

GENERAL POKER RULES

Buy-In

Buy-in is the initial stake you must bring to sit down at the table. The buy-in is typically ten times the size of the bet limit; for example \$10 for a table with a \$1-\$2 stake. In order to prevent players from unfairly banking their winnings, if a player leaves a table and returns within an hour, we require that the player buys back in to the table with the same amount as they left with.

Button

A dealer "button" is used to indicate the position of the player who would be dealing the cards if the players were actually dealing the cards themselves. Holding the button is an advantage, because as the player to act last, you have more information available to you when your turn to bet arrives. After each hand, the button is moved one position clockwise, so that all players in the game have, after a full round, had exactly the same number of opportunities to hold positional advantage.

Blinds

In Texas Holdem and Omaha poker games, certain players are required to post "blind" bets...which means they put bets in the pot before they see their cards. Blinds are placed in the pot to give the players a reason to play. Without blinds, there would be very little incentive for a player to enter a hand without the absolute best possible cards, because there would be nothing to win.

The player to the immediate left of the dealer's posts the 'small blind', and the player to his immediate left posts the 'big blind'. Typically, the small blind is one-half the size of the big blind. (For example, in a \$1/\$2 game, the small blind is \$0.50 and the big blind is \$1). In Holdem and Omaha, the player to the left of the dealer must begin each round of betting (except in the first round, in which the player to the left of the player who placed the big blind must begin the betting round).

Betting Rounds

The cards in a poker hand are normally dealt in several rounds of dealing, with a betting round between each partial deal. In each betting round the first player to act is determined by position (in Holdem or Omaha) or up cards (in Stud). The betting continues clockwise around the table until all active players have bet the same amount in the round. If no money has yet been bet in a round, each player has the choice to:

- **Check** - he can stay in the hand without adding more chips to the pot, or

- **Bet** - raise the stakes by adding more chips to the pot

If the player checks, then the player to his left has the option to check or bet. If all active players check then the betting round is complete and play continues. Once a player makes a bet each subsequent player can either:

- **Fold** - if the player thinks his cards are not good enough to play he can discard them without putting more chips into the pot, and take no further part in the hand
- **Call** - to call a player must put enough into the pot to match the total bet of the last bettor or raiser
- **Raise** - if a player wants to raise the stakes he can call the current bet and then raise a further amount. Subsequent players will need to make their total contribution to the pot equal to that of the last raiser if they wish to remain in the game

Play continues clockwise around the table with each player given the same set of options. When all players have either folded, called the last raiser, or put all of their chips in the pot, the betting round is complete and the cards are dealt for the next round. Of course, if a player raises and no one calls him, then he wins the pot and the hand is over.

The first betting round in a deal is started using blinds or forced bets to build a pot. The player after the blind or forced bet must fold, call, or raise. In subsequent betting rounds the first player to act may check.