

ROBERT'S RULES OF POKER

Condensed Hold'em Version

HomePokerTourney.com

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 anyone who violates it. The following is not permitted:

1. Collusion with another player or any other form of cheating.
2. Verbally or physically threatening any patron or employee.
3. Using profanity or obscene language.
4. Creating a disturbance by arguing, shouting, or making excessive noise.
5. Throwing, tearing, bending, or crumpling cards.
6. Destroying or defacing property.
7. Using an illegal substance.
8. Carrying a weapon.

POKER ETIQUETTE

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

1. Deliberately acting out of turn.
2. Deliberately splashing chips into the pot.
3. Agreeing to check a hand out when a third player is all-in.
4. Reading a hand for another player at the showdown before it has been placed faceup on the table.
5. Telling anyone to turn a hand faceup at the showdown.
6. Revealing the contents of a live hand in a multihanded pot before the betting is complete.
7. Needlessly stalling the action of a game.
8. 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).
9. Stacking chips in a manner that interferes with dealing or viewing cards.
10. Making statements or taking action that could unfairly influence the course of play, whether or not the offender is involved in the pot.
11. Using a cell phone at the table.

TOBACCO USE

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

1. The seat on each side of the dealer is a nonsmoking seat.
2. Cigar or pipe smoking is not allowed in the cardroom.
3. 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 an error or irregularity 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, but the time limit for a ruling request given in the previous rule has been complied with, 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 for a short period. The delay could be needed to check the overhead camera tape, get the shift supervisor to give the ruling, or some other good reason. In such circumstances, a pot or portion thereof 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.

PROCEDURES

1. Management will decide when to start or close any game.
2. 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 the first hand. 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.
3. Cash is not permitted on the table. All cash should be changed into chips in order to play. If a player appears unaware of this rule and attempts 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 establishment are not permitted on the table, do not play in the game, and if discovered will be treated similarly to unnoticed cash. [See Section 16 – “Explanations,” discussion #5, for more information on this rule.]
4. 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.
5. All games are table stakes (except “playing behind” as given in the next rule). All chips and money must be kept in plain view. Chips may be removed for security purposes when leaving the table, but must be fully restored upon return. 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.

6. "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.
7. Playing out of a rack is not allowed.
8. Only one person may play a hand.
9. No one is allowed to play another player's chips.
10. Permission is required before taking a seat in a game.
11. Playing over without permission from the floorperson is not allowed. A playover box is required. Permission from the absent player is not necessary.
12. Pushing bets ("saving" or "potting out") is not allowed.
13. Pushing an ante or posting for another person is not allowed.
14. 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.
15. Insurance propositions are not allowed. Dealing twice (or three times) when all-in is permitted at big-bet poker.
16. The game's betting limit will not be changed if two or more players object. Raising the limit is subject to management approval.
17. 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.
18. Any player is entitled to a clear view of an opponent's chips. Higher denomination chips should be easily visible.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. Looking through the discards or deck stub is not allowed.
23. After a deal ends, dealers are asked to not show what card would have been dealt.
24. 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.
25. A non-player may not sit at the table.
26. 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.
27. Speaking a foreign language during a deal is not allowed.

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. 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, as to assist in ease of reading the board for a person with a vision problem, or some other good reason.
8. To avoid a seating dispute, a supervisor may decide to start the game with one extra player over the normal number participating. If so, a seat will be removed as soon as someone quits the game.
9. In order 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 may not play in the must-move game or get on that list for one hour.
10. You must play in a new game or must-move game to retain your place on the list, if by your playing there would be three or fewer empty seats.
11. 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.
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 floorperson draws 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 for that particular game. A full buy-in at limit poker 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 who is forced to transfer 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.

MISDEALS

1. The following circumstances cause a misdeal, provided attention is called to the error before two players have acted on their hands. (If two players have acted in turn, the deal must be played to conclusion, as explained in rule #2)
 - (a) The first or second card of the hand has been dealt faceup or exposed through 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.
2. Action is considered to occur in stud games when two players after the forced bet have acted on their hands. In button games, action is considered to occur when two players after the blinds have acted on their hands. Once action occurs, a misdeal can no longer be declared. The hand will be played to conclusion and no money will be returned to any player whose hand is fouled.

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 at management's discretion if doing so is in the best interest of the game. We will make an extra effort to rule a hand retrievable if it was folded as a result of false 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.
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 a card on the floor out of your hand, you must still play that card.
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.

BETTING AND RAISING

1. Check-raise is permitted in all games, except in certain forms of lowball.
2. In no-limit and pot-limit games, unlimited raising is allowed.
3. 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.]
4. Unlimited raising is allowed in heads-up play. 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.
5. 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 facing 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 is on a \$20 betting round, raising a \$15 all-in bet to \$35).
6. Any wager must be at least the size of the previous bet or raise in that round, unless a player is going all-in.
7. 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.
8. A verbal statement denotes your action and is binding. If in turn you verbally declare a fold, check, bet, call, or raise, you are forced to take that action.
9. Rapping the table with your hand is a pass.
10. 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. An action or verbal declaration out of turn may be ruled binding if there is no bet, call, or raise by an intervening player acting after the infraction has been committed.
11. 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.
12. A player who bets or calls by releasing chips into the pot is bound by that action. 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.

13. 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.
14. String raises are not allowed. 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. A player must show all cards in the hand face-up on the table to win any part of the pot.
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 us 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 has been called, 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. If you show cards to an active player during a deal, any player at the table has the right to see those exposed cards. Cards shown during or after a deal to a player not in the pot should be shown to all players when the deal is finished.
7. 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 is a side pot, players involved in the side pot should show their hands before anyone who is all-in for only the main pot.

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 after the first betting round. The button moves 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 the structure of a game or the situation requires part or all of a particular blind to be "dead." Dead chips are not part of a player's bet. With two blinds, the small blind is posted by the player immediately clockwise from the button, and the big blind is posted by the player two positions clockwise from the button. With more than two blinds, the little blind is normally left of the button (not on it). Action is initiated on the first betting round by the first player to the left of the blinds. On all subsequent betting rounds, the action begins with the first active player to the left of the button.

RULES FOR USING BLINDS

1. 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.]

2. A player who posts a blind has the option of raising the pot at the first turn to act. (This does not apply when a "dead blind" for the collection is used in a game and has been posted).
3. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is on the button.
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.)
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 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 #3, for more information on this rule.]
8. When you post the big blind, it serves as your opening bet. When it is your next turn to act, you have the option to raise.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.)
12. 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.
13. 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 move closer to the big blind, you can be dealt in without any penalty. 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.)
14. 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.
15. A live "straddle bet" is not allowed at limit poker except in specified games.

SECTION 5 - HOLD'EM

In hold'em, 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 community cards, 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 first or second holecard dealt 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 flop contains too many cards, it must be redealt. (This applies even if it were possible to know which card was the extra one.)
3. If the flop needs to be redealt because the cards were prematurely flopped before the betting was complete, or the flop contained 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. [See "Section 16 – Explanations," discussion #2, for more information on this rule.]
4. 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 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 #2, for more information on this rule.]
5. 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.
6. You must declare that you are playing the board before you throw your cards away; otherwise you relinquish all claim to the pot.

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).
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. 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. All bets must be at least equal to the minimum bring-in, unless the player is going all-in. (A straddle bet sets a new minimum bring-in, and is not treated as a raise.)
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. A player who has already checked or called may not subsequently raise an all-in bet that is 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.)
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.)
4. 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.
5. A wager is not binding until the chips are actually released into the pot, unless the player has made a verbal statement of action.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 needs some protection. 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.
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.)
9. 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.)
10. 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. (This does not apply to a player who has unintentionally put too much in to call.) The wager is brought up to the sufficient amount only, no greater size.

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. The cardroom does not condone "insurance" or any other "proposition" wagers. The management will decline 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.

POT-LIMIT RULES

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. 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.
5. 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.
6. In pot-limit hold'em and pot-limit Omaha, 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.
7. In pot-limit, if a chip or a bill larger than the pot size is put into the pot without comment, it is considered to be a bet of the pot size.

SECTION 15 - TOURNAMENTS

By participating in any 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.

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. 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. Absent players will be dealt in, and all chips necessary for antes and blinds will be put into the pot.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Limits and blinds are raised at regularly scheduled intervals.
7. 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.)
8. 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. 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. 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. 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.
9. An absent player is always dealt a hand, and will be put up for blinds, antes, and the forced bet if low.
10. A player must be present at the table to stop the action by calling "time."
11. 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.)
12. 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.
13. A change of seat is not allowed after play starts, except as assigned by the director.

14. 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.
15. New players are dealt in immediately and take over the obligations of that position, including the small blind or button position.
16. 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.
17. 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.)
18. 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.
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 remains. A player who posts a short blind and wins does not need to make up the blind.
20. All players must leave their seat immediately after being eliminated from an event.
21. 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 may not show any cards during a deal (unless the event has only two remaining players). 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.
22. The limit on raises is also applied to heads-up situations (except the last two players in a tournament are exempted from a limitation on raises).
23. At pot-limit and no-limit play, the player must either use a verbal statement giving the amount of the raise or put the chips into the pot in a single motion. Otherwise, it is a string bet.
24. Non-tournament chips are not allowed on the table.
25. Higher-denomination chips must be placed where they are easily visible to all other players at the table.
26. All tournament chips must remain visible on the table throughout the event. Chips taken off the table or pocketed will be removed from the event, and a player who is caught doing this may be disqualified.
27. 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. A severe infraction such as abusive or disruptive behavior may be punished by eviction from the tournament.
28. The deck is not changed on request. Decks change when the dealers change, unless there is a damaged card.
29. In all tournament games using a dealer button, the starting position of the button is determined by the players drawing for the high card.
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 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.
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 two (or more) players go broke during the same hand, the player starting the hand with the larger amount of money finishes in the higher tournament place for prize money and any other 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 excludes 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.

ROBERT'S RULES OF POKER

VERSION 4

"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 author has strongly supported uniform poker rules, and applauds the work done in this direction by the Tournament Director's Association (TDA). 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.

CHANGES MADE BY THIS CARDROOM

Here are the amendments, additions, and clarifications to these rules made by our cardroom.

April 2004 by HomePokerTourney.com

Converted document to pdf format.

Inserted bookmarks throughout.

Moved the Title Page to the end of the document.

Removed the Table of Contents, Sections 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Explanations and Glossary.

Condensed the type.

Removed the page numbers.