

Texas Hold'em Rules

Hold'em is a poker game where each player receives two cards as his initial hand. There is a round of betting after these cards have been dealt. Then three board cards are turned simultaneously (which is called "the flop") and are community cards available to all players. Another round of betting takes place. The next two board cards are turned one at a time with a round of betting after each one. After the final round of betting has been completed, a player may use any combination of five cards (one in his hand, four from the board, etc.) to determine his best hand. A player may use all of the board cards (called "playing the board").

Hold'em uses a flat disc called a Dealer Button to indicate the player who, in theory, deals the cards for that pot. The Button (player with the Dealer Button) is last to receive cards on the initial deal and has the right of last-action on all betting rounds, except the first. On the first round one or more blind bets are used to stimulate action and initiate play. Blinds are posted before a player looks at his cards. Blinds count as part of the player's bet unless the structure of a specific game or situation requires part or all of a particular blind to be "dead". Dead chips are not part of a player's bet.

Blinds are posted by players who sit in consecutive clockwise order from the Button. Action is initiated on the first betting round by the player on the immediate left of the person who posted the furthest blind clockwise from the Button. The blinds act last on the first betting round and are "live" which means the player is allowed to raise his own blind bet.

RULES FOR HOLD'EM

Check and raise permitted.

A bet and four raises are allowed. The fourth raise "caps the action."

There is no limit on raises when only two players are left in a betting round and the action is not yet "capped".

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. A player putting in less than half of the raise without announcing "raise" may call only.

A player who puts a single chip into the pot that is larger than the bet to him is assumed to have called the bet, unless he announces "raise".

No pot may be awarded until all losing hands have been killed. The winning hand should remain face up until the pot is awarded.

A card found face up in the deck (boxed card) shall be treated as a "scrap of paper". A joker that appears in a game that does not use a Joker is also a "scrap of paper". A card being treated as a scrap of paper is replaced by the next card below it in the deck when possible. If not possible, it is replaced by the top card of the deck after completion of the round. If a player does not call attention to the Joker among his down cards before acting on his hand, then he has a foul hand and forfeits all rights to the pot and all monies involved.

If a player's hole card is exposed due to a dealer error, he may not keep the exposed card. After completing the deal, the dealer will exchange the exposed card with the top card on the deck and place the exposed card face up on top of the deck. The exposed card will be used as the first burn card after all action before the flop is completed. If two or more cards are exposed on the deal, it is a misdeal.

If a player is dealt more or less cards than the game is playing calls for, and it is discovered before two players act on their hands, it is a misdeal. If it is discovered after two players have acted, then all monies, antes and blinds are forfeited by that player.

If the flop has too many cards, it will be taken back and reshuffled, except the burn card will remain burned. No new burn card will be used.

If cards are flopped by the dealer before all the betting is completed, the entire flop is taken back and reshuffled. The burn card will remain and no additional burn card will be used for this flop.

If the dealer burns up the fourth card on the board before the round of betting is completed, the card is not in play. After the completion of the betting, the next card is burned and the fifth card is put in the fourth card's place. After betting is completed, the dealer will reshuffle the deck, including the card that was taken out of play but not the burn card or discards. The dealer will then deal the fifth card without burning.

If the fifth card is turned up before betting is complete, it shall be reshuffled in the same manner as the previous rule.

Playing the Board: A player may play the board by throwing his hand away only if: (1) the hand has been checked around, or (2) there has been a bet and a call, and the best hand is on the board. The player must CLEARLY declare that he is playing the board before throwing his hand away; otherwise the player relinquishes all claims to the pot.

The winning hand must show both cards face up on the table; one card up and the other face down is not a valid hand.

A player must not enter play in the middle of the blinds; he must wait until the Button passes.

A new player entering any Hold'em game has several options. He may: (1) wait for his big blind, (2) wait until the Button passes and then post his big blind, or (3) post the big blind when he sits down. If he chooses the second or third option, the blind acts as his opening bet and he may either call by rapping the table or make the prescribed raise in turn.

If a player leaves the table for any reason and any blind passes his position, he may resume play by posting the total amount of the blinds for the game or wait for the big blind. If he chooses to post the total amount of blinds, the small blind goes to the center of the pot while the big blind is live.

The dealer button always moves forward and the blinds are adjusted accordingly.

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 half a bet or more is treated as a full bet and a player may fold, call or make a full raise.

The smallest chip that may be wagered in a game is the smallest chip used in the antes or blinds. Any smaller chips may be played provided they can be combined in quantity to equal the size of a chip used in the game.

When going all-in, players must put all chips that play into that pot.