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## **Hilton Poker Room Rule Book**

### **A1. THE BUY-IN**

Rules concerning the buy-in apply only to a player's initial buy, or rebuy after going all-in and losing the pot. A player with chips may add additional chips to his stack as he wishes when not involved in a pot. The house has set a minimum buy-in for each game. All buy-ins and rebuys must be for at least that amount. No short buys are permitted. A new player to a table must comply with the buy-in requirement for that game even if he has come from the same size and type of game, unless the house has transferred him there from a similar game which has broken down, has the limit or type of game changed, or some related reason.

At big-bet poker (pot-limit or no-limit play), a return to the game after an absence of less than one hour, and at limit poker, a return to the game after an absence of less than half an hour is still considered part of the same playing session. A player must buy-in for at least the amount that he cashed out. If he has cashed out short, he must have a full buy-in when he re-enters the game if he has been gone for ten or more deals. Cash does not play in limit games smaller than \$30-\$60. Cash other than \$100 bills does not play and is not permitted on the table in any game, with the exception of cash on the table announced by the dealer while awaiting a chip-runner. Foreign currency or chips from another casino are not permitted in play.

### **A2. TABLE STAKES**

All games shall be played according to table stakes rules as follows:

- a. Only chips on the table at the start of a deal shall be in play for that pot, except as specified in Rule (b).
- b. Chips that are in transit from the cashier by a house runner are treated as actually in play, provided the house has given its consent and the other players have been informed. If awaiting chips from the cashier, a player passing chips must "play behind" in the amount passed. A "playing behind" button shall be placed in front of any player who is playing behind, to indicate that an additional amount is in action.
- c. Concealed chips or money, such as under an ash tray or chip rack, does not play in a non-tournament game.
- d. A player with chips may add additional chips of any amount to his stack between deals. A player who goes broke may add chips between deals, provided that he complies

with the minimum buy-in requirement.

e. A player with no chips, who requests a hand and looks at it without specifying the amount being played, must play exactly the amount of the minimum buy-in for that deal.

f. Chips on the table may be used to pay for incidental items (cigarettes, beverages, food, etc.) and casual gaming activities such as low-stakes keno and inexpensive satellite tournament entries.

g. A player may not remove any of his chips from play until he quits the game. Consistent removal of change is prohibited.

h. Chips may be transferred from one player to another only if no one at the table objects.

i. It is recommended that a player take all cash in play with him, for security purposes, when he leaves the table. (The house is not responsible for cash left on the table by an absent player, as stated in A40 - HOUSE RIGHTS.) He is expected to announce the sum removed so the proper amount may be restored upon his return. If he returns and forgets to immediately restore the money, he cannot reintroduce it during a deal once he has looked at his cards. He must wait until the next deal. Chips may not be removed from the table unless the player quits the game.

j. A player transferring tables to the same size game only needs to play enough money to comply with the minimum buy-in requirement. k. Any player has the right to an unimpeded view of another player's chips and cash upon request.

### **A3. CHANGES DURING A DEAL**

The conditions of contest assumed to be in effect at the beginning of a deal may not be changed during that deal if any player can be injured by that change. An example of changing the conditions of contest would be a player, who had removed cash from the table when he left, trying to restore it in the middle of a deal. Another example would be a player changing seats during a deal and altering his position relative to another player with a live hand.

### **A4. DIRECTION OF PLAY**

Play must always proceed clockwise, with each player's turn to act following the person on his immediate right.

### **A5. HAND PROTECTION**

A player is responsible for taking reasonable means to protect his hand. A player who fails to take reasonable means to protect his hand shall have no redress if his hand becomes fouled by contact with discards or accidentally taken in by the dealer. Contact of an unprotected hand with a discarded card shall make the hand dead if there is any doubt about which cards belong to the hand.

If a protected hand has come into contact with discards, the floorperson should make every effort to reconstruct the hand and have the deal played to its conclusion. A protected hand may not be ruled dead by accidental contact with discards unless it is

impossible to reconstruct. A "protected hand" means the player is holding onto it or has one or more chips or a heavy object (such as a cigarette lighter) set on top of it. Stud holecards are considered protected. A player who has a protected hand taken in by the dealer or fouled by discards is entitled to be refunded from the pot all the chips that he put in, provided the floorperson feels the player has been injured and is not a contributor to the error. In exceptional cases, the shift manager shall have the authority to award a player his approximate equity in the pot, as calculated from the pot size and his chance of winning.

A player who leaves the table without comment and has an unprotected hand is assumed to have no interest in the pot, and his hand may be mucked.

## **A6. PROPER CARD**

Each card dealt must be the top card of the deck. After the initial card of a round has been dealt to a player, each player must receive his card directly after the person on his immediate right. The order of future ownership of cards that will be in play is not to be disturbed at any time during the deal unless an irregularity of sufficient magnitude has taken place requiring a round of cards to be buried, the deck remade, or a holecard has been dealt to the wrong player in such a manner that the mistake cannot be rectified by switching the card.

A player receiving a final downcard in a Stud game that should have been dealt to another player must keep it, unless there is no chance that he knows its rank or suit, and the card has not become intermingled with his other downcards. A player who has been skipped his proper downcard in such a manner that he can no longer receive it should get a card after all other players receive a card that round. Procedure for an improperly faced card is discussed in A27 - BOXED CARD. These rules make an effort to preserve the order of the cards so a player will receive the same card that he would have received if there had been no irregularity in procedure. If for some reason it becomes impractical or impossible for the player to receive the same card, the player has not been injured. The substitution of a randomly selected card neither helps nor hurts the player's chances of winning the pot. See the definition of "Random Card Concept" in the Glossary (Section N).

## **A7. BOTTOM CARD OF DECK**

The bottom card of the deck is never to be dealt.

## **A8. EXPOSED CARDS**

a. A downcard dealt faceup, a downcard that flashes as it is dealt so that another player might know its identity, or a downcard dealt off the table is considered to be an exposed card. A card exposed by the player himself is not considered to be an exposed card. Where there is a question of whether a card that "caught some air" actually flashed, the player is entitled to get it replaced if he has not looked at the card. It is proper for the

player to ask for a replacement before looking at a card. If he looks at the card before asking to get it replaced, he opens himself to the charge that he is asking to get the card replaced because he didn't like it. The decision whether to allow the looked-at card to be replaced will depend on a number of factors, and will be made by the house.

b. An exposed downcard is either required to be replaced or the player is required to keep it, according to the rules for each particular form of poker. The player never has an option of whether to accept or reject a card.

c. The replacement of an exposed card must be accomplished in such a manner that the requirements of Rule A6 - PROPER CARD are met regarding the dealing of only the top card of the deck and not changing the natural assignment of any card that will be in play. Therefore, the replacement of an exposed card must be done in the following manner:

1. The dealer continues to deal each player his rightful card;

2. After each player has received all his cards, the exposed card is replaced by the top card of the deck (which was due to be the burncard);

3. The dealer shows the exposed or flashed card to all the players and then puts it facedown on top of the deck to be used as the new burncard.

d. If more than one exposed card of the players' starting hands needs to be replaced, it is a misdeal as provided in Rule A9i - MISDEALS.

e. The rules regarding exposed cards dealt to the player at each form of poker (unless the situation requires a misdeal) are listed as follows:

### **1. SEVEN CARD STUD:**

At seven-card high, if one of a player's initial holecards is exposed, he shall use it for his upcard and receive his third card facedown as his holecard. If two of a player's initial cards are exposed, he has a dead hand and his ante is refunded. At seven-card low ("Razz") and seven-card high-low split, if one of a player's initial holecards is exposed, it is a misdeal. (In tournament play, at all forms of Stud, if a downcard in the starting hand is exposed at any time it is a misdeal.)

If the final card dealt to a player is exposed, the following rules apply:

(a) A faceup final card is always treated as if it is a downcard in determining who initiates the betting action on the final round.

(b) If the first player (not all-in) received his card faceup, all the other players receive their cards faceup, and the action proceeds as normal with respect to bets and raises.

(c) In heads-up play, if only one player's final card is exposed, there shall be no betting action. If both final cards are exposed, in accordance with Rule (b) above, betting is allowed.

(d) In multi-handed pots, if a player other than the first player is dealt an exposed card, the remaining cards should be dealt facedown. The player with the exposed card has the option of declaring himself all-in before the betting round begins. If he declares himself all-in, the betting proceeds normally among the other players. If he does not declare himself all-in, he is subject to all bets and raises on that round, and he himself has the right to bet or raise.

(e) An all-in player should receive his final card facedown. However, if it is exposed, he must take it. The remaining players still receive their final cards facedown.

### **2. HOLDEM:**

An exposed downcard must be replaced. The method is discussed earlier, in sub-section (c).

**3. DRAW:** The following rules govern exposed cards before the draw at each form of Draw Poker:

(a) At High, the card must be taken.

(b) At Lowball, any card that might make a player the best possible hand must be taken, and any other card must be replaced. Therefore, at Ace-to-Five Lowball, a wheel-card must be taken. At Deuce-to-Seven Lowball, a seven, five, four, trey or deuce must be taken, and a six or any other card must be replaced.

(c) At High-Low Split, the rule for Lowball at that form of poker is followed.

If a card is exposed on the draw, it may not be kept. After all the other players have drawn, it is replaced by the top card of the deck.

## **A9. MISDEALS**

A misdeal shall cause all the cards to be returned to the dealer for a redeal. A misdeal may not be called once substantial action has taken place on a deal. "Substantial action" is defined as three players taking any action (including a fold), or two players acting by a bet, call or raise before attention is called to the error. Substantial action can only occur when the dealer is no longer in the act of dealing cards. See the definition of "substantial action" in the Glossary (Section N). A player who discovers that he has too many cards after action has begun has a dead hand. A player posting a blind or straddle is not considered to have taken action at that point.

The following action shall cause a misdeal to be declared if there has not been substantial action:

a. Failure to shuffle and cut the deck before dealing.

b. Dealing to the wrong player first.

c. Failure at some point to deal each player only his proper card (except that a player whose card flashes may receive the burncard in its place). "Proper card" means the card a player is due to get if the order of cards and players receiving them is not disturbed. After the first player gets the top card of the deck, each player receives his card for that round directly after the person on his immediate right. If a card initially dealt to the wrong player can be moved to its proper owner in a simple manner, without any damage being done, this is acceptable. If there is any chance the wrong player looked at the card's face, it is a misdeal.

d. In a game with one or more blinds, dealing out a player at the table, or a player away from his seat who has either indicated his desire to get a hand by posting a blind, or is on the button and has asked for a hand. In a game using blinds, if an absent player (other than the above) has asked for a hand and is dealt out, it shall be declared a misdeal so long as no player has yet been dealt all the cards for his starting hand. (For example, at Omaha Holdem, a misdeal should be called if no player has been dealt all four starting cards.)

e. In a game using an ante, if a player who has anted is dealt out, it shall be declared a misdeal so long as no player has yet been dealt all the cards for a starting hand. If the error is not discovered until one or more players has been dealt all of his cards, the player dealt out receives his ante back, and the deal is played.

f. Dealing too few cards to a player, except when that player is due to get the top card of

the deck.

- g. Dealing too many cards to a player, except when the last card dealt was due to be the burncard and can be returned to the deck.
- h. At forms of poker that do not use upcards as part of the initial starting hand (other than Draw), the exposure of an initial card to one of the blinds on the left of the button, declared before anyone has received a second card.
- i. The exposure of two or more cards that need to be replaced.
- j. In tournament Seven-card Stud, if a player has either holecard exposed on his initial hand.
- k. In Seven-card Stud Low or High-Low Split, if a player has either holecard exposed on his initial hand.
- l. The presence of more than one boxed (improperly faced) card.
- m. The discovery of a joker (improperly) in the deck.
- n. The discovery of one or more cards missing from the deck.
- o. The discovery that the deck is defective, as defined in A29 DEFECTIVE DECK.
- p. At Holdem or Draw, if the dealer deals any cards in tempo (either up or down) that were supposed to be part of the flop or the draw, it is a misdeal.

At any game played with an ante, if the pot is found to be short one or more antes, it is not a misdeal. The offender(s) shall have a live hand and be obliged to put in the missing ante. If the offender cannot be determined, the deal is played out with a short pot.

The dealing in of an absent player is not a misdeal. If he is not back by the time it is his turn to act, the hand is killed.

The dealing in of a player or seat that is ineligible to receive a hand is not a misdeal. The dealer continues to deal a complete hand in that spot; then the hand is killed.

## **A10. MINIMUM BET**

A player may bet a smaller amount on a betting round than was bet on a previous round. However, the minimum and maximum legal bet sizes never decrease on a deal.

Therefore, at Holdem or Draw, the minimum bet is never less than the minimum bring-in for that game, unless a player is going all-in.

At Stud, The minimum bet is never less than the initial forced bet, unless a player is going all-in.

## **A11. ALL-IN BET**

A player is never obliged to drop out of contention because he has insufficient funds in play to call the full amount of a bet. He may call for the amount of chips in front of him. The excess part of the bet is either returned to the better, or used to form a side pot with another player or players who matched the amount called. There is no limitation on the number of side pots. A player who has put all his funds in play into the pot is said to be "all-in."

A player who goes all-in and loses must rebuy to receive a hand on subsequent deals, even though he may still have some odd chips or coins that were not played when he went all-in. If the player declares himself all-in with playable chips remaining, the dealer should require that the chips be played. In a heads-up situation, the opponent has the option of waiving the requirement that the chips play, provided that he exercises this option immediately. The all-in player must buy in again to play in a new deal, even if several chips remain.

A player may raise all-in even though the amount is too small to qualify for a full-size raise according to the betting rules of that game, provided he would normally be entitled to raise in that particular situation. When the action falls upon a player who is all-in, it passes clockwise to the next active player.

An all-in bet of less than half the minimum bet (as determined in A10 - MINIMUM BET) does not reopen the betting in limit poker.

An all-in bet of less than the full amount of the minimum bet does not reopen the betting at big-bet poker (pot-limit and no-limit play). The question of when the betting is reopened is discussed thoroughly in the next sub-section, A12- RAISES.

A player going all-in may be prohibited from playing certain low-denomination chips or coins (see A25 - MINIMUM BETTING UNIT). For example, in our cardroom, bets involving fractions of a dollar are not allowed in any game. The rules for which chips and coins play in a certain game are given in Section H - STRUCTURES OF GAMES, where our house rule governing the minimum betting unit for each game is given.

## **A12. RAISES**

This section determines which wagers may be raised by a player in for all previous bets. Any player may raise the pot at his turn unless:

1. The previous wager is below the minimum size necessary to qualify for reopening the betting to him.
2. The betting has been "capped" because the maximum number of raises on a betting round has been reached. Limit poker places a restriction in multi-handed pots on the number of raises that can take place on a betting round. In heads-up play, the restriction is removed. Any wager of sufficient size to reopen the betting will count as a bet or raise toward the maximum permissible number, and any wager smaller than that size will not count for that purpose. This cardroom uses a maximum of a bet and four raises on a betting round. See Rule A12g for clarification on some capping situations.
3. A "ceiling figure" has been reached. A ceiling figure is a restriction on the size of the total bet on a particular betting round. An example would be "one hundred dollars maximum total bet before the flop" in a pot-limit Holdem game.

The minimum size to reopen the betting at each form of poker is as follows:

**LIMIT POKER:** a wager must be at least half a "full bet."

**BIG-BET POKER:** a wager must be a "full bet."

To be considered a "full bet," a wager must fulfill both these conditions:

1. Be at least the size of the minimum bet, as defined in A10 - MINIMUM BET.
2. Be at least the size of the largest previous wager on that round. (The largest previous wager refers to the amount of increase over a previous wager, not the total amount a

player has to put in the pot on that round. For example, if Player A bet ten dollars and Player B raised twenty dollars to make the total thirty dollars, "the largest previous wager" to Player C would be twenty dollars.

If the limit is fixed, a full bet is a bet of that limit. A player may not bet or raise less than the amount of a full bet unless:

1. He is making the initial forced bet.
2. He is going all-in. (This rule applies in all situations, including heads-up at big-bet poker.)
3. He is raising a wager to the specified ceiling figure for that particular betting round or game.

At limit poker, a player facing a wager of less than half a full bet may:

1. Fold.
  2. Call.
  3. Raise the wager to the amount of a full bet. This is called "completing the bet" or "completing the raise." The player is not permitted to both complete and raise a wager.
- EXAMPLE: At thirty-dollar limit, a player wishing to raise an all-in bet (or initial forced bet) of ten dollars could complete it to thirty dollars straight.

At limit poker, a player facing a wager of half or more of a full bet may:

1. Fold.
2. Call.
3. Raise one full bet.

EXAMPLE: At thirty-dollar limit, a player wishing to raise an all-in bet of twenty dollars could make it thirty dollars more, for a total of fifty dollars.

A combination of all-in wagers may be raised by any player with less than half of a full bet in the pot if the last all-in wager totals half or more of

EXAMPLE: At thirty-dollar limit, if Player A checks, Player B goes all-in for ten dollars, Player C calls, Player D goes all-in for ten dollars more, to make the total twenty, and Player E calls the twenty, either Player A or Player C may raise the pot.

At big-bet poker, if two or more players go all-in consecutively, or with only intervening calls or folds, a player may raise if the amount he must call equals or exceeds a full bet.

EXAMPLE: If a player bets \$100, the next player goes all-in for a total of \$175, and another player goes all-in for a total of \$225, and then someone else calls, the original bettor (who must call \$125) may raise. The following explanations are designated to clarify certain situations that can arise:

A. At fixed-limit poker, if the initial forced bet is less than half a full bet, it is not considered large enough to be counted as a bet. A wager increasing the amount of that bet to a full bet is called "completing the bet" and is considered the first bet on that round (not a raise, even though the betting is reopened). On subsequent rounds, bringing a wager of less than half a bet up to the size of a full bet is completing that wager. The smaller wager and the one that completes it are counted as a single bet or raise toward the bet-and-four-raises limitation.

B. At flexible-limit poker, a wager that increases the amount of a forced bet by half that amount or more is considered a raise, because the forced bet is of sufficient size to qualify as a bet at that structure.

C. In our cardroom, at flexible-limit poker, a combination of the forced bet and first raise may not exceed the limit of that game. For example, in one-to-four-dollar limit, a forced

bet of one dollar may only be raised three more dollars, to a total of four dollars. As explained in "B," this is still a bet and a raise, but the amount of the first raise is slightly restricted for the purpose of better building a pot. This restriction applies only to the initial forced bet. On subsequent betting rounds, a wager of one dollar could be raised four more dollars, to a total of five dollars.

D. At limit poker, an all-in bet of less than half the minimum bet (as defined in A10 - MINIMUM BET) does not reopen the betting to a player who checked on that round, or count as a bet for the purposes of the bet-and-four-raises limitation. At big-bet poker, a wager of less than the minimum bet does not reopen the betting to a player who checked on that round.

E. The minimum bring-in is never considered a raise. At limit play a bring-in of one-and-a-half times the minimum or greater is considered the first raise.

F At Stud, a bring-in of greater than the minimum requirement is not considered a raise.

G. When the maximum number of raises has been reached in a multi handed pot at limit poker, or a specific ceiling figure has been reached, the betting is said to be "capped." Once the betting on a round has been capped, no wager of any kind that increases the total bet will be allowed. Therefore, a player cannot increase the total bet by going all-in after the betting has been capped. The betting cannot become uncapped by a player dropping out of a multi-handed pot and creating a heads-up situation. (This protects a player from thinking his raise has capped the betting and finding himself unexpectedly exposed to a reraise.) A player is not considered to be all in until he has actually gone all-in in turn, even though he may be easily seen not to have enough chips to cover more than a small portion of a raise behind him. This removes any obligation for a player or dealer to count an opponent's stack to determine whether there is a "technical heads-up" situation.

H. At big-bet poker, because raises are unlimited, it is theoretically possible that a player could be placed in whipsaw situation. In this situation, two players could each be raising a small amount, with a third player caught in the middle. To prevent this, when a bet and four raises have taken place, further raises in that round must be at least half the pot size unless a player is going all-in.

I. When the last legal raise is made, if two or more players other than the raiser have as much as one playable chip left, then the betting is capped.

### **A13. ACTION OUT OF TURN**

A player has the right to act on his hand, and an obligation to notify the other players that he has not yet acted when the betting action bypasses him. Therefore, the following rules apply when the betting action bypasses a player who has not yet acted:

a. If substantial action takes place behind a player whose turn has come to act and has not yet acted, the actions stand. The player must check if there has not been a bet to him, and may only call or fold if there was a bet to him. "Substantial action" means either three players acting, or two players acting by putting money in the pot. The dealer counts as a person if he has condoned the action, and is considered having acted if he has dealt the burncard off the deck or pushed the action past the proper player.

b. If substantial action has taken place after a player who has not yet acted, and the dealer

deals any cards for the next round, the player who has not called all bets has a dead hand. This rule may not be used to rule a hand dead where the player obviously intended to call all bets, but unintentionally put in less than the required amount of money. In such a case, the floorperson should rule that the player must make up the amount short and have a live hand. EXAMPLE: There has been a \$20 bet and three raises, making the total \$80, but after a card was dealt, it was noticed that a player had put in only \$60.

c. An action out of turn may seriously disrupt the normal course of betting. Therefore, the following rules will be used to reduce the harm done to non-offending players if substantial action has not taken place:

1. The floorperson has the authority to require that a player take the same action in turn that he took out of turn. This means that if a player acts out of turn by betting, calling or raising, he may have to leave the chips in the pot.
2. The player will not be compelled to take the same action in turn when he has been misled by the dealer, or a player in front of him who has not yet acted. Misleading may come from actions such as a player concealing his hand, starting to act and then not following through, improper placement or a player's bet, or the dealer looking at a player as if it were his turn.
3. At big-bet poker, a player normally shall not be required to take the same action. It still is considered unethical at any form of poker to deliberately act out of turn, so the floorperson retains the right to penalize what he feels was a deliberate offense.
4. At Stud, an action taken by a player who thinks he is first to act becomes established if the next player acts behind him, and betting shall continue as if he were supposed to be acting first. This rule fulfills the requirement of "substantial action:" because the dealer in this case counts as a player.
5. Any action out of turn may be required to stand, except a player is allowed to take back a call out of turn if an intervening player who had not acted decides to raise the pot.
6. A bet out of turn may be changed to a raise if an intervening player who had not acted decides to bet, and a raise out of turn may be changed to a re-raise if an intervening player who had not acted decides to raise.
7. A player who bets out of turn before the next card is dealt (be in the dark) may not remove the money from the pot. If someone else bets, he may raise the pot at his turn. If there is ; misunderstanding as to whether his opponent was betting or calling, the right to raise may be revoked by the floorperson.
8. A player who technically bets out of turn at Stud in a heads-up situation, but is really intending to call what seems to be an automatic bet by a powerful board, shall not be exposed to check-raise. This applies only when the first player has actually picked up chips and started a betting motion, but not actually released the chips into the pot.

#### **A14. BURNCARDS**

The dealer shall burn a card (place it facedown on the table) before dealing any round of cards after the players have received their starting hands.

Burncards shall be kept separate from the discards throughout the hand until the last card has been dealt. If nothing abnormal has happened the dealer should drop the deck stub and put the burncards into the discards. If there is any question of whether the dealer

burned a card properly, they should remain until the situation has been resolved to everyone's satisfaction. At Holdem, if the deck has to be reshuffled (because the dealer dealt prematurely, dropped the deck, or some such procedural irregularity), the burncards should not be used in the new deck. The dealer still burns a card before dealing from the new deck. At Stud, the burncards are used with the undealt cards to form a new deck when the dealer does not have enough legal cards (cards that may come into play, which excludes the bottom card of the deck) to finish the last round. Any time the dealer burns a card and is unable to deal immediately, he should replace the burncard back on top of the deck, and announce that he is doing it.

Nobody may be shown a burncard while the pot is still being played. If the dealer fails to burn a card when required, burns two cards by having them stick together, or burns twice on a round, and substantial action has not taken place, each card must be moved to its proper spot. One card must be burned, so the correct layout has been reestablished. Substantial action in this case means two players have acted, because the dealer fulfills the requirement of the third person for the substantial action rule to be invoked. If substantial action has taken place before attention is called to the error, all cards will be played as dealt. If the error takes place at Draw poker or a round of downcards at Stud poker, the cards will have to be played as dealt if any player has had an opportunity to see his card or has intermingled it with his other cards.

#### **A15. PREMATURE DEALING**

A player is not allowed to put chips into the pot knowing any of the cards that are to be dealt for the next round, except for the final downcard at Stud, where the card must be kept. A player is never allowed to control whether an upcard is to remain as dealt or the deck reshuffled. The following rules apply when a card has been dealt faceup before all the players have acted on their hands:

- a. Any card dealt before everyone has acted may not be used.
  - b. If there has been a bet, and the dealer deals as the last player is in the process of folding, the card stays in play.
  - c. The discovery that a wager, represented to be a certain action (a call, for example) and accepted as such by the dealer, is actually slightly short shall not invalidate the dealing of a new card. The player is required to make the bet correct.
  - d. A player who has not called a bet and allows the dealer to deal a new round of cards without comment has a dead hand once action has been taken on the new betting round, and the new round of cards must stay. The player does not have a dead hand if he has indicated the intention of being in for all bets, but has mistakenly failed to put the correct amount in the pot. He simply makes the bet correct. This is similar to the discussion in A13 - ACTION OUT OF TURN Rule
- b). At Stud games, if the dealt cards may not be used, they are retrieved and buried in the discards. A card for each additional player is also buried under chips near the burncards, so the players receive the cards that were coming on the next round. If the mistake is made on the last downcard, when the card is taken in or might have been seen by the player, the card is kept. On sixth street, any player who already has a seventh card may not net or raise a player with only six cards.

At Holdem, if the dealt cards may not be used, a new deck is made from the unused stub and the improperly dealt cards (but no burncards). The dealer shuffles, cuts, and burns-and-turns. If the fourth street card cannot be used, the card due to come on fifth street is used in its place. The dealer burns-and-turns again, and the deck is remade for the final card (fifth street).

## **A16. WORDS AND GESTURES**

A player facing a bet who announces a fold has a dead hand. At Stud, the picking up of all one's upcards off the table when facing a bet may be construed as a fold. However, the floorperson may elect to let the player have a live hand if he feels the player was unfamiliar with the rule and no damage was done by the act.

A player facing a bet who discards his hand may not reclaim it. The hand is dead.

A player who discards his hand when not facing a bet may reclaim the hand if it has not touched the muck, provided nobody has acted on the assumption that the hand had been folded.

At Stud, any time before the showdown, a player who turns his upcards facedown has folded.

The dealer shall kill his hand, even if he is in for all bets up to that time. This does not apply to a player who has bet and mistakenly believes everyone has folded.

Asking the dealer to deal any new cards to see what was coming when facing a bet is equivalent to announcing a fold. The dealer is not required to have the player surrender his hand before complying with the request; the hand is already dead.

A statement of "fold," "check," "call," "raise," or a specific size bet is binding on an active player.

At big-bet or flexible limit poker, a player who announces a bet or raise of a certain size but put a different number of chips in the pot should have his bet corrected to the stated size if the next player has not acted.

The substitution of an irregular statement or gesture for "fold:" "check:" "call:" or "raise" is as binding as the regular statement would be in that situation, provided the intent is obvious or it could easily and justifiably be construed as having that meaning.

Rapping on the table or waving the cards up and down is considered a check. A player who in turn places his full hand faceup on the table without comment on the final betting round is considered to have checked.

If a player is obligated to put money into the pot (either as a bet, call, or raise), the fact that he has thrown away his hand does not relieve him of that obligation. The dealer may and should try to prevent the hand from being fouled by contact with the muck.

## **A17. UNCALLED BET**

A player who makes a bet that nobody calls wins the pot. A player who makes a bet, and then incorrectly assumes there are no live hands against him, and throws his hand away into the discards, loses the pot, unless the hand is declared retrievable by the floorperson. Every effort should be made to rule in the direction of playing out the pot. If a player has

been induced to discard his hand by the dealer indicating he has made an uncalled bet and won the pot, but someone still has a live hand, the following rules prevail:

- a. If at all possible, the hand should be retrieved and the pot played out.
- b. If the hand is irretrievable, the floorperson must make a decision based on the strength of the remaining hand, whether it was out in the open or concealed, and whether the player had the opportunity to speak up to prevent the better from thinking he won the pot.
- c. The floorperson can and should rule a worthless hand dead. A powerful hand strong enough to have raised should get the whole pot. In between those extremes, it is up to the floorperson to decide what is fair.

### **A18. INSUFFICIENT BET**

An illegally small bet stands once there has been substantial action behind it. The dealer counts as a player, and the act of burning before dealing a card for the next round is treated as accepting the bet. At fixed limit, a person wishing to raise such a bet increases the wager by one full, correct bet. If there has not been substantial action establishing the insufficient bet, the action shall back up to the original better, and a call is nullified. The original better must make the insufficient bet the correct size.

If the betting action needs to be backed up because an insufficient amount has been wagered, a player may not change his call to a raise if somebody has acted after him, or the improper bet has enabled him to obtain useful information about the nature of any hand behind him.

A bet represented as being a particular amount and treated as such by subsequent action must be made good to that amount, even if the bettor later opts to fold.

If a player who is obligated for a blind or forced bet does not have sufficient funds to wager the full amount, all other players will still be obligated to put the full amount of the blind or forced bet in the pot if they wish to call.

### **A19. INSUFFICIENT CALL**

A player who puts chips in the pot with the apparent intention of calling a bet, and is found to have put in an insufficient amount, may not withdraw the chips. He must put in sufficient additional chips to call, even if the opponent has shown down his hand. This rule is not to apply when someone has obviously misunderstood the amount of the wager to a significant degree.

A player who shows that he is unaware of a raise by calling only the amount of the bet before that raise may withdraw his chips and fold, provided nobody has acted behind him. If there has been proper action behind him, the bet must stay in the pot if the raise was announced by the dealer or player.

In games where the betting limit is flexible, an insufficient call may be withdrawn if the player is obviously unaware that someone in front of him has bet.

An insufficient call may not be changed to a raise. (To raise would be a form of string bet as covered in A21 - STRING BET.)

## **20. UNCLEAR BET**

A player has the right to assemble chips in front of him before acting. A player has made a bet if he pushes assembled chips forward and releases them, or releases chips into the pot at a sufficient distance from him to make it obvious that he intends it as a bet. In unclear situations, a player who lets the dealer pull the chips into the pot without making an immediate objection has made a wager.

A wager without comment that is larger than necessary to call a bet, but less than necessary to raise, may be clarified by that player as either a call or a raise if the next player has not acted. If the next player has acted, the wager is treated as it most closely resembles. Therefore, it is a call if the excess amount is less than half of the amount needed to raise, and considered a raise if it is more than half of the amount needed to raise. If the amount is exactly half the amount needed to raise, it is considered a call if the excess amount is only one chip, but a raise if it is two or more chips. If the wager is ruled a raise, the player must add the amount needed to bring the wager to the size of a full raise. (The floorperson may depart from this formula in making a ruling if it appears obvious that the player unintentionally used the wrong denomination of chips.)

For example, on a twenty dollar bet, a player putting in twenty-five dollars must reduce his bet to a twenty dollar call. A player putting in thirty-five dollars must increase the amount to a forty dollar raise. If he puts in thirty dollars, it is a raise, because the excess amount is two chips. (If the excess amount were only one chip, as a fifteen dollar wager at ten dollar limit, it would be ruled a call.)

In a multi-handed pot, any player who makes a wager the size of a raise, but is under the faulty impression that he is calling, may reduce his bet to a call if nobody has yet acted behind him. If there is action behind him, or if he may have gained useful information about the nature of a hand behind him, the bet must stand. If he is heads-up, the bet must stand if requested by an opponent. An example of the use of this rule would be where the big blind does not realize he is already in and puts more money into the pot.

## **A21. STRING BET**

A player is not allowed to make a bet, gauge an opponent's reaction, and then increase the amount of the bet. In order to add additional chips to the original wager, he must indicate at the time it is made that the bet is not yet complete.

A player who puts the amount of a call into the pot without indicating a raise is coming may not go back to his stack for more chips and raise the pot.

At big-bet poker (pot-limit or no-limit play), a player announcing "raise" may continue to bet chips until both his hands come to rest outside the pot area.

## **A22. OVERSIZE CHIP BET**

A player who bets a single chip larger than required is assumed to have only called unless he announces a raise. He may clarify his apparent call as a raise only if nobody behind

him has acted and he has not gained useful information about a hand behind him. This rule is extended to apply when more than one chip is necessary to call a bet, but the last chip might be construed either as a call or raise. For example, at a \$60 street, if the bet were \$120 and a player put in two black (\$100) chips without comment, it would be considered a call. A player who puts in the full amount of an oversized chip wagered by the player in front of him, intending to call what appears to be a raise (because the oversized chip has not yet been changed up by the dealer) but is actually only a call, has the right to reduce his wager to the amount of a call if the next player has not acted.

Example: In a pot-limit game with a \$25 minimum bring-in, Player A opens with a \$100 chip. Player B believes that Player A has raised and puts four \$25 chips into the pot. Player B may reduce his wager to \$25 provided that the next player has not acted on the assumption that the bet is \$100.

At flexible limit or pot-limit play (or split-limit where the player has an option of betting the lower or higher limit), the initial bet (not the forced bet or bring-in) of a single oversize chip or bill, or group thereof, without comment, is assumed to be a bet of the maximum allowable amount. A wager accompanied by the announcement of "raise" indicates that the whole amount plays, or as much as legally possible. When a player is required to make the opening forced bet, it is assumed that he is betting the minimum unless he makes a statement to the contrary.

### **A23. BET-OR-FOLD**

A rule may be set for a game where a player is required to either bet or fold; he is not allowed to check. (The most frequent use of this rule is in some types of Draw games before the pot has been opened.) Any game using this rule will have a special warning prominently posted to that effect. If in a situation using the "bet or fold" rule a player says "check" or "pass:" it is not to be considered a fold, but an indication that he is unfamiliar with the use or meaning of the rule.

### **A24. CHECK-AND-RAISE**

Check-and-raise is permitted in all games, unless a specific notice to the contrary is posted for a particular game.

### **A25. MINIMUM BETTING UNIT**

The minimum betting unit is the smallest denomination of chip that will be permitted in play for a game, except for use in antes and blinds. This also includes all-in situations. Every game will have a minimum betting unit set for it by the house. A table of minimum betting units for each game is given in SECTION H - STRUCTURE OF GAMES.

### **A26. FOUL HAND**

A foul hand is a dead hand and cannot win any part of the pot. A hand is foul if it comes into contact with discards in such a manner as to violate Rule A5 - HAND PROTECTION, or has too many cards for that point in the game. A hand with too few cards for that point in the game may continue to play, but a missing card cannot be replaced unless the player is due for the top card of the deck, the player was skipped his card for that round and called immediate attention to the fact, or the player did not have the opportunity to take in a card and protect it before the card was fouled in some manner.

A player who discovers his hand is foul cannot recover any chips he has put into the pot (unless a misdeal can be called in accordance with Rule A9 - MISDEALS because substantial action has not yet taken place) except as follows:

If a player makes a bet or raise and the next player has not yet acted, or indicated the intention of calling or raising, he may call attention to the fact that his hand is foul and be returned the uncalled amount.

A player may not deliberately foul his hand to recover a bet, nor make an attempt to win the pot by betting or raising once he has discovered his hand is foul. If the floorperson decides the player has violated either of these provisions, he may rule that the chips must stay in the pot. If the player with the foul hand wins the pot and this is discovered before the pot is awarded, the situation is similar to a player who bets knowing the deck is defective, as covered in Rule A29 - DEFECTIVE DECK. A player who bets and wins a pot believing he has a complete hand, when actually one or more of his cards have been inadvertently scooped into the discards by the dealer, gets to keep the pot. The floorperson will have to rule whether the player bet with or without the knowledge that he did not have a hand.

A player who has been dealt two upcards that have stuck together must call attention to this before he acts on his hand, shows it down, or alters the evidence. He may then retain his proper card and have a live hand. In all other cases, the player's hand is dead because he has too many cards. If a floorperson is convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that no impropriety by that player exists, he will refund his chips from the pot.

## **A27. BOXED CARD**

A boxed card (improperly faced card) is treated as a scrap of paper. It is replaced by the card immediately beneath it. If this is not possible because the card below it was dealt as a holecard to the next player, it is replaced at the end of the round.

## **A28. IMPROPER JOKER**

A joker improperly in the game shall constitute a misdeal if substantial action has not occurred. Once substantial action takes place, a player with the joker is entitled to have it replaced. On a round of upcards, the joker is replaced by the card beneath it. On a round of downcards, the joker is replaced by the top card of the deck at the end of the round. If

discovered during a betting round, it is replaced by the top card of the deck, and the dealer still burns a card before dealing the next round.

### **A29. DEFECTIVE DECK**

A defective deck is one that has two identical cards (including two jokers when one is in use) or any cards of a different-colored back. Missing, mutilated, or marked cards, or one or more jokers when none are in use, do not constitute a defective deck for the purposes of this rule. If the deck is found to be defective, all chips in the pot shall be returned to the players in the amount each contributed. A player who realizes the deck is defective should call attention to the fact immediately. A player who has the opportunity to know the deck is defective and attempts to win the pot by betting or raising shall have any chips used for this purpose remain in the pot for the next deal instead of returned to him. Only players who were initially dealt in on the deal where the deck was found defective may receive a hand on a pot containing forfeited money. A player who has already been awarded a pot and taken it in is entitled to keep it, even if the deck is subsequently found to be defective, provided the deal is over before the correctness of the deck is challenged. The deal is considered to have ended when all cards are facedown and all hands are intermingled into the discard pile.

### **A30. DROPPED DECK**

A deck that is dropped by the dealer before the deal is over, such as the dealer thinking no more cards are to be dealt, shall have the top of the deck used if it can properly be determined. The floorperson should see that the cards in question are the correct deck stub. If the deck is in doubt or a card might have flashed, the floorperson shall have the dealer take the unused cards and reshuffle them. Cards known to be discards may not be reshuffled into the deck. The dealer must cut the deck and burn a card before dealing.

### **A31. THE SHOWDOWN**

If betting is over, the players show their cards to determine who has the best hand and wins the pot. A player may discard a hand without showing it, but any player in the deal has the right to see a discarded hand upon request, even if it has touched the muck. (A player should wait until a hand has actually been thrown away before asking to see it.) A hand winning the pot at the showdown by virtue of the opponent discarding his own hand without waiting to see it should still be shown to the table before the pot is awarded. The right of any player to examine the contents of a discarded hand at the showdown is not to be abused. A player using this right as a method of irritation should be warned to stop. If he does not heed the warning, he is subject to having the right revoked by the management. The following rules govern who gets the pot at the showdown:

- a. A hand with too many cards for that form of poker is dead. A dead hand cannot win any part of the pot.

b. A hand with too few cards at the showdown may be ruled live. The player must still have one or more individual cards, unless he has specifically announced that he is playing the board prior to discarding his hand. (see Rule B-1).

It is improper for a player to discard any of his cards, even though they are not needed for his five-card poker hand. A player who breaks this rule is subject to having his hand ruled dead if the floorperson feels the action was a deliberate violation.

c. A hand is ranked according to the cards actually in it, not by the player's opinion of his holding. Therefore, the undercalling of a hand's rank or a verbal concession is not binding. "The cards speak for themselves.

d. A hand that has been placed faceup on the table and properly identified is a live hand. The player who owns it is entitled to the pot, even if the dealer subsequently mucks the hand in error.

"Properly identified" means accurately identified to the satisfaction of the floorperson.

Examples would be by the dealer and the player confirming the hand, or by a significant majority of players observing the hand. In all situations, a floorperson has discretion in deciding if any equity situation exists.

e. A discarded hand which has never been properly identified that is turned faceup by the dealer at another player's request cannot win any part of the pot. The dealer should touch the hand to the muck before turning it up, but this gesture is done only to avoid an argument, and is not considered necessary from a legal standpoint in order to have the hand be dead.

f. Although it is unethical to deliberately miscall the value of a hand, it is quite possible to do so as an honest mistake. Therefore, a player is responsible for confirming that a hand actually reads as stated. To give a misled player some protection, the floorperson has the power to reconstruct and rule live a hand thrown away as a result of an inaccurate identification of an opposing hand by the opponent or the dealer, even if it has touched the muck. However, if the mucked hand can no longer be satisfactorily reconstructed, and has never been properly identified, the hand is dead. The player must give up any claim to the pot. The house retains the right to make an equitable decision when the mucked hand was obviously the best hand. For example, in Lowball Draw, suppose a player bet after the draw and was called. If he has announced "a seven low" and thereby induced a fold, the folded hand would certainly have been able to beat a pair of sevens.

The muck is defined as discards, burncards, and cards from the unused deck stub. Faceup community cards are not part of the muck. A hand never properly identified that is discarded into the muck by a player who concedes the pot, when the concession is not a result of misinformation about an opponent's hand, is a dead hand, even though it may have been faceup on the table at one time.

g. A hand that has been thrown away but has not touched the muck may be retrieved and ruled a live hand, even if the dealer has touched it, provided the act of throwing it away has not induced another player to muck his hand. To have the hand considered live, turning it faceup may only be done by the owner of that hand, the dealer acting at the owner's explicit request, or the opponent who would be winning the pot if the hand were ruled dead. A thrown-away hand turned faceup by someone other than the above is not a live hand. (Note that if the opponent who would be winning the pot turns up an opponent's hand himself, it is live, but if he asks the dealer to turn it up and the dealer does so without touching it to the muck, it is still dead, as stated in A31e.)

- h. The proper dealer procedure for a hand being shown down is to call attention to any card(s) that are still facedown so the player may turn them up if he wishes. However, the turning up of one or more facedown cards by the dealer or another player in a hand that is partially faceup cannot deprive a player with the best hand from winning the pot.
- i. No player or dealer may show down a hand for an absent player, unless specifically instructed to do so by the hand's owner. The owner of a live hand who is away from the table should be given an opportunity to show down his hand if he is visible and within earshot; otherwise, the hand should be mucked immediately.
- j. A hand discarded faceup is still a live hand, even though it has touched other cards, provided it is clearly identifiable.
- k. A hand that is put into the muck when a player has left the table at the showdown, tacitly implying a concession of the pot, is a dead hand. The house is not obligated to restrain a player who bolts from the table in the belief that he has lost the pot.
- l. If the dealer mistakenly mucks a faceup hand that has never been properly identified, and the player has given overt approval to the action, the error must stand. If the player has not given overt approval, the hand is still eligible to win the pot if the floorperson can determine the contents to his satisfaction by the testimony of other persons. A player who knowingly shows down the best hand cannot be deprived of the pot because the dealer mucked it in error.
- m. Any player or floorperson who sees an error about to be made in awarding a pot has an ethical obligation to speak up.
- n. The responsibility for properly identifying a hand at the showdown is shared by the dealer, player who owns the hand, and to some extent the other players in the game. However, the higher the stakes, the greater the presumed competence of the player. Consequently, he has greater responsibility for protecting his own interests in the pot.
- o. The dealer does not have the obligation to read a hand that has been thrown away facedown, even if that hand had been faceup at one time. A discarded hand that has been momentarily shown but not properly identified should be mucked by the dealer, unless the hand had been discarded because another hand was improperly identified.
- p. A pot should be awarded only by the dealer; no player may scoot in the pot himself.
- q. A player who wishes to contest the ownership of a pot must do so at the time the pot is awarded. A pot that has been awarded without an immediate challenge belongs to the player possessing it.
- r. The floorperson has the authority to calculate the size of a misawarded pot and remove the proper amount of money from a player's stack provided attention was called to the error at the time it was made.

### **A32. ORDER OF SHOWDOWN**

Side-pot winners should be determined before the center pot, to prevent a player from discarding his hand because some player only in for the center pot has him beaten. The rule governing the order of showdown is to be used only in situations where players refuse to show their cards "until the other guy does first." The most practical way for the game to be played, which saves the most time, is for any player who thinks he has a possible contention hand to immediately put it faceup on the table at the showdown. The

following rules are for players who discourteously insist on wastin! time:

The player who last "showed strength" by a bet or raise shall show his hand first. If the last or later rounds of betting are checked out, the "last show of strength" rule still applies, and the round that was last to have any betting is the determining factor.

Subsequent showing of hands will be clockwise from that person. In a pot where nobody has shown strength (because there was no further betting after the blind or forced bet was called), the first player clockwise from the button shall show first in a game using blinds, and the player who made the initial forced bet shall show first in a game without blinds.

### **A33. RANKING OF SUITS**

Suits do not count in the ranking of hands at the showdown. Suit ranking can determine the lowest card for a forced bet, deciding who gets an odd chip in a split pot, assigning seats to players, and the like. Suits are ranked: Spades (highest), Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs. A joker is treated as a blank piece of paper when dealing for high-card.

### **A34. DEALS AND INSURANCE**

In tournament play, deals and insurance are not permitted.

In non-tournament play, pot-splitting is not allowed, but deals that conform to the rules of insurance are permitted. All hands involved must be face-up before any insurance agreements are carried out.

It is in the best interest of the players to keep the game moving. Therefore, insurance agreements will conform to the following rules:

- a. Everybody with a live hand must be all-in except one player, so there is no more betting.
- b. Insurance may be allowed with two cards to come, or restricted to situations where there is only one card to come, depending on the rule used for a particular game or structure.
- c. No turning up the discards.
- d. The pot size must be at least \$1,000 and at least twice the amount of the minimum buy-in.
- e. No player is required to turn over his hand so another player can get insurance.
- f. Insurance negotiations are subject to the same control by the clock as other actions in the game. Clock procedure is discussed in SECTION A38 - THE CLOCK.

Insurance is not considered an integral part of the game of poker. It is a private agreement between the players involved. The dealer should award the pot to the player holding the winning hand. He may only assist the carrying out of the agreement by awarding insurance money at the direct request of the pot-winner.

The floorperson will make a strong effort to get every player to abide by his agreement.

Any person refusing to honor an agreement will be subject to disciplinary action.

However, the cardroom cannot actually guarantee compliance with private agreements.

As it is in the interest of the cardroom to promote harmony, the following guidelines are offered for proper etiquette and the settlement of disputes regarding insurance deals:

- g. An accepted offer is binding.
- h. An offer may be retracted at any time prior to its acceptance.
- i. An offer is automatically cancelled with the dealing of any new cards. Otherwise, an offer is considered open until the person who offered it says that he is withdrawing the offer. Therefore, an offer that has initially been rejected may be accepted if it has not actually been withdrawn.
- j. Any player in the game may help establish an accurate count of the outs and ties of each player. Nobody should recommend a specific deal or counsel rejection of a deal unless invited into the conversation by all parties concerned.
- k. Any person may participate in an insurance deal, including a spectator, unless the house prohibits a non-player laying insurance in a particular type game.
- l. The player in the pot has first option to negotiate a deal. Outsiders should not make any offers until negotiations between the players involved in the pot have failed. Once those negotiations are over, a player in the pot does not have the right to take over another person's agreed-upon deal, as the outside insurance man ran a risk of overlaying the insurance when he made a proposal. A player in the game has priority over a spectator to initiate negotiations.
- m. In one-winner games (and split-pot games involving a tie for high), an insurance agreement with a person not involved in the pot is cancelled by a tie.
- n. An insurance agreement between two players involved in the pot should clarify whether the money is removed. If it is not specified as removed, a tie cancels the agreement. If it is specified as removed, it is not necessary to actually remove it before dealing cards; only the center pot is split. For example, if the deal were worded "I'll lay you three to one for a thousand," a tie would cancel the deal. If it were worded "You take a thousand, I'll take three thousand, and we'll race for the rest," four thousand must be split three and one before dividing the remainder of the pot.
- o. No player who has folded should reveal his knowledge of any cards as being in or out of play while negotiations are being conducted.

### **A35. ODD CHIP**

At tournament play, one-winner games shall have the pot divided as evenly as chips in play permit. An odd chip shall be awarded to the player with the highest-ranking card, by suit, in his hand. The selection is made from his entire hand, not just cards played at the showdown.

At split-pot games, to keep a fast pace, no chip smaller than the minimum betting unit shall be put into the pot by the dealer, except as needed for rake-off. A group of chips equalling the minimum betting unit are treated as a single chip. The high hand gets the odd chip. Pots needing to be sub-divided shall be split as follows:

- a. An odd chip on the first division is awarded to the player(s) going high. If there is a tie for high, the player with the highest-ranking card in his hand by suit gets the odd chip.
- b. On a sub-division for a direction, the player with the highest-ranking card in his hand by suit gets the odd chip. If more than two players tie, and there is more than one odd chip, no player may receive more than one odd chip. The player with the second-highest card in his hand by suit gets the second chip, etc.

Each player in a poker game is required to play only in his own selfinterest. Any behavior designed to assist one player over another is prohibited.

The house has the right to prohibit any two players from playing in the same game. This should not be taken as an accusation. Only one player is permitted to a hand, and he must make all decisions without advice from someone else. Conversation in a foreign language between a player with a live hand and another player or a spectator is forbidden.

Any information about a folded hand that is given to one active player in a pot must be shared with all the active players in the pot. An uncalled hand shown to another player by the pot-winner must, upon request, be shown to the other players.

Potting or kitting between players is prohibited. Anteing for a player one has just beaten is acceptable, provided nobody complains. Contributions larger than an ante or agreements to ante another player whenever one wins a pot are not allowed.

Behavior considered collusion is listed in SECTION J - ETHICS.

### **A37. SPECTATORS**

A player has the right to have the house reposition a spectator in the playing area so that person cannot see his holecards. A player has the right to have the house reposition a spectator in the playing area so that person is no longer irritating him with tobacco smoke or constant loud conversation. A spectator is not to be seated at the playing table itself, even if the game is short-handed. The house has the right to insist that a spectator not be in the immediate area of a table. Spectators are permitted at the table as a courtesy and are in no way allowed to disrupt, distract or influence the play of the game. At tournament play, spectators are not permitted in the immediate vicinity of a table.

### **A38. THE CLOCK**

The house has the right to place a maximum time limit for taking action on one's hand. The dealer may not put the clock on someone unless he has been requested to do so by a player or a flooperson. A player who has the clock put on him and is forewarned of the time limit for taking action shall be penalized in the following manner for exceeding the specified time limit of one minute plus the dealer's countdown:

- a. If there has not been a bet to him, he must check.
- b. If there has been a bet to him, his hand is dead.
- c. If there is an insurance discussion, the dealer is going to deal another card.

To warn the player that time is about to expire, the dealer must count down from ten to zero before the penalty is invoked.

Clock procedure will be as follows: When the dealer starts the clock running, he warns the player "Sir, you have a minute and ten seconds to act." When the minute has expired, if the player has not acted, the dealer will call a flooperson by saying, "I need a flooperson to table --- for a clock countdown:' and immediately begin counting down from ten to zero. When he reaches zero and the player still has not acted, the penalty will be invoked whether or not a flooperson has managed to reach the table.

### **A39. REVENUE FROM GAMES**

Once a player has been awarded a pot and taken it in, no additional rake-off may be taken from it.

An uncalled bet is not considered as part of the pot when calculating the amount of rake-off.

If a percentage rake-off is used for a game, that figure will not be exceeded at any point; therefore, the pot size is never rounded off upwards when computing the amount of rake-off.

In all revenue games not using rake-off or entry fee, time collection will be used.

Procedures for time collection are as follows:

1. In time games which have a "per player:" as opposed to a "per table" charge:
  - a. Half of the hourly time is to be taken on the hour and the other half on the half hour. If the hourly time is an odd amount, the larger portion is taken on the hour.
  - b. The dealer should collect the time from each player in order. If a player is away from the table, his time fee will be taken from his stack.
  - c. In Stud games higher than \$30-\$60 limit, the time charge will be taken from the collected antes. Any player absent from the table will have his time fee taken from his stack. This will be done before the time is taken from the antes.
  - d. In a "playover" situation, time will be taken from the actual owner of the seat.
  - e. A new player, arriving after time has been taken, will pay time only if he is seated within five (5) minutes after the hour or half-hour. If there is a list for this particular game, a player who has been given a seat is liable for the time payment even if he fails to occupy the seat before the five (5) minute grace period has expired.
2. In time games which have a "per table" charge:
  - a. In limit games, the time may be taken out of the antes, or if there are no antes, out of the first blind large enough to accommodate the time charged. The time should be taken before starting the deal.
  - b. In a pot-limit game, the time may be taken out of the first pot to reach \$200.00 (two hundred dollars). Before dealing, the dealer should announce that the next pot will be a time pot. If the pot reaches \$200.00, the dealer should announce that he is taking time and place it in the drop slide. If the pot does not reach \$200.00, the dealer need not repeat his time pot warning, since the players have already been put on notice.
  - c. In most games, time is taken every twenty (20) minutes or every thirty (30) minutes, depending on the number of players, the game structure, and the house's preference. When counting the number of players, both seated and temporarily absent players are counted. The dealer should presume that a player's absence is temporary unless told otherwise by the shift manager.
  - d. In some games, the house may choose to use the "pooled" collection method. For example, in a pot-limit game, when \$25 is to be collected; each player puts up (pools) \$5, the dealer takes the \$25 collection, then the remainder goes into the next pot. The remainder is not counted as part of the pot until after the flop, unless that particular game has been designated differently. With this method, "pool" money is collected from both a playover and the absent player.
  - e. When a dealer takes time, he should always announce it to the entire group of players present.
  - f. In special situations, the house may use a different form of time collection than those listed above.

## A40. HOUSE RIGHTS

A decision of the floorperson is final.

A player shall have no claim against the house for a faulty decision given in good faith, or an honest error by a dealer or floorperson.

The house is not responsible for chips left on the table by an absent player, unless the amount has been verified by a floorperson. The house has no responsibility for cash left on the table by an absent player, whether verified or not. A player should take his cash with him when leaving the table.

The house has the right to inspect any discarded hand, whether called or not, to protect the honesty and integrity of the game.

The house has the right to request a standard of dress, talk, and behavior befitting ladies and gentlemen.

No one is to sell any merchandise in the cardroom without written permission from the house.

The house reserves the right to suspend or waive the use of any rule to accommodate special games or events such as closed games, private games, heads-up matches, and private tournaments. This will only be done when the players involved are informed of and agree to such a change.

This code of rules tries to have the offender be the person who is damaged by the effect of his error, and not some innocent player. In situations not specifically discussed in the rules, this principle will be followed by the floorperson making a decision.

If a decision observing only the letter of the law would be clearly unfair or incorrect, the house has the right to make a decision observing the spirit of the law, which is the concept of fairness.

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## Hold'em and Using Blinds

Hold'em is a community card game. After players receive their initial facedown cards, there is a betting round. The dealer burns a card and deals three boardcards (called "the flop") and turns them up. There is a betting round, and the dealer burns and turns the fourth board- card. There is a betting round, and the dealer burns and turns a final boardcard. There is a final betting round followed by a showdown. The number of individual cards dealt each player depends on the form of Hold'em being played. At Texas Hold'em, each player receives two cards to start, and at the showdown may play both individual cards and three boardcards, one individual card and four boardcards, or all five boardcards, called "playing the board." At Omaha Hold'em, each player receives four cards to start. At the showdown he must play **two** of those four combined with three boardcards.

Texas Hold'em and Omaha Hold'em are the two most popular games from the Hold'em family. Any game with five boardcards where a player is limited to no more than two cards from his hand would be considered a variety of Hold'em.

Certain types of Hold'em, particularly Omaha, lend themselves very well to high-low split play. Our split-pot games use a qualifier of eight or better for low unless specifically stated otherwise. A player may use any two cards from his hand for high and the same or any other combination of two cards for low.

Games with a house dealer use a flat disk called the dealer-button (or just "button") to indicate the theoretical dealer of each hand. The player to the immediate left of the button is first to receive a card. Betting action on the initial round starts with the player on the left of the last player to post a blind bet ("blind"). On subsequent rounds, the first active player clockwise from the button acts first.

## **RULES**

Rules B1. through B3. apply to Hold'em games. Rules B4. and subsequent rules apply to any game played with blinds.

### **B1.**

A player who wishes to play the board (in a game allowing that action) is not permitted to do so unless he gives an indication by word or gesture that he intends to play the board prior to discarding his hand.

### **B2.**

If the dealer flops more than three cards, the whole flop is invalid, regardless of whether or not the correct order of cards can be determined. The flopped cards are put back into the deck, but the burncard stays out of play. The deck is reshuffled, cut, and the dealer burns a card and delivers a new flop. This method is used unless there has been substantial action based on an improper card, in which case, the card the players based their actions on will stand, and the dealer on subsequent streets shall treat the two stuck-together cards as a single card. He must burn the top card before dealing another round of cards.

### **B3**

At split-limit play, Hold'em games will use the lower limit before and on the flop, and the upper limit on the last two betting rounds, unless a specifically posted sign announces a different procedure.

### **B4**

Any new game employing a dealer-button will have the button positioned, for the initial deal, in front of the first player at the table counter-clockwise from the dealer. Any player who does not receive a hand on the initial deal is considered an incoming player to a game already in progress and must come in on or post the big blind (if this policy is in force for that game). At tournament play, if there has not been a random draw for seat assignment, there shall be a random draw for the button.

### **B5>**

In non-tournament play, a new player to the game may not receive a hand between the big blind and the button, or have the privilege of last-action. He must wait for the button to pass him.

### **B6>**

All blinds are "live," meaning the player has the option of raising the pot when the action reaches him.

### **B7>**

A player who posts a regular blind may only put up the amount required by the structure of a particular game; oversize blinds are prohibited.

**B8>**

An extra, voluntary blind, posted by the person on the immediate left of the person who has the furthest consecutive blind clockwise from the button, is called a "straddle." The rules governing straddle bets are as follows:

- a. Only one straddle is permitted on a deal, unless the shift manager specifically permits multiple straddles.
- b. A specific size straddle is set for each game. It is always at least twice the size of the big blind. A straddle of larger size than regulation is not permitted.
- c. In games where the bring-in is greater than the big blind, the bring-in will continue to be greater than the straddle, usually in the same ratio. Example: If the big blind is ten dollars and the structure is "come for double the big blind (\$20)," a twenty dollar straddle would make the minimum bring-in \$40.
- d. The action before the flop is initiated by the person on the immediate left of the straddler.
- e. The straddle is a live blind; that player may raise the pot.
- f. The button does not have the option of posting a straddle.
- g. The house has the right to disallow the use of a straddle bet in a game. However, if the dealer breaks the house rule and allows the player to post a straddle and substantial action takes place, the bet must stand and is live.
- h. A sleeper bet (straddle out of the normal straddle position) is not allowed, except with specific approval of the shift manager.

**B9>**

Initial round betting action begins with the player who is to the immediate left of the last player, clockwise from the button, who has posted a normal blind (or straddle). That player's blind is termed "the big blind" in this rulebook, following the custom of increasing the size of blinds clockwise from the button. If a player makes up a blind in the straddle position, but does not post the amount of a straddle bet, he will be the first player to act.

**B10>**

In non-tournament play, a player who has not taken any blinds, or who has missed taking any blind, cannot have the privilege of last action on that round of deals.

**B11>**

The system of button and blind placement for each type game is determined by weighing the unfairness of someone escaping a blind versus someone gaining last-action twice on a round of deals. Therefore, the system used at each form will be as follows:

- a. At tournament play, the "No Missed Blinds" method will be used for all games.
- b. At non-tournament play, the "No Missed Blinds" method will be used in limit games, and the "No Dead Button" method will be used in big-bet poker (pot-limit and no-limit play).

**B12>**

The two systems controlling blind and button placement are described as follows:

- a. THE "NO MISSED BLINDS" METHOD -- Every player must take all the blinds each round. If a player who had a blind on the previous deal does not participate in the next one, his seat may still be assigned a blind or the button. A blind or button assigned to an empty seat is termed "dead." A dead blind is one not actually posted. A dead button confers the privilege of last-action on the first player counter-clockwise from it, normally

the person having last-action the previous deal.

b. THE "NO DEAD BUTTON" METHOD -- No player may be dealt the privilege of last action on two consecutive hands, so the button must always move forward to a position in front of an active player. All the blinds for that structure must be posted each deal.

Therefore, someone may escape posting a particular blind on that round. However, any player away from his seat who has taken all the blinds and is due for the button shall have a hand dealt to his seat if he is in the room, unless he has specifically requested to be dealt out. If he does not return in time, the hand is killed and the deal played. This method will be used even though a player may unintentionally obtain the privilege of last action twice (if the player on the button fails to return to play the hand).

EXAMPLE: Suppose on the first deal, Player A has the button, Player B has the \$5 blind, and Player C has the \$10 blind. If Player C quits the game, here is how the blinds and button would be placed on the following deals with each method:

The "NO MISSED BLINDS" method on the next deal would have Player D (on Player C's left) take the big blind, the empty chair (where Player C had been sitting) assigned a dead little blind, and Player B the button. The following deal would have Player E take the big blind, Player D the small blind, and the empty chair vacated by Player C assigned the button. With this method, each player would take all his blinds, but player B would have the privilege of last-action on two consecutive deals.

The "NO DEAD BUTTON" method on the next deal would have Player E take the big blind, Player D the small blind, and Player 8 the button. The following deal, the button would go to Player D. With this method, Player D would escape taking his big blind, but Player B would not get the privilege of last-action on two consecutive deals.

### **13>**

All blinds will be arranged in clockwise order from the button. The number and placement of blinds will vary from game to game. A blind may be used as "dead money" that is not part of the player's bet in some structures. An idea of precise usage for each game will be discussed in SECTION H - STRUCTURE OF GAMES.

A player who misses a blind will be given a "missed blind" button. To receive a hand when he returns, a player with a missed blind button must do one of the following:

- a. Come in on his big blind.
- b. Make up the blind in appropriate fashion.
- c. Place a straddle bet, if in the proper position (immediate left of the big blind.) A player who makes up his blind is still required to take the blind in normal rotation.

A player who misses all the blinds on a round shall make them up as follows:

- a. At limit poker, the player must post an amount equal to the sum of the blinds. The excess amount over the bring-in becomes dead money, and is put into the center pot by the dealer because it is not part of the bet.
- b. At big-bet poker (pot-limit and no-limit poker), the player must post the amount of the big blind only. In some structures, where the bring-in is greater than the big blind, the rule may be used that all blinds are made up, but not exceeding the amount of the bring-in. If this rule is used, all the blind money is live and counts towards the player's bet.

### **B16>**

At limit play, a missed blind by a player already in a game may not be made up between the blinds. He must wait for the button to pass. At big-bet poker, he may make up a blind

between the blinds, and does not take any more blinds or get the button that round.

**B17>**

At lower-limit play, a new player may enter the game without having to post a blind. At limit poker, in all games of \$5-\$10 and higher, a new player, before getting dealt in, must either take the big blind or put up the amount of the big blind as live money.

A player transferred by the house from a broken game, or game where the limit was changed, does not have to post any money before he is scheduled to take the big blind. However, he will still be given a "missed blind" button if he waits for the blinds to pass him.

**B18>**

Once a hand has been dealt in a new game, that game will be treated the same as an established game with regard to an incoming player posting a blind(see B17).

**B19>**

A player who goes broke and wishes to re-enter the game shall be treated as a new player with regard to the blinds once he has missed his big blind. The following rules therefore apply:

a. At lower limit play, he may re-enter play whenever he wishes without having to post any blinds.

b. At \$5-\$10 limit or higher, he is required to post or come in on his big blind if he has missed his big blind.

**B20>**

At \$5-\$10 limit or higher, a player who moves to a new seat, and goes past three or more active (present at the table) players clockwise from the blinds, must post the amount of the big blind (or wait to take the big blind). This rule prevents a player from continually changing seats to unfairly get several extra hands before taking a blind.

**B21>**

A player who has just taken the blind before the button or just played his button, and then immediately moves to a new seat that is due for the big blind, or either of the two seats on the immediate left of the big blind, has the option of letting the blinds go by him without penalty. He has not unfairly received any hands, because his relative position to the blinds has not improved.

**B22>**

At stakes lower than \$5-\$10 limit, a player who takes his big blind and then switches seats before the next hand may do so without penalty. At \$5-\$10 limit and higher, he must either make up the little blind or wait for the big blind, if he moves past three or more active (present at the table) players clockwise from the big blind's new position on the next deal.

**B23>**

A player who needs to make up a blind and looks at any of his cards before posting the blind money has a dead hand, provided the error is caught before the player acts on his hand. If he acts before the error is caught, the hand is live and may be played, and the player must make up the blind on a subsequent deal.

**B24>**

If the big blind is less than the required amount because that player is all-in, all subsequent betting action is taken as if the full amount has been posted.

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## STUD

Stud is characterized by players having one or more faceup, individual cards. Seven-card Stud is the most popular form, and the only type discussed in these rules. Seven-card Stud is played high, low, and high- low split. To avoid running out of cards on a deal, all Seven-card Stud games normally will be restricted to a maximum of eight players. To start a deal, each player is dealt two downcards and one upcard (called a "doorcard").

There is a betting round followed by an upcard ("fourth street"), a betting round followed by an upcard ("fifth street"), a betting round followed by an upcard ("sixth street"), a betting round followed by a downcard ("seventh street") and a final betting round followed by a showdown. Each of the three forms is played as follows:

**a. SEVEN STUD HIGH** -- On the first round, the low card by suit is required to initiate action with a bet. Suits are ranked: Spades (highest), Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs. On subsequent rounds, the high hand on board initiates betting action. If hands are tied, the player to the left of the dealer acts first. For split-limit games, the lower limit applies on the first two betting rounds unless there is an open pair. If there is an open pair on fourth street, any better has the option of wagering either the lower or upper limit. If he bets the lower limit, he may be raised the amount of either the upper or lower limit by any player. Subsequent raisers also may raise the lower limit if nobody has bet or raised the upper limit. On fifth, sixth or seventh street, only the higher limit may be bet.

**b. SEVEN STUD LOW (RAZZ)**- Aces are low cards only. Straights and flushes do not impair the value of a hand for low. On the first round, the high card by suit is required to initiate action. On subsequent rounds, the lowest hand on board initiates betting action. If hands are tied, the player to the left of the dealer acts first. Split- limit games use the lower limit on third and fourth street and the upper limit thereafter, with the presence of an open pair not affecting the limit.

**c. SEVEN STUD HIGH-LOW SPLIT** -- A qualifier of eight or better for low will be in force for all high-low split games unless a specific posting to the contrary is made. The low card by suit initiates betting action on the first round, with an ace counting as a high card for this purpose. On subsequent rounds, the high hand initiates action. If there is a tie, the player to the left of the dealer acts first. Split- limit games use the lower limit on third and fourth street and the upper limit on subsequent streets, with an open pair not affecting the limit. As in Seven-card Low, aces may be used for low, and straights and flushes do not impair the value of a hand for low. A player may use any five cards to make his best high hand and any other grouping of five cards, whether the same as his high hand or not, to make his best low hand.

### C1

A player who has anted, but is not actually present at the table when the time comes to act on his hand, loses his ante and has the forced bet put in the pot for him, if he has that obligation.

### C2

At non-tournament play, a player who has not indicated his desire to be dealt in by posting an ante is ineligible to receive a hand. If such a player is dealt a starting hand, the hand is dead, provided the failure to ante is discovered before the player has acted by putting any chips into the pot. If a player ineligible for a hand by failure to ante is dealt an

upcard that obligates him to make a forced bet, the player who has the second-lowest card (second-highest at Razz) shall assume that obligation. A misdeal may not be called because an ineligible player is dealt a starting hand. A misdeal occurs when a player who has anted is dealt out, provided attention is called to the error before any player has received all the cards to his starting hand. **See A9d. - MISDEALS**

### **C3**

If a player who is in for all the bets folds, his seat receives the care it was due on that round, and continues to receive a card on subsequent rounds if nobody bets. The card is dealt facing the same way (up or down) as the cards to the live players on that round. A player who has folded cannot be considered high on board for betting purposes, even though his seat has been dealt one or more additional cards that outrank faceup cards of the other players. The highest-ranking live hand initiates betting action. (The failure of a dealer to deal the dead seat a card where required can be psychologically disturbing, but no player has been injured, because receiving a random card does not affect a player's chance of winning the pot, as explained in **SECTION A6 - PROPER CARD.**

### **C4**

If the dealer mistakenly deals a dead seat a card, or fails to deal a dead seat a card when required, it should be corrected by having the cards moved to the proper player if there has not been substantial action. Two players acting would constitute substantial action, because the dealer counts as a player. If there has been substantial action, or if the error is on a round of downcards that might have been seen, the cards stay and play as dealt. Once the proper order of cards has been broken by the improper dealing out of the dead seat, and the error stands, the dead seat should no longer receive a card on subsequent rounds.

### **C5**

If the dealer is going to run out of cards before all active players have a complete hand. The following procedure shall be used:

- a. The undealt cards and burncards are remade when it is determined that there are not enough cards to finish the deal, not when the dealer actually runs out of legal cards to deal.
- b. If a new deck is made by combining undealt cards with burncards (and buried cards from the remainder of a round where the dealer dealt prematurely and the cards could not be used), the dealer must observe the rules for burning a card before dealing, and not dealing the last card of the deck. Therefore, the number of players that can be accommodated by making up a new deck is two less than the number of cards available.
- c. If every player can be given a final card in accordance with rules (a) and (b), the dealer mixes the undealt cards and burncards by scrambling as a shuffling procedure. He then squares up the deck, cuts, burns a card and deals.
- d. If the number of players needing a final card is too many to be taken care of by the procedure of rules (a), (b), and (c), this should be foreseen by the dealer before anyone is dealt a final card by examining the stub of the deck. Instead of dealing anyone an individual card, he shall burn a card and deal a community card for all the players to use. If the dealer has failed to realize at the start of the round that he does not have enough cards, he should deal all but the last card. He then remakes the deck from the last card and burncards, burns a card, and deals a community card for all players who lack a final card. If only some of the players are sharing a community card, there shall be no betting

on the last round.

e. In higher limit games (those that allow a bet of more than ten dollars), it is extremely unlikely that a community card will be necessary. Therefore, the dealer is forbidden to examine the stub of the deck (to see if he has enough cards to finish the deal) without permission from the floorperson.

#### **C6**

A player who calls when he is beaten by his opponent's upcards is still not entitled to a refund for these reasons:

a. There is always the chance an opponent whose holecards do not help his hand will assume by the call that his hand cannot win, and will muck his hand without showing it down.

b. The call could be used as a tool to reveal an opponent's hand.

c. Information about the better's hand has been made available to all the players by the call. Therefore, it is unfair if the better does not receive his normal compensation for disclosing this information.

#### **C7**

In all games, the dealer should indicate who acts first. In high or high- low games, the dealer should call open pairs. In low-limit games, (\$5-\$10 Stud and below) and tournaments with a buy-in of less than \$1,000, the dealer should identify four-straights and four-flushes. At higher-limit games and tournament play with a buy-in of \$1,000 or more, the dealer should not identify four-straights and four-flushes.

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