

# World Series of Poker® Rules and Tips

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## Playing Texas Hold 'Em

Texas Hold 'Em is one of the most popular poker

games. Players use their two "pocket" cards (face-down cards) along with five community cards to make the best five-card poker hand. The player

with the best five cards wins the hand. Hands are played until one player has all the chips.

There are three main versions of Texas Hold 'Em: limits, pot limit, or no limit. The play of the game is the same in all three, except for the rules governing betting.

### The Limits Game

In Limits Texas Hold 'Em, limits set the amount of the bet in each round. During the first and second betting rounds, the lower limit is used. The upper limit is used in the third and fourth betting rounds. If the limit was "10-20," \$10 would be the

bet amount in betting rounds one and two, and \$20 would be the bet amount in betting rounds three and four. Typical limits are 10-20, 20-40, 50-100 and 100-200—although you can choose any limits you wish.

### The Pot Limits Game

In Pot Limit Texas Hold 'Em, the maximum allowable raise is the size of the pot. The size of the pot is defined as the total of the pot in the middle, plus all bets on the table—plus the amount the active player must first call before raising. The minimum allowable raise is the amount of the previous bet or raise. For example, if the first

player to act bets \$100, then the second player must raise a minimum of \$100 (a total bet of \$200).

## The No-Limit Game

In No-Limit Texas Hold 'Em, the maximum allowable bet or raise is the amount you have on the table. The minimum allowable raise is the amount of the previous bet or raise. For example, if the first player to act bets \$100, then the second player must raise a minimum of \$100 (a total bet of \$200).

## Blinds

Blinds are advanced bets automatically placed

for two players in each hand. The blinds rotate to the left with each hand. The blind is applied to a player's first bet or raise. If that player folds, he forfeits the blind, plus anything else he put in the pot. Blinds are bets and not antes. When it is the turn of a player who posted a blind, he may use the blind as all or part of his bet/raise. If he folds, he loses the blind plus anything else he put in the pot.

All blinds must be posted before play begins. There are two required blinds for each hand.

The small blind is equal to one-half the lower betting limit. The small blind is posted by the first play-

er to the dealer's left.

The big blind is equal to the lower betting limit. The big blind is posted by the second player to the dealer's left. If there are only two players, the dealer posts the big blind.

There may be one or more additional big blinds. Each new player is required to post the big blind for his first hand, and may use the blind as all or part of his bet. If he folds, he loses the blind.

Once all of the blinds have been posted, play begins.

## Playing the Game

Texas Hold 'Em is dealt

in four stages or rounds. Before dealing each round, the dealer normally discards the top card into a pile of unused cards. This eliminates the possibility of using a card someone has been able to see. Dealing a card to the pile of unused cards is called "burning" the top card.

One card is dealt to each player. The player with the high card deals the first hand. If more than one player has the high card, the first player to receive the high card deals. The deal is passed to the left with each new hand.

## First Betting

**Round-** The dealer deals two cards to each

player. The player to the left of the small blind plays first. The limit is the lower limit for betting in round one. The player can FOLD, CALL or RAISE. Play continues around the table to the left.

### **Second Betting**

**Round-** Once the bets are even, three cards are dealt face-up to the table (the flop), and the second betting round begins. The big blind plays first. The limit is the lower limit for round two. The player can FOLD, CHECK or BET. Play continues around the table to the left.

### **Third Betting**

**Round-** Once the bets are even, one card is dealt face-up to the table (the

turn), and the third betting round begins. The big blind plays first. The limit is the upper limit for round three. The player can FOLD, CHECK or BET. Play continues around the table to the left.

### **Fourth Betting**

**Round-** Once the bets are even, one card is dealt face-up to the table (the river), and the fourth betting round begins. The big blind plays first. The limit is the upper limit for round four. The player can FOLD, CHECK or BET. Play continues around the table to the left.

### **The Showdown-**

Once the bets are even, the showdown occurs. The last player to bet or raise

reveals his cards first, then the player to his left, and so on, until all hands have been revealed. Players use the best five cards from

their two pocket cards and the five community cards, in any combination. The highest hand wins the game.

## **Ranking of the Hands**

- 1. Royal Flush:** Ten, Jack, Queen, King, Ace of the same suit.
- 2. Straight Flush:** Straight (see #6 below) with all five cards in the same suit.
- 3. Four of a Kind:** Four cards of the same rank.
- 4. Full House:** Three of a kind plus a pair.
- 5. Flush:** Five cards of the same suit. If there is more than one flush, the hand with the highest card(s) wins.
- 6. Straight:** Five cards in sequence. Cards can be in any suit. An Ace can be used in the highest straight (10, J, Q, K, A) and the lowest straight (A, 2, 3, 4, 5).
- 7. Three of a Kind:** Three cards of the same rank.
- 8. Two Pair:** Two cards of the same rank plus two other cards of a different rank.
- 9. One Pair:** Two cards of the same rank.
- 10. High Card(s):** The highest card or cards.

## TIPS

1. If you are dealt strong pocket cards, bet and raise, if possible, before the flop. This grows the pot and encourages weak hands to fold. There is nothing more frustrating than getting burned by someone who should have folded but was given a free ride.

2. If you are dealt low cards of different suits that are unconnected, fold the hand unless it is very cheap to stay in.

3. Don't get too excited if you have a good hand using cards in the flop. Remember that there are probably other good hands using those same cards.

4. If you are dealt a low pair, be careful. Fold the hand unless it is very cheap to stay in.

5. Bet if the flop is unpromising and you have an ace. Be careful, however, if someone raises.

6. Watch for straight and flush possibilities. The use of community cards makes these hands more frequent.

7. Consider all the possibilities of your hand, but don't waste time and money on long shots.

8. Learn to spot the signs of bluffing. A change in a player's demeanor usually indicates a bluff. Be careful though, good players will put on an act to throw you off. Learn to do the same yourself.

9. Early in the game, getting caught on a bluff is not necessarily bad. This can put in the minds of the other players that you are a bluffer. They will continue to call with losing hands, just to avoid being suckered.

10. Watch the other players, even if you are out of the hand. Look for clues as to the strength of their hands and their propensity to bluff.

11. Don't fall into patterns of betting. Make occasional outrageous plays. This will confuse your opponents.

12. Don't get too optimistic on a winning streak. Reckless betting can cause your winnings to evaporate quickly.

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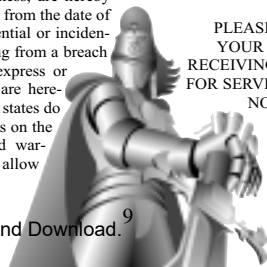
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