining player has matched the bet without anyone else raising it.

The dealer gives each player another face up card. This is *Forth Street*. The betting starts with the player with the highest two cards. If two players tie for highest then the highest to the left of the dealer goes first.

This is repeated twice more, for *Fifth Street* and *Sixth Street*.

A final card is dealt face down (*The River*) and a final round of betting occurs.

Finally once betting is finished there is the showdown. The last player to raise shows his hand to all the remaining players. The other remaining players, beginning with the player to the left then have the option of revealing their hand. The highest revealed hand wins.

If multiple people have the same hand, then the pot is split amongst all the high hands.

Texas Holdem

The dealer deals two cards face down to each player.

Players pick up their cards and assess their hand. The player to the Dealer's left opens the betting round by either placing a Bet, indicating a Check by placing no bet, or Folding by discarding their hand.

The next player to the left now can Call (match the existing bet), Raise (match the existing bet, and then add more) or Fold. The betting then moves to the next player on the left, then the next, and so on back to and including the Dealer. Betting continues until every remaining player has matched the bet without anyone else raising it.

The dealer then deals three cards face up to the centre of the table. This is called *The Flop*. These cards are community cards and are used by all players.

A second round of betting occurs.

A fourth card is dealt face up in the centre of the table.

A third round of betting occurs.

A fifth and final card is dealt face up to the centre of the table.

A final round of betting occurs.

The aim of Texas Holdem is to get the best five cards you can from the two cards you have and the five community cards in the centre of the table. This can be two and three, one and four, or all five community cards.

Finally once betting is finished there is the showdown. The last player to raise shows his hand to all the remaining players. The other remaining players, beginning with the player to the left then have the option of revealing their hand. The highest revealed hand wins.

If multiple people have the same hand, then the pot is split amongst all the high hands.

Variations on the Basic Games

Oklahoma (Draw variation)

Each player is initially dealt seven cards. After a round of betting, each player passes three cards away, two to the player on his left, and one to the player on his right.

After another round of betting there is a draw phase, with a maximum draw of four cards.

After a final round of betting there is the showdown.

Psycho (Five Card Draw variation)

Game plays as per normal five card draw (deal, bet, discard and replace, bet) until the showdown. Instead of the showdown all players place three cards face up and two face down on the table.

The game then continues as for a seven card stud game (deal face up, bet, deal face down, bet, and showdown).

Whiskey Poker (Five Card Draw variation)

Five cards are dealt face down to each player, plus an additional hand is dealt in the centre of the table after the dealer. The game continues in three phases. Please note, no betting occurs in this game until phase three.

Players pick up their cards and assess their hand. The player to the Dealer's left has two options. If satisfied with his hand he may pass the play to the next player, or he may swap his hand completely with the hand in the middle.

If he does not swap then the next player has the same option, and so on around the table.

If a player swaps his hand, his old hand is placed in the centre of the table face up. If the play gets back to the dealer without anyone swapping and the dealer passes as well, then the hand in the middle gets turned up. This is the end of phase one.

From this point each player has four options:

- Pass – Play passes to the player on their left, and they do nothing. A single player may only pass twice in a row. If a player passes twice in a row, and the play gets back to them without anyone knocking, then that player must either swap or knock.
- Swap a single card – Take a single card from his hand and place it in the centre face up, and retrieve a replacement card.
- Swap his entire hand – Place his entire hand face up in the centre and retrieve the cards that were there.
- Knock.

When a player knocks, it ends phase two. From this point each remaining player except the person who knocked has one more chance to Pass, Swap or Fold, with a round of betting between each. Each round of betting begins with the person whose turn it is to Pass, Swap or Fold, or if they folded, then the person who knocked.

Once the last round of betting is complete, the person who knocked must show their cards. If the knocker folded during the betting then the last person to raise must reveal. The other remaining players, beginning with the player to the left then have the option of revealing their hand. The highest revealed hand wins.

If multiple people have the same hand, then the pot is split amongst all the high hands.

Please note: The person who knocked *does not* get a chance to change their hand, and are stuck with the cards they had when they knocked. Also, with eight players, there are nine hands of five cards in play, for a total of 45 cards. There are only 52 cards in a normal deck of cards, so almost all the cards will be in play.

Baseball (Seven Card Stud variation)

Game is played as per normal seven card stud, except for three ranks.

All nines are considered wilds, whether face up or face down (nine innings to a game).

All fours dealt face up immediately get another card dealt (four balls for a walk). This will mean that some players will end up with more than seven cards.

All three's dealt face down are wild (three strikes and you're out).

A three dealt face up is considered wild if the player chooses to pay an amount equal to the current value of the pot. A paid for three is placed side on to all the other cards to indicate it's paid status, and is considered to be a natural card, and is exempt from the usual Wild rules. A face up three that is not paid for is considered to be a three. (Three out and change sides).

Standard betting rounds apply as per Seven Card Stud.

Black Bitch (Seven Card Stud variation)

As per normal Seven Card Stud rules except for one card.

If the Queen of Spades (The Black Bitch) is dealt face up then the game is declared a miss-deal, all cards return to the dealer and are reshuffled, and each player must re-ante. All chips in the pot remain in the pot.

The game then begins again.

If the Queen of spades is dealt face down to any player, then that player automatically receives a share of the pot at the end of the game as long as they do not fold.

Mexican Stud (Seven Card Stud variation)

As per normal Seven Card Stud rules except all cards are dealt face down. At the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Street, each player must turn face up one of the face down cards in their hand, their choice.

This means that at The River, each player will have three cards face down, and four cards face up, as per normal Seven Card Stud.

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly (Seven Card Stud variation)

As per normal Seven Card Stud rules except for three additional cards.

At Fourth Street an additional card is dealt face up in the centre of that table. This card is *The Good*. All cards of matching rank with it are wild.

At Fifth Street an additional card is dealt face up in the centre of the table. This card is *The Bad*. All cards of matching rank with it must be discarded. This means that some people will be playing with less than seven cards at the showdown.

At Sixth Street an additional card is dealt face up in the centre of the table. This card is *The Ugly*. Any player with a card matching its rank must fold immediately. This is also true for those dealt a matching card during the River.

Omaha Holdem (Texas Holdem variation)

As per Texas Holdem, except that four cards are dealt face down to each player, and the final hands must be composed of two of your cards and three community cards/

Other Games

Not all games played at the poker table are based around poker. Some others (that don't require the use of a dedicated house) are given here.

Double-Guts (aka Zany Death Double-Guts)

Each player places his ante in the pot. If there is an odd total pot, the dealer is required to add an additional chip to make it even.

Each player is then dealt three cards face down.

To win, a player must either have the best pair of cards (a pair of Aces is highest, followed by a pair of Kings, a pair of Queens, etc) or the worst pair of cards (a two and a three is the worst, followed by a two and a four, then a three and a four, etc).

Starting with the player to the left of the dealer in the first round, and the player to the left of the last person who started in all subsequent rounds, each player must declare whether they are in (they believe they have the best or worst two cards) or out.

There are three options at this point.

If no one goes in the cards are all gathered, shuffled and the next round begins.

If only one person goes in, then each person other than the one who went in has the option to change his mind, starting with the same person who began that round. If no one else goes in, then the one person who went in wins the entire pot, and the game is over.

If two or more people are in, then they've got to show some guts!

Each of these people must decide whether they are going high (best two cards) or low (worst two cards). They then take a chip under the table and either hide it in their hand (to indicate they are going high) or not (to indicate going low). All players in then place their hands in the centre of the table and reveal simultaneously.

If a *single player* that declared high has the highest two cards, he takes a share of the pot.

If a *single player* that declared low has the lowest two cards, he takes a share of the pot.

All players that declared and did not get a share of the pot must place in the pot twice the previous value of the pot.

Please note that this is one of the few games where "Cards Speak" does not apply. If a player has declared high, then it is the highest two cards that count. If a player has declared low, then it is the lowest two cards that count.

The game continues until one of two things occurs. The first option is that a round ends with no money in the pot. This will occur if in a round there were no losers, only winners.

The second option is that the pot limit is reached. If the total pot (after a round) is equal to two thousand chips or greater the game ends, and the total pot is split between all players. Any chips that can't be split evenly go to the dealer.

Indian Poker

Indian Poker is a very silly game. Each player antes, and is then dealt one card that they are not allowed to look at.

Each player then takes that card and places it on their forehead, face out so that everyone else can see.

There is then a single round of betting on whether you have the highest card (even though you can not see your own card).

Players who fold may look at their own card.

If multiple players remain with the highest card, the pot is split.

Screw Your Neighbour

Unlike most games, Ace is considered the lowest card, with Kings being high, also there is no ante. Instead the dealer states the stakes. Each player then places three piles of the stakes in front of him. These are their lives.

Each player is then dealt one card. Starting from the player to the dealers left, they have the option of sitting (keeping the card they have) or swapping with the person to their left.

The aim of each round is to not have the lowest or equal lowest card on the table.

If a player swaps with the player to his left, there is nothing the other player can do to stop it unless they have a King. If they have a King they turn it face up as the swap is attempted, and the swap is foiled.

This continues around to the dealer, and if the dealer wishes to swap (most likely) then he places the card he has face up on the table, and then places the top card of the deck on top of it. All cards are then revealed, and the person or people with the lowest cards each loose a life which is placed into the pot.

If a player looses his last life, then they are out for the rest of the game.

The cards are not shuffled between each round, and cards are instead dealt off the top of the deck until the deck runs out of cards. Then all cards not in use are shuffled, and the game continues.

This continues until it is down to two players.

When there are only two players left, the rules change slightly. To make sure the second player doesn't get an advantage, they are not allowed to see the card they receive until the first player has decided whether to sit or swap. If the first player sits, they can look at their card. If the first player swaps, they can look at the card the first player had, and then decide whether to sit or swap themselves.

Please note that a King will automatically block a swap, so if the first player swaps and receives a King from the second, the two cards must be swapped back, and the second player wins that round.

If both players are on a single life remaining, and both reveal the same ranked card, then both players lose. All players then place three more lives in front of them and continue.

Special Rules

Wilds

Under normal circumstances, a hand can not have more Wilds than normal cards to match against. For example, a hand of Ace Hearts, King Hearts and three wilds is two pair (two Aces and two Kings) and another card, and not a Royal Flush in Hearts. However Ace Hearts, King Hearts, Queen Hearts and two wilds is a Royal Flush of Hearts.

Running out of chips

If a player runs out of chips during a game there are two options.

If all remaining players agree, the betting stops at that point (and anyone who has already bet more removes any excess they have bet) and the game is determined at that point.

However, if all players don't agree, or there are further rounds of betting to go, then the pot is split into two. All betting that matches the amount that was placed in by the player with no more chips goes into the original pot. All betting excess to that (including any already bet) goes into a second pot.

From this point on, the player without any money has two options in betting, they may fold, or call. If they call, they don't place any further chips in the pot.

At the end of the game, if the player who ran out of chips wins, they only receive chips from the pot they contributed to. The player with the second best hand wins the rest. If the pot is shared by a number of players including the player who ran out of chips, then the player receives an equal share, except if that share would be greater than the pot they contributed to.

If the player who ran out of chips did not win, they are out of luck, as well as chips.

Changing Chips

There is no bank in this game, and as a result anyone requiring change will need to do it amongst the other players between games.

Only with the agreement of all remaining players in a game can a player get change during a game.

All bets must be done with whole chips, and change can not be taken from the pot.

Running out of cards

If the situation arises where the deck does not have enough cards there are two options.

Firstly, the deck is used until a player is reached who would not be able to get all cards they need. At this point all discards are gathered, with the remainder of the deck, reshuffled and recut as per the normal rules, and play continues.

If there are still not enough cards to continue, then all remaining players use a common flop of the remaining cards.