

## Poker Games

### House Rules

- All house rules are defaults and may be “overruled” in any particular game. However, before a game begins, exceptions to house rules must be explained, or otherwise house rules will apply.
- **Card values**
  - Aces can be low (i.e., a “1” card) or high (i.e., rank higher than a king). There are subtle exceptions to this rule for certain poker variations, but in none of these variations will a “wraparound straight” win you anything.
  - Wild cards can take the value of any card, even if the card is held by another player.
- **Betting**
  - In determining who must open betting, highest hand showing opens. In the case of ties, highest hand to the left of the dealer opens.
  - Sometimes in the case of ties, we use the highest card’s suit to determine highest hand. In this situation, spades outrank hearts outrank diamonds outrank clubs.
- **Winning**
  - Winners are determined by the best five cards only. Ties are **not** broken by suit. Instead, ties split the pot.
  - Best cards win, even if the person who has the best cards cannot read them correctly.
  - If a game is played high-low and the pot cannot be evenly split, the high hand gets a little more.
  - Best low hand is 6-4-3-2-A. 5-4-3-2-A is a straight.
- **Information Asymmetry**
  - Some games have information asymmetry. In that situation, it is usual that one person will have the most disadvantage. For fairness, disadvantage will rotate clockwise, starting with the host. To keep track of the next person to have the most disadvantage, we’ll pass around a “button.”

### Things to be Determined

- Chip value for each color.
- Maximum number of raises and maximum raise.

### **7-Card Hi/Lo**

7 card stud

Play proceeds exactly as regular 7 card stud, but the pot is split between the persons with the best high hand and best low hand.

As with 7 card stud, after the 7th cards have been received, a final round of bets are placed. Players remaining must review their 7 cards and determine the best high hand of five cards they could make and the best low hand of five cards they could make from those 7 cards. Then each player must decide whether to declare “low,” “high,” or “both.” Declaring “low” means that the player believes that she has a good low hand. Declaring “high” means that the player believes that he has a good high hand. Declaring “both” means the player thinks she a good low hand and a good low hand.

The declaration is made simultaneously, with each player remaining revealing the number of chips placed in one’s fist. No chips in hand means “low,” one chip means “high,” and two chips mean “both.” After the declaration is made, people who declare in the same direction review each other’s cards to determine who has the better hand.

A person who declares “both” **must win both high and low**. If she does not, then she cannot win either high or low at all, and the winners are found among all others remaining in the running.

Note: you select the best five cards for yourself, depending on the context. A person who holds an A-A-A-6-4-3-2 hand has a best high hand of 3 aces (plus a 6 and a 4) and simultaneously a best low hand of 6-4-3-2-1. You can interpret aces depending on context and therefore aces are useful cards to have in this game.

### **7-Card Hi/Low Chicago**

7 card stud

This is played as regular 7-card stud. However, note that each person who remains after the final round of betting is concluded has three cards face down (“the hold”). The person who has the lowest spade in his hold wins half the pot. NB: if no one has a spade in his hold, the entire pot goes to the high hand holder. The lowest spade is a 2 of spades; the ace of spades is the highest spade card.

### **Follow the Queen**

7 card stud

All queens are wild (no matter what). In addition, the rank of the card that directly follows the last face-up queen to be dealt is also wild. Thus, if the card dealt right after the last face-up queen dealt is a 5, then all 5s are wild as well.

The following rules apply to the “follow the queen” wild cards. If more than one queen is dealt face up, only the rank of the card that follows the last queen to be dealt face up is wild. If the last face-up card dealt is a queen, then there are no additional wild cards (except for the queens, of course). If there is no queen dealt face up, then there are no additional wild cards (except for the queens, of course).

**Add 'em up 10**

## 7 card stud

10s are wild and any set of number cards that add up to 10 can collectively be used as a single “wild card.” (Face cards are not wild, but aces can count as an ace or as a 1, according to preference.)

A set of cards used as a “wild card” strictly becomes a wild card and no longer can be used with their respective values. For example, if a player decides to use a 4 and a 6 as a “wild card,” then he no longer has that 4 and that 6 in his hand, but he does have a wild card in his hand.

Note that you must have a total of 5 “cards” in your hand. If, for example, you have four cards that collectively sum to 10, you cannot use them as a wild card. Why? Because you will essentially have four “cards” in your hand. You will have a 4-card “wild card” plus 3 more cards. You cannot win a hand with 4 or fewer “cards.”

Example hand: A♠, K♣, 10♦, 9♥, 8♠, 4♦, 2♠

Best “5-card” hand from example: K♣, 10♦, 8♠, 2♠, 9♥, A♠, 4♦: four kings. How? The 10 is wild; the 8 plus the 2 are collectively a wild card; the 9 plus the ace are collectively a wild card; the four of diamonds completes a 5 “card” hand.

**Low hold wild**

## Unusual 7 card stud

Recall that, at the end of the game, players still in have four cards face up, three cards face down. The face down cards are known as the “hold.” The rank of the lowest card in a player’s hold is a wild card for only that player. Thus, if a person has a 3, 5, and 7 in her hold, then for her all 3s are wild. NB: aces cannot count as a “1” card in a hold; thus, it is extremely unlikely for a person to have aces as wild cards. Aces, however, may be used as a “1” card in a straight.

How the cards become face up and face down is important. Initially, players are dealt three cards face down. Each person must choose one of the hold cards to turn face up for all to see. After bets are placed, each person is dealt another card face down. Again, the players review their hold cards and choose one card to turn face up, after which another round of betting begins. This continues until the 7th (and last) card is prepared to be dealt. This card must be taken face down, no exceptions. In other words, the 7th card is a mandatory hold card. Savvy players will realize that this means the 7th card may screw up one’s hand, as one’s wild cards may change after receiving the 7th card. This is part of the fun of low hold wild. After the 7th card is taken, a final round of betting ends the game.

**Texas Hold'em**

7 card hold'em

This is a version with no blinds. There are 5 community cards. Each person is dealt two cards face down, then the person to the left of the dealer starts the betting. After bets are placed, three of the five community cards ("the flop") are revealed. Bets. A fourth community card is revealed ("the turn"). Bets. Finally, the last community card is revealed ("the river"). Bets.

**Baseball**

7 card stud

3s and 9s are wild. Receiving a face-up 4 allows you to purchase an extra card. Purchase price must be stated before the game begins and usually escalates as more cards of rank 4 are revealed.

This is played as regular 7-card stud with 8 wild cards and the potential to receive extra cards upon payment.

**Night baseball**

Unusual baseball (information asymmetric: the third player to the left of the dealer is generally the one with the most disadvantage.)

This is not a stud game, but it is based on baseball. As such, 3s and 9s are wild. Revealing a 4 allows you to purchase an extra card. Purchase price must be stated before the game begins, and usually escalates as more cards of rank 4 are revealed.

Seven cards are dealt face down to each person. Nobody can see his or her cards. Without looking at their cards, each person arranges the cards in the order in which they wish to reveal them. Starting with the person to the left of the dealer and proceeding clockwise, each person shows as many cards as they need to beat the best hand showing. After that, that person starts a betting round. After bets are placed, the next person reveals his cards. This continues until the people who remain have revealed all their cards.

**3-5-7**

Guts variation (information asymmetric: player to the left of the dealer has the most disadvantage)

This a legs game. The value of each leg must be determined before the games begin. Here, the first person to win 3 legs wins the pot. However, as with most guts games, there is plenty of action before any pot is won.

The game is divided into rounds, which are divided into subrounds. In each round, 7 cards are eventually dealt to each player.

First subround: Every player receives 3 cards and 3s are wild. Best hand is 3 aces. "Straights" and "flushes" are not possible.

Second subround: Every player receives 2 more cards for a total of 5, and 5s are wild. Straights and flushes are certainly possible.

Third subround: Every player receives 2 more cards for a total of 7, and 7s are wild.

In every subround, every player examines her cards. Then, starting with the player to the left of the dealer, each person declares whether she is "in" or "out." After the dealer declares, there are 3 possible situations. Either (1) no people are in (but we'll see why this won't happen), (2) one person is in, or (3) two or more people are in. If one person is in, then that person wins a "leg."

If two or more people are in, then each of them shows her cards to the other people who are also in. After examining each other's cards, they should be able to declare one of them as the winner. Winner takes the pot and losers match the pot. If there is a tie, then ties split the pot (and loser(s) match the pot). If no one has yet won 3 legs, then another subround is dealt. If the third subround has ended and no one has yet won 3 legs, another deck is shuffled, and another round is played. The dealer (and thus button) should be moved to the left between rounds. First person to three legs wins the pot.

Because of the information asymmetry of the declarations, it is obvious that, if no one else is in, the dealer only need to declare she is in and she automatically wins a leg. Thus, it should never be the case that no people are in.

## Not Poker Games

### Chase the Ace

(information asymmetric: player to the left of the dealer has the most disadvantage)

This is a legs game. The value of each leg must be determined before the games begin. Here, the last person to have at least one leg remaining wins the pot.

The upshot of this game is each person gets one card and the person with the lowest card loses a leg.

Every player in the game places three legs in front of him- or herself.

Everybody is dealt one card face down. Each person looks at his card. Then, starting with the person to the left of the dealer, each person must decide whether to switch his card for the card of the player to his left or to simply keep the card he currently has. After the decision has been made, the player to *his* left (i.e., the second player to the left of the dealer) has to make the same type of decision. In this fashion, play revolves clockwise until the person to the right of the dealer decides whether to keep her card or take the dealer's card. Finally, the dealer must decide whether to keep his card or take a card off the top of the deck.

All players then reveal their cards. The player with the lowest card (aces are low, kings are high, and ties are broken by suit) loses a leg to the pot.

The switching algorithm has but one exception. Any player holding a king can refuse to allow a switch to take place. We usually say, "Fuck you" (but in a nice way), to declare that the switch cannot happen. This declaration must be followed by the revealing the card so that all can see that the card is indeed a king.

Play continues, with the person to the left of the dealer becoming the dealer (and thus disadvantage, and the button, rotates to the left). Usually, we don't necessarily re-shuffle the deck, but play off of it until there are too few cards to play with. When a person loses his third leg, then he is out of the running to win the pot and is no longer dealt cards.

Eventually, only one person has a leg remaining and that person wins the pot.