

Welcome to the Complete Manual to Poker

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INTRODUCTION

There are many different styles of Poker you can play in live casinos and online, but of all the styles played today, none is more popular than Texas Hold'em.

Texas Hold'em has garnered much of its popularity from hit TV shows such as the Traveler's Channel *World Poker Tour*, and ESPN's *World Series of Poker*. Aside from these exciting shows, Hold'em has gained popularity because it is one of the easiest games to learn, the hands are fast and the stakes are high. Many novices have come to realise that as long as one masters the skill of the game, there is a lot of money to be won in the world of Texas Hold'em Poker.

Whether you are interested in making money or want to improve your Texas Hold'em game, this book is exactly what you need. However, please be aware that although this book will provide you with the basic rules and strategies playing Texas Hold'em or any other Poker game for that matter takes more than luck – it also takes dedication. The skill you need to become a good Poker player can only be learned through practice, patience and observation. If you ever hope to win at Poker or become a champion, you are going to need to learn to play like a pro.

So what's their secret?

Not only have the Poker pros developed their own unique strategies but they also understand that while knowing how to play the cards is important, the real talent is playing the other players.

Professionals study their fellow opponents and learn how the other players will react during game. This gives them an advantage over the other players - a pro will know how to weed conservative players out of the pot or keep the juvenile player in the hand for as long as they can so he can milk these hotheads for all they're worth.

How you gain the advantage over your opponents will vary depending on whether you are playing Poker live or online. One of the biggest hurdles for many online Poker novices is that while the games may follow the same rules and strategies, gaining the upper hand you're your opponents is difficult when you cannot see them, especially if you do not know how the right psychology.

Why? In a live poker game, you can see the facial expressions and reactions of the other players. This allows you to gain a good idea of

the type of player they are, as well as how they play their cards by simply observing their body language. However, when playing online, you do not have the luxury of relying on the reactions of your opponents, which means you have to figure out the type of players you are up against, you need to mentally pay attention to the decisions they make in the game and you need to observe how they communicate when you converse with them online.

For the purpose of this guide, we will be focusing primarily on the tactics related to online Texas Hold'em game play. You should gain a better understanding of how to effectively play against other online players by learning the online psychology of good game play and also how to use these skills to win.

Taking your online Texas Hold'em Poker playing abilities to the next level is possible and this book is here to show you how you can make this goal a reality. Within its pages you will find the rules, strategies and fantastic tips related to online Poker and Texas Hold'em. You will discover the different types of players you should watch out for, as well as innovative strategic tools that can help you uncover odds, providing you with a better shot at winning the pot.

Good Luck, Have Fun - And Don't Stop Winning!

(As you read this book you will realise that luck really is not a major factor when it comes to being a killer poker player!)

THE ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE POKER

Before we turn our attention to Texas Hold'em and the strategies you can apply to your online Poker playing, it is important that you understand the differences between online and live Poker, as well as the advantages of playing online.

Now more than ever, people are choosing to take part in online Poker instead of going to a casino. One of the major reasons for this is because visiting an online poker site is far easier and more convenient than going to a live casino. Imagine instead of having to travel outside of your home to a busy, noisy casino, you can now relax and experience just as much Poker enjoyment in the virtual world with a simple click of your mouse.

Here are just a few advantages of online poker:

You can play at any time of the day or night from the comfort of your own home or place of choosing, at your convenience
You can play against players from all over the world
You can play for fun
You can use special strategic tools to assist you when you play
You don't have to worry about the other opponents seeing your expression or hearing your comments during a hand

To further appreciate the advantages of playing online, take a closer look at the differences between live and online Poker.

Physical vs. Virtual

Perhaps the single most obvious difference between live and online Poker is the fact that at a live Poker table, the players are physically present and you can therefore see the moves of your opponents, their emotions and their reactions. This makes playing live Poker far more challenging than online, because players always need to be conscious of what their opponents are doing and if they are being watched. Players also need to have control over their body language, emotions and expressions, as sudden reactions, nervous gestures or movements can often be a dead giveaway to the experienced player.

When playing Poker online, players do not need to concern themselves with physical control. You can scream, yell, laugh and make any expression you want, because even though your family, pets or neighbors may hear or see you and possibly think you're crazy, your opponents can only judge you by the way you converse over a chat dialogue and by the moves you make in the game. What's more is when you play online you don't have to worry about following a dress code, which is required at many live casinos. Therefore, whether you feel inspired to dress to the nines, wear your pajamas or even your birthday suit.

Table Limits

Generally there are lower limits in online Poker rooms than in live casinos. There are certain internet casinos that offer tables with higher limits but there is usually enough diversity in table limits to suit the budget of any player. The lower limit tables makes online Poker an ideal environment for players to learn, develop and try out new strategies without feeling as though they are taking a huge gambling risk. Thus, there is no worry of losing a substantial amount of money while honing your skills online.

Variety

When it comes to choosing Poker games and betting limits, no live casino can provide you with the variety you will find online. Choosing a Poker table is important for all players, because it is essential that you feel comfortable while playing. Online Poker rooms allow you the chance of selecting a table with a betting limit that is most suitable for your budget and expertise. You will also discover that finding a seat at an online poker table of your choosing is far easier and more probable than in a live casino. Just check out the hundreds of tables to choose from at www.africanpalacepoker.com

Game Conduct

It is not possible for any players participating in online Poker to break the rules of conduct that apply to the game. Due to computer technology and gaming software, no player has the ability to see their opponents' cards, to show their cards to other players, place string bets or act out of turn during a hand.

The software will only permit the conduct that has been programmed to occur and for the standard online casino or Poker site, this means that you are entitled to see the number of players taking part in the hand, the money amount of each player and the total sum of money that has accumulated in the pot. On the other hand, in a live casino, players can break conduct rules, cause disruptions and stall the hand quite easily.

Player Support

Due to the fact that online Poker can be played in the comfort and privacy of your own home or a place of your choosing, you can use a variety of special tools and programmes such as calculators, charts and tables when playing a game. The purpose of these devices is to assist you in finding out the best odds in the hand. Although they are not considered cheating and while some are even permitted in a live casino, the beauty of using these helpful tools online is that no one else can see you and therefore no one can judge your actions or intimidate you when you play.

Time Control

When it comes to fast hands, live Poker does not compare to online Poker. Online Poker games are substantially shorter than those played in a live casino.

The major reasons for this are due to the fact that internet players continually hop from table to table, and hands are much shorter and the rounds are quick because of the computer software. Players can not see their opponents, which allows online players the freedom to participate in games for as long or as little as they wish. Therefore, while one player may only be interested in playing a single game for a few minutes, another may wish to spend an hour or longer. A live poker game can last for hours and this is because the average round during a hand can take anywhere between 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the number of players involved in the hand.

Overall, the experiences provided by both live and online Poker tables are equally sociable, enjoyable and rewarding for players. Each environment requires players to adapt to a different style of game play that is often challenging and involves skill. Nothing beats the advantages of comfort, convenience and choice that you will only find with online Poker.

All Examples listed in this book will be in ZAR NL 10/20

GENERAL POKER RULES

Have you ever caught yourself racking your brain trying to remember the basic rules of Poker hands or forgetting what hand beats what? This is a common concern amongst many players and regardless of what player category you fit into, you need to know the basics of poker in order to really dig your heels into the sport of Texas Hold'em.

A standard 52-card deck is used in every Poker game, regardless of the number of players or the style of game that is being played. The standard deck features the following cards starting with the highest rank to the lowest as listed below:

- * **Ace**
- * **King**
- * **Queen**
- * **Jack**
- * **10**
- * **9**
- * **8**
- * **7**

- * 6
- * 5
- * 4
- * 3
- * 2
- * **Ace** (an ace can count as both a low or high card)

Each rank is featured in the same 4 equal suits:

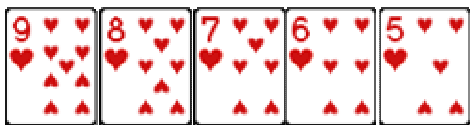
- ♠ Spade
- ♦ Diamonds
- ♥ Hearts
- ♣ Clubs

The object is to achieve the highest hand by obtaining one of the winning card combinations listed below in the table. *Note: the following list begins with the highest and ends with the lowest possible winning hand.*

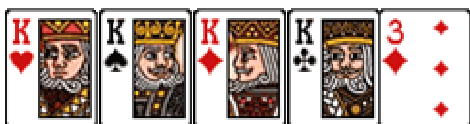
Royal Flush - A Royal Flush is an Ace, King, Queen, Jack and Ten of same suit.



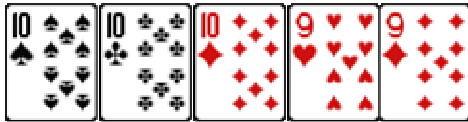
A Straight Flush – this is five consecutive cards of the same suit. ("Suits" are spades, hearts, clubs and diamonds.)



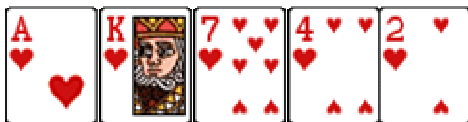
Four of a Kind - Four cards of the same rank. For example four kings, plus any fifth card. As always, higher ranks are better - four tens would beat four sixes.



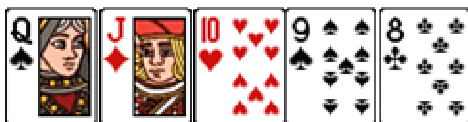
Full House – This is three cards of the same rank, with a pair of another rank. For example: **KKK33**. The higher ranking three cards determines which full house beats another -- **77766** beats **222AA**.



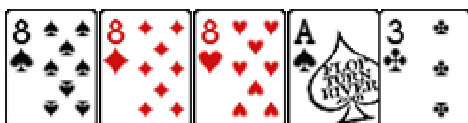
Flush – This is five cards of the same suit. For example, the Ace, king, Seven Four and Two of hearts. When comparing flushes, they are ranked from the top card on down. **AK742** defeats **KQJ85**, while a **QJ987** flush defeats a **QJ983** one. If two flushes have exactly the same cards, like **AJ976** of spades versus **AJ976** of hearts, this is a tie and a pot would be split.



Straight – This is five sequential cards of different suits, For example, **QJT98**. When two straights are shown, the highest card determines the winner - **KQJT9** defeats **87654**. An **Ace** can be used to make either a 'Broadway' straight of **AKQJT** or a 'wheel' straight of **5432A**. 'Around the corner' straights like **32AKQ** are not allowed.



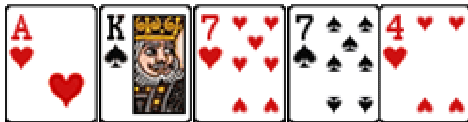
Three of a Kind – This is three cards of the same rank, such as **888** with two unpaired cards. As always, the higher ranked three of a kind defeats the lower ranked three of a kind - **99932** beats **666AK**. In flop games, it is possible for both players to have the same three of a kind, in which case the two unrelated 'kicker' cards would determine the winner - **QQQ92** would defeat **QQQ87**. If the two hands are identical, the pot is split.



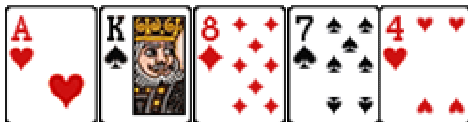
Two Pair - Two cards of one rank, two cards of another rank and a kicker of a third rank. For example: **KK332** defeats **QQJJ9** - **99554** defeats **9933A** - **7766A** defeats **7766Q**. Two hands of the same ranks, like **KKQQ5** versus **KKQQ5** split the pot.



One Pair – This is two cards of the same rank and three unrelated cards. For example: **JJK73**. A higher pair defeats a lower pair. When players have the same pair, the unrelated 'kicker' cards are valued in order, so **99Q32** defeats **99765**.



No Pair, High Card – These are Poker hands with no pair or any of the other ranking values above. When comparing no pair hands, the highest card determines the winner, using each card in order if necessary, so **AKQ94** defeats **AKQ85**.



Low Hand Rankings

Two principal ways are used to determine rank of low Poker hands. The common way is for an Ace to play low and for straights and flushes to be ignored. Thus, the lowest possible hand is a **5432A**.

The second low Poker hand ranking method is 'Kansas City' or 'deuce to seven' method, where Aces are high and straights and flushes do count. With this method, the best possible low is a **75432**. In both cases, low Poker hands are compared in terms of the number they create, from highest card to lowest - **87653** defeats **95432**. If a Joker is used, it serves as the lowest missing card.

BASIC TEXAS HOLD'EM GAME RULES, TERMINOLOGY AND FACTS:

Number of Players – is always between 2 and 10. If a Hold'em game consists only of two players, it is referred to as a 'heads up' match.

Dealer Button (Button, Buck, Puck) - This is a device that is used in online Poker rooms to mark the dealer among the players for each hand. The dealer button is a small disk that is marked with the letter 'D'. The dealer button is not only essential to the players so that they know who is dealing but also because the two players to the left of the dealer must post the two blinds in the game. After completion of each hand, the dealer button moves to the left.

Blinds - In games with blinds, there are two blinds posted – the small blind (half of the minimum level bet) and the big blind (the full minimum bet). Before the game begins, the small blind is posted by the first player on the dealer's left and the big blind is posted by the player to the left of the small blind player. The purpose of the blinds is to ensure that there is money in the pot before the game starts.

Betting can then begin, encouraging players to take part in the hand. It also means that no one will walk away empty handed should the hand end quickly. The size of the blinds is determined by the limits of each table. Therefore if you are playing at a R4/R8 table, and the typical small blind is half the minimum bet, the small blind will be R2, and the big blind will be the full minimum bet of R4.

Betting Structure - The betting structure is the same for every table. The only aspect that will change is the amount of money involved, which will correspond to the limits for the table you choose to play at. For example, the R4/R8 table: For each round of betting, there is a limit of 1 bet and 3 raises. Therefore, in the R4/R8 example, betting would be restricted to a total of R16 in rounds 1 and 2 and \$32 in rounds 3 and 4.

Hole Cards - Also known as 'pocket' cards, hole cards are those dealt to each player and are face down, so that only the player can see these cards.

The Flop - These are the first three community cards issued by the dealer.

Turn - The fourth community card that is dealt

River - The fifth and final community card to be dealt

GENERAL POKER RULES

The Buy In

When you enter a game, you must make a full buy-in for that particular game. A full buy-in for limit Poker is at least 10 times the maximum bet for the game being played, unless designated otherwise. A full buy-in at pot-limit or no-limit poker is 40 times the minimum bring-in (usually, the size of the big blind), unless designated otherwise. Only one short buy-in is allowed per session. Adding to your stack is not considered a buy-in and may be done in any quantity between hands

The Shuffle and Cut

In a player-dealt game, the pack must be shuffled and cut before the cards are dealt. The recommended method to protect the integrity of the game is to have three people involved instead of only two. The dealer on the previous hand takes in the discards and squares up the deck prior to the shuffle. The player on the new dealer's left shuffles the cards and then slides the pack to the new dealer, who gets them cut by the player on his right.

The deck must be riffled a minimum of four times. The cut must leave a minimum of four cards in each portion. The bottom of the deck should be protected so nobody can see the bottom card. This is done by using a cut-card. A Joker can be used as a cut-card. Any complaint about the shuffle, cut or other preparation connected with dealing must be made before the player has looked at his hand or betting action has started.

Misdeals

The following circumstances can cause a misdeal, provided attention is called to the error before two players have acted on their hands. (If two players have acted in turn, the deal must be played to conclusion)

- a. The first or second card of the hand has been dealt face up or exposed through dealer error.
- b. Two or more cards have been exposed by the dealer.
- c. Two or more boxed cards (improperly faced cards) are found.
- d. Two or more extra cards have been dealt in the starting hands of a game.

- e. An incorrect number of cards have been dealt to a player, except the top card may be dealt if it goes to the player in proper sequence.
- f. Any card has been dealt out of the proper sequence (except an exposed card may be replaced by the burn card without such action causing a misdeal).
- g. The button was out of position.
- h. The first card was dealt to the wrong position.
- i. Cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player not entitled to a hand.
- j. A player has been dealt out who is entitled to a hand. This player must be present at the table or have posted a blind or ante.

Action is considered to occur in stud games when two players after the forced bet have acted on their hands. In button games, action is considered to occur when the two players after the blinds have acted on their hands. Once action occurs, a misdeal can no longer be declared. The hand is played to conclusion and no money is returned to any player whose hand is fouled.

Dead Hands

Your hand is declared dead if:

- a. You fold or announce that you are folding when facing a bet or a raise.
- b. You throw your hand away in a forward motion causing another player to act behind you (even if not facing a bet).
- c. In stud, when facing a bet, you pick your up cards off the table, turn your up cards facedown or mix your up cards and down cards together.
- d. The hand does not contain the proper number of cards for that Poker form (except at stud, a hand missing the final card may be ruled live and at lowball and draw high a hand with too few cards before the draw is live).
- e. You act on a hand with a Joker as a hole card in a game not using a Joker. (A player who acts on a hand with out looking at a card assumes the liability of finding an improper card)
- f. You have the clock on you when facing a bet or raise and exceed the specified time limit.

Cards thrown into the muck may be ruled dead. However a hand that is clearly identifiable may be retrieved, if doing so is in the best interest of the game. An extra effort should be made to rule a hand

retrievable if it was folded as a result of false information given to the player. Cards thrown into another player's hand are dead, whether they are face up or facedown.

Betting and Raising

1. Check-raise is permitted in all games, except in certain forms of lowball.
2. In no-limit and pot-limit games, unlimited raising is allowed.
3. In limit Poker, for a pot involving three or more players who are not all-in, there is a maximum of a bet and three raises all owed.
4. Unlimited raising for money games is allowed in heads-up play. This applies any time the action becomes heads-up before the raising has been capped. Once the raising is capped on a betting round, it cannot be uncapped by a subsequent fold that leaves two players heads-up. For tournament play, the three raise maximum for limit Poker applies when heads-up as well.
5. In limit play, an all-in wager of less than half a bet does not reopen the betting for any player who has already acted and is in the pot for all previous bets. A player facing less than half a bet can fold, call or complete the wager. An all-in wager of a half a bet or more is treated as a full bet and a player may fold, call or make a full raise. (An example of a full raise is on a R20 betting round, raising a R15 all-in bet to R35).
6. Any wager must be at least the size of the previous bet or raise in that round, unless a player is going all-in.
7. The smallest chip that can be wagered in a game is the smallest chip used in the antes or blinds. Smaller chips do not play even in quantity, so a player wanting action on such chips must change them up between deals. If betting is in Rand units or greater, a fraction of a Rand does not play. A player going all-in must put all chips that play into the pot.
8. A verbal statement in turn denotes your action and is binding. If, in turn, you verbally declare a fold, check, bet, call or raise, you are forced to take that action.
9. Rapping the table in turn with your hand is a pass.
10. Deliberately acting out of turn is not tolerated. A player who checks out of turn may not bet or raise on the next turn to act. An action or verbal declaration out of turn may be ruled binding if there is no bet, call or raise by an intervening player acting after the infraction has been committed.
11. To retain the right to act, a player must stop the action by announcing Time (or an equivalent word) Failure to stop the action before three or more players have acted behind you may cause you

to lose the right to act. You cannot forfeit your right to act if any player in front of you has not acted, only if you fail to act when it legally becomes your turn. Therefore, if you wait for someone whose turn comes before you and three or more players act behind you, this still does not hinder your right to act.

12. A player who bets or calls by releasing chips into the pot is bound by that action. However, if you are unaware that the pot has been raised, you may withdraw that money and reconsider your action, provided that no one else has acted after you.
13. In limit Poker, if you make a forward motion into the pot area with chips and thus cause another player to act, you may be forced to complete your action.
14. String raises are not allowed. To protect your right to raise, you should either declare your intention verbally or place the proper amount of chips into the pot. Putting a full bet plus a half-bet or more into the pot is considered to be the same as announcing a raise, and the raise must be completed. (This does not apply in the use of a single chip of greater value.)
15. If you put a single chip in the pot that is larger than the bet but do not announce a raise, you are assumed to have only called.
Example: In a R3-R6 game, when a player bets R6 and the next player puts a R25 chip in the pot without saying anything, that player has merely called the R6 bet.
16. All wagers and calls of an improperly low amount must be brought up to proper size if the error is discovered before the betting round has been completed. This includes actions such as betting a lower amount than the minimum bring-in (other than going all-in) and betting the lower limit on an upper limit betting round. If a wager that is supposed to be made in a rounded off amount and it is not and should be corrected, it shall be changed to the proper amount nearest in size. No one who has acted can change a call to a raise because the wager size has been changed.

The Showdown

1. A player must show all cards in the hand face-up on the table to win any part of the pot.
2. Cards speak – they must be read for themselves. The dealer assists in reading hands but players are responsible for holding onto their cards until the winner is declared. Although verbal declarations as to the contents of a hand are not binding, deliberately miscalling a hand with the intent of causing another player to discard a winning hand is unethical and may result in forfeiture of the pot.

3. Anyone who sees an incorrect amount of chips put into the pot or an error about to be made in awarding a pot, has an ethical obligation to point out the error. Please help us keep mistakes of this nature to a minimum.
4. All losing hands must be killed by the dealer before a pot is awarded.
5. Any player who has been dealt in can request to see any hand that has been called, even if the opponent's hand or the winning hand has been mucked. However, this is a privilege that can be revoked if abused. If a player other than the pot winner asks to see a hand that has been folded, that hand is dead. If the winning player asks to see a losing player's hand, both hands are live and the best hand wins.
6. Cards shown during a deal to a player not in the pot should only be shown to all players when the deal is finished.
7. If everyone checks (or is all-in) on the final betting round, the player who acted first is the first to show the hand. The last player to take aggressive action by a bet or raise is the first to show the hand. In order to speed up the game, a player holding a probable winner is encouraged to show the hand without delay. If there is a side pot, players involved in the side pot should show their hands before anyone who is all-in for only the main pot.

Ties

1. The ranking of suits from highest to lowest is Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs. Suits never break a tie for winning a pot. Suits are used only in stud and then only to break a tie between cards of the same rank (no re-deal or redraw).
2. Dealing a card to each player is used to determine things like who moves to another table. If the cards are dealt, the order is clockwise starting with the first player on the dealer's left (the button position is irrelevant). Drawing a card is used to determine issue such as who gets the button in a new game.
3. An odd chip is broken down to the smallest unit used in the game.
4. No player can receive more than one odd chip.
5. If two or more hands tie, an odd chip is awarded as follows:
 - a. In a button game, the first hand clockwise from the button gets the odd chip.
 - b. In a stud game, the odd chip is given to the highest card by suit in all high games, and to the lowest card by suit in all low games. (When making this determination, all cards are used, not just the five cards that constitute the player's hand.)

- c. In high-low split games, the high hand receives the odd chip in a split between the high and the low hands. The odd chip between tied high hands is awarded as in a high game of that Poker form and the odd chip between tied low hands is awarded as in a low game of that Poker form.
- d. All side pots and the main pot are split as separate pots, not mixed together

TEXAS HOLD'EM IN ACTION

Round One

The Pre-Flop

At the start of each hand, a small disk known as the **dealer button** is placed in front of one of the players. This disk indicates the theoretical dealer of each hand and marks the individual who will act last in each of the betting rounds. After each hand, the button moves clockwise one spot to the next player.

First Round



The two players to the left of the button make forced bets called the small blind and big blind respectively. In **No Limit Hold'em**, the minimum bet is equal to the big blind, (i.e. in a R30/R60 No Limit Hold'em game, the big blind would be R60). The small blind is generally half of the big blind.

Action begins with the player to the left of the big blind and continues in a clockwise fashion. All players must at least match the amount in of the big blind in order to remain in the hand. If a player does not wish to match the big blind, he can throw his cards away and wait for the next hand to start. The player can also raise, by any amount equal to the maximum of their chip stack. All players must now match this additional amount to remain in the hand.

The round is completed when action goes around the table without any player raising or the maximum number of bets allowed per round is reached. (This is dependant on the type of game played – Fixed Limit)

The Flop

Three cards are spread across the center of the table, face up. These are community cards, which means that all players are allowed to use them. By this point of the game, the excitement increases as the dealer deals the first three community cards face up on the board (the middle of the table). Now players can use these three communal cards in combination with their two hole cards to determine their hand possibilities.

Second Round

The Big Blind betting limit is once again used. Starting from the left of the dealer button, the first player to act has the option of checking or betting. It does not matter if the dealer folds - betting always commences with the player closest to their left. Checking can only be performed when no bets have been placed in the current round. This refers to passing the action on to the next player. Once a bet has been placed, checking is no longer allowed.

After any player places a bet, all other players have the option of calling, raising or folding. Calling refers to matching the bet in order to remain in the hand. Raising refers to making an additional bet in addition to a bet placed by another player. If a player is unwilling to match the bet, they may throw away their cards and wait for the next hand to start.

The Turn

Once the second betting round has come to an end, the dealer deals the fourth community card on the board. Now the game becomes even tenser as the players left in the game now have 6 cards to work with.

Third Round

The betting limit now doubles and becomes equivalent to the size of the larger betting increment. For example in the (R30/R60) game, the betting limit in this round would increase from R30 to R60.

The River

The fifth and final community card is placed at the center of the table. At this point of the game, palms really start to sweat as the fifth and final

community card is dealt on the board. Players now have all 7 cards at their disposal and must make the best possible 5-card hand.

Fourth Round

Another round of betting using the size of the larger betting increment takes place.

Showdown

All remaining players turn over their cards and the player with the strongest hand is awarded the money in the pot. If two or more players tie, the pot is split evenly among those players. If there is an uneven amount, the remainder is given to the player closest to the dealer's left.

The winning hand can be made by any of the following combinations - the player's two hole cards and three of the five community cards or one of the players' hole cards and four of the five community cards or all five of the community cards

This is the moment every player waits for – when their blood runs cold with defeat or pumps hot with the victory! Each player remaining in the hand show their cards, beginning with the last player to bet and continuing in that pattern. During the showdown players may also choose to muck or fold out of the game, without showing their cards. In the event that a player wins by default (every other player in the hand folded) no showdown will occur and the winner is given the option to show their cards or not. For the most part, players choose not to show their winning hand, as it adds to the drama of the game and keeps the other opponents guessing what the great hand was.

Winning the Pot

- 1.** The player with the best hand, in accordance with the Poker hands as listed in the 'Basic Poker Rules' section of this book, is declared the winner by the computer software and takes the pot.
- 2.** If two players have identical winning hands, they are both declared winners and the pot is split evenly between them.
- 3.** If the 5 community cards make the best possible hand, the pot will be split evenly among all players still left within the hand. When this occurs, it is known as 'the board plays'.

Betting Limits and Other Facts

There are three different types of limit games you can play in Texas Hold'em –

- 1.** Fixed-Limit
- 2.** Pot-Limit
- 3.** No- Limit

Fixed Limit

A fixed limit game means that during each betting round, limits are placed on the bets. Thus, a R4/R8 fixed limit table means that during the first two rounds of betting the maximum bet any player can make is R4, and in the last two rounds of betting the maximum bet is R8.

During each round of betting, only three raises are allowed and each raise cannot exceed the betting limit for that round. Therefore, on the first round the player entitled to the first bet may fold, call or bet R4. The second player, after the first bet has been made, may fold, call the R4 or raise another R4, which would make the bet total to R12. If another player decides to make one more raise, it would be the third and final raise for the round totaling the bet to R16. After this raise, all the remaining players in the round may either fold or call.

The same method works for the last two rounds with the max bet of R8, making the total bet for these rounds no more than R32. If you are a beginner player or would like to keep your budget capped, playing Texas Hold'em at a fixed limit table is a good idea, as it will help you to stay in control over your losses and improve your game before you start to play with the big fish. *Note: the fixed limit style game was the betting example used in the above Texas Hold'em rules*

Pot Limit

A pot limit Texas Hold'em game begins with a minimum bet designated by the table which is posted by the big blind. As the game gets underway, players who raise cannot make one smaller than double the amount of the previous bet or one larger than the total money amount in the pot during any time of the game.

Thus, if there is R100 in the pot and the previous bet before yours is R20, than the minimum raise you could make is R40, and the maximum raise would be R100. The only exception to this pot limit betting rule is the all-in. An all-in is when a player chooses to wager all

of his or her remaining chips. For example, should a player choose to wager all their chips as a raise but the total amount of their chips is smaller than the minimum bet, their wager will still count because the player has no more chips to offer.

As far as pot limit game goes, there is much more flexibility when it comes to betting, compared to a fixed limit game. Players have more liberty to use strategies that involve bluffing and more risky techniques. For this reason, pot limit games are not the best choice for beginners or apprehensive players. If you are determined to give it a go, rather enter a pot limit game where the buy-in is reasonably low.

No Limit

Like the pot limit Texas Hold'em game, the only time a no limit game is designated by a wager at the table is the minimum bet which is posted by the big blind. After this initial betting takes place, the minimum raise graduates to double the amount of the previous bet.

Unlike pot limit games, the maximum raise is all the chips you have. This means that in a no limit game, players can wager all of their chips at any point during the game. Players can raise as much as they like, as long as it does not exceed their total number of chips and it is double the amount of the last bet. If players choose to go all-in or if they run out of chips they can not be 'bet out' of a hand, just as in the pot limit game. If a player runs out of their chips before the game is finished, a 'side pot' is established if there is more than one player with chips still remaining in the hand.

TEXAS HOLD'EM STRATEGIES

There are many strategies that you can learn when playing Texas Hold'em. For the purpose of this guide, you will find the essential tips and tactics to keep in mind when playing. Becoming a good Hold'em player is about using your strategies to determine when you should 'hold'em' or 'fold'em'.

Knowing whether you should fold or stay in the hand is based on two vital factors:

1. The 5 community cards
2. The 2 hole cards

In other words, the strategies you use must be linked to your two hole cards because they determine the potential of your starting hand, as

well as the community cards. They are a part of yours and every other player's possible victory. Evaluating your Hold'em game takes practice, and the decisions you will make during each hand will depend on a variety of different factors, such as:

- Your starting hand
- The number of players in the game
- The community cards
- How high the limit game is

Despite the number of players or how high the stakes are, remember that it is your starting hand which is the major key to your survival.

PLAYABLE STARTING HANDS

In total there are 169 possible starting hands but for the purpose of this guide you will only find those starting hands which provide you with the best chance of winning. To give you a better understanding of the most effective way to use the starting hands listed below, here are some helpful guidelines for you to follow:

- Starting hands that are **blue** consist of the top ten starting hands, and indicate that these hands can be raised and re-raised at any time during the game.
- Starting hands that are **green** indicate that it is best to call these hands early in the game, and then proceed to raise midway and late in the hand.
- Starting hands that are **orange** indicate that it is in your best interest to call in the middle and late portion of the game.
- Starting hands that are **purple** should be called only when you are in the late portion of the game.
- **A** = Ace, **K** = King, **Q** = Queen, **J** = Jack and **10 - 2** = numerical card value and **m** = matching suit.

STARTING HANDS:

Any pair - they provide you with the possibility of high pair, two pair, three of a kind, full house and four of a kind. Naturally the higher the pair you start with the better off you are:

* **A-A, K-K, Q-Q, J-J**

* **10-10, 9-9, 8-8**

* **7-7 6-6, 5-5, 4-4, 3-3, 2-2**

Any high card accompanied by another of their matching suit –

These starting hands have the potential of achieving a high pair, three of a kind, flush, a straight or a straight flush. Depending on their arrangement any suited **A, K, Or Q** have potential flush possibilities.

- * **A-Km, A-Qm, A-Jm, A-10m, A-9m , A-8m, A-7m, A-6m, A-5m, A- 4m, A-3m, A-2m**
- * **K-Qm, K-Jm, K-10m, K-9m, K-8m, K-7m, K-6m, K-5m, K-4m, K-3m, K-2m**
- * **Q-Jm, Q-10m, Q-9m, Q-8m, Q-7m, Q-6m, Q-5m, Q-4m, Q-3m, Q-2m**
- * **J-10m, J-9m, J-8m, J-7m, J-6m, J-5m**
- * **10-9m, 10-8m, 10-7m, 10-6m**

Any high card with another unsuited high card – These starting hands have the potential of achieving a high pair or straight. *Note: it is a good idea to only play the combination of unsuited cards if their value totals to 21 or more.*

- * **A-K, A-Q, A-J, A-10, A-9**
- * **K-Q, K-J, K-10, K-9**
- * **Q-J, Q-10, Q-9**
- * **J-10, J-9**
- * **10-9**

Low card accompanied by any other low card of matching suit – The only potential these cards have is the may achieve a possible flush or straight, because they are connected by suit.

- * **9-8m, 9-7m, 9-6m**
- * **8-7m, 8-6m, 8-5m**
- * **7-6m, 7-5m**
- * **6-5m, 6-4m**
- * **5-4m, 5-3m**
- * **4-3m**

You should fold if you have any starting hand that is not found in the above list. It is important that you realise when playing Texas Hold'em that you will end up folding prior to the flop most of the time. This is because you will likely experience frequent, terrible starting hands on a regular basis such as 2-7 or 3-8.

Don't let this discourage you. You need patience when it comes to playing Hold'em, so don't expect to win every game you play or you will only end up losing all of your chips. Keep in mind that although a strong starting hand is a good sign and it increases your chances of nabbing the pot, you should always be prepared to fold if your hand fails to improve because more than likely another player already has the better cards.

FOLD'EM AND BLUFF'EM

Knowing when and when not to fold or bluff during a Hold'em game takes experience and the only way to gain that is to practice and play frequently. Knowing how to minimize your losses and maximize your winnings is all about knowing the right time to bet, call, raise, check or fold.

For instance, if you want to cut your losses, you should fold during the pre-flop if you do not have a strong starting hand. On the other hand, if you're starting hand has potential, the longer you stay in the game and raise the bar, the more opportunity you have to get the other players to keep adding money to the pot, maximizing your possible victory. The above folding tip sounds obvious and perhaps you may even think it to be easy but the truth is, folding is sometimes difficult for players, especially for those players who have little patience and a lot of pride.

To help you decide when to fold ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I currently have potentially one of the best hands according to the number of players in the game?
2. Do I have enough faith in my hand to take on the other players' personalities?
3. Is my hand worth the current wager?

Although you'll never know the exact answers to these questions, the whole point of asking them is so that you will follow your gut instinct and do what you feel is best for the present game, and your budget. Basically, asking these three questions is like giving yourself a bit of a reality check.

There are technically two particular rounds in Hold'em where folding needs to be considered seriously - the pre-flop and the turn. The pre-flop gives you an indication of your potential victory with your starting hand, so if it does not look good, you can fold quickly out of the game and cut your losses early. The turn, on the other hand, is your last chance to fold before you put your final chips in the pot for the last round. If you reach the turn and all of your confidence in your hand has run dry, you can still cut your losses by skipping out on the showdown.

BLUFFING

The whole point to bluffing is to trick the other player/s into believing you have a great hand. The reason you want to do this is so that players will fold out of the game and you can win the pot. Sounds pretty straight forward doesn't it? Sure it does, but like everything else in life, anything that sounds easy rarely ever is. After all, do you actually think there would be so many strategies out there if gambling was that simple? Of course not, and that's why it takes skill. And how do you achieve this skill? Experience!

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK

If you are able to check in the game, take advantage of this opportunity. Why?

If it happens that you are still in the game after the flop, have an okay hand and are the first person to bet, you can check and hope that the other players follow suit. If your plan works, you will be able to make it to the next round and get another card without having to lose any more of your chips. Checking can also work to your bluffing advantage if you have a strong hand. For instance, if you have a strong hand and you choose to check instead of raising midway through the game, the other players may be tricked into thinking that your hand is weaker than it actually is.

In addition, if you believe that your hand is likely the best of all the players after the flop, at this time it is usually a good idea to check/raise. Check/raise means that you check whenever you get the opportunity and raise if you are bet into. On the flip side of the coin, should you feel that your hand is not strong enough you can check/fold, which means you check if you get the chance and fold if you are bet into.

Above all, you need to remember that folding is often your best option as it allows you to control your money and gives you the chance to really nail your golden opportunity once it finally comes your way. Spend less time obsessing over winning every game and use your focus on a good hand to maximize its potential and possibly win the pot.

ESSENTIAL TIPS AND TACTICS:

- 1. If your two hole cards are a low pair, be cautious of how you play.** It is a good idea to only stay in the hand if the betting is low. As the game continues, if you find you do not have a 3 of a kind or two pairs, it is usually in your best interest to fold.
- 2. Don't make the mistake of folding too quickly.** If you find everyone is checking, stay in the game and choose to check also; therefore you can move on to the next round without having to put in anymore money in the pot. After all, the next round may provide your hand with the card you've been waiting for.
- 3. As early as the second round of betting (after the flop) you will have 5 cards to work with,** giving you a good idea of just how strong your final hand will look like, without putting you too much in the hole. At this time, carefully consider your odds and decide whether it is best to stay in the game or quit while you're ahead.
- 4. Do not play at tables when you know you cannot afford to lose.** Not only will this affect the way you play, making you more anxious and liable to make foolish mistakes but high-stakes tables generally appeal to skilled players.
- 5. If you have a strong starting hand, play aggressively during the pre-flop and try to weed out as many players as you can who have weak hands.** This will stop them from getting lucky during the flop. In addition it will ensure that players who think they have a shot at winning to put more money in the pot.
- 6. Watch out for flops that are in consecutive sequence such as 6-7-8,** because even if you have a high pair there is a high probability that another player will make a straight.
- 7. Sometimes being caught bluffing can work out in your favour.** While getting caught may not be your primary goal, it will make it harder for your opponents to guess your next move. Nonetheless, you shouldn't always bluff to try and fake out your players, eventually a really good player will catch on and end up taking all of your chips.
- 8. Carefully study your fellow opponents.** Pay attention to the moves they make during the game. How and when do they bet,

call, fold, call, check, raise or bluff? Do they take their time when it is their turn to make a move or do they act quickly? Even though players tend to jump around from table to table online, if you frequent a certain table often, you will come to know the type of players that filter through. Never forget – you can always learn something from others.

9. **Keep a watchful eye on the high stakes tables, as they usually draw more experienced and professional players.** By studying the actions of these players during the game, you will gain a better idea of what separates the pros from the armature and mediocre players. This is an excellent opportunity so make sure you take notes!
10. **If you are learning how to play Texas Hold'em at the fun tables, don't fall into the trap of shrugging off the games because the money isn't real.** This careless attitude will only cause you to develop bad habits. Instead you should play as if your chips are the real thing so that you will develop great strategies from this.

THE ONLINE POKER APPROACH

Playing online Poker is vastly different from playing it live. Players are constantly jumping around from table to table, which means you have to learn how to keep up with the fast pace online Poker environment, forcing you to adopt a different approach than you would if you were playing Poker live.

Poker, regardless where you play it, is ultimately about psychology and how you can use it to gain the advantage over your opponents. For instance, many times during Hold'em, the winner rarely has an impressive hand. Often a player wins by a low pair, such as a pair of 8's. The point is it does not matter if you do not have an excellent hand - all that matters is that it is better than everyone else's! So how do you achieve the ideal online Poker approach that puts you a step above the average Joe? Aside from practice, here are some aspects you should keep in mind and apply to your game:

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

It may not have occurred to you but many players are distracted when they play poker online. For instance, while playing, many players often:

- * play two tables at once
- * read or write emails
- * watch TV
- * talk on the phone
- * work
- * or busy themselves with other matters

Have you ever found yourself multitasking while playing Poker online? It's easy to do but these distractions can have an effect on your game. Your mind is busy trying to focus on too many things at once. Remember if you are planning on improving your game and winning, you need to take Poker seriously and to do that your full attention is required.

In addition, keep on the look out for players who may appear distracted as you can use their scattered minds to your advantage. Pressure them to fold early or drag them further into the hand so they will add more money to the pot.

NAMES WITHOUT FACES

Although you have the freedom to make any facial expression you would like when playing online Poker as no one else can see you, this is both to your advantage and disadvantage. Your opponents also have this freedom and as no player can see their opponent, some players become careless and will bluff to the point of foolishness because they do not have anyone to stare them down.

Just because players frequently bluff online, you cannot always assume that every opponent you are up against is pulling a fast one. That being said, there will be times where you will have to call or raise more often than you prefer, especially when faced with those players who are desperate to win the pot every hand. In the long run, if you find players frequently bluffing and you have a relatively decent hand, it is best to call. Many online Poker players find this a far more rewarding tactic than constantly making a raise.

STATE OF MIND OR MENTAL CONTROL

Your state of mind is the key to your success when playing online Poker. The mental control you have influences the way you play. When you are focused on the game at hand, you will learn about the other players and likely hand probabilities. You will also quickly discover

opportunities that allow you to gain the upper hand over your fellow opponents.

A player with a controlled state of mind is one who:

- * Keeps their focus and controls their emotions when faced with defeat
- * Does not become defensive when they compete
- * Has confidence in their abilities and lets the other players know this when they play
- * Does not let other players gain the upper hand by letting their opponents psyche them out
- * Remains positive. Regardless of how unfavorable your hand may be, getting frustrated about constant bad hands is not going to make your odds any better. It is only going to make you more frustrated, which can cause bad judgment once you do get a hand you can work with
- * Does not let their minds wonder or start daydreaming during a game. It is imperative that your mind is constantly focused on playing the game. That means knowing the probabilities of yours and your opponents' hand
- * Stays patient. If you are too anxious to win the pot you can make foolish mistakes, making it easy for more experienced players to take advantage over you. A good Poker player is in control of their every action. They are not only aware of their own state of mind but the minds of their other players as well. They are relaxed and can easily adjust to the different players that enter the game, ready and waiting to defeat them as soon as they get the chance to take advantage of the way they play.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

If you adopt a positive outlook on life, it can make all the difference in the world. It affects the way you feel, think and respond to the people and environment around you for the better. That is why it is in your best interest to maintain a positive attitude when you play Poker.

- * **Look on the up side of things** – if your game is not going the way you would like it to, put all your concentration into the other players and think about how you will gain the upper hand over them once the strong hand comes your way.
- * **Believe in your abilities as a Poker player** – everyone has different styles of playing - find one that you are comfortable with, stick to it, improve it and settle for nothing but the best.

- * **Care about the game** – If you expect to become good at winning, you have to take the game seriously. A carefree attitude won't fly in poker.
- * **Trust your instincts** – when you are feeling positive about your game, you will feel more in tune with your intuition and won't second guess your decisions. Your intuition is a powerful ally that is linked to your subconscious and more often than not, it acts in your best interests.

Remember, even the best Poker players were beginners once and everyone has their days that are not lucky. That does not mean that you should give up or care less about the game. You need to work for success, and with a positive attitude you will gain the determination and drive to win.

CLASSIFY YOUR POKER PLAYERS

If there is one thing frequent Poker playing will teach you, it is that every player thinks differently. There is also an incredible difference between the way in which the Poker player on the left thinks to the one on your right. You should never assume that all players act the same or that you will be able to figure out their strategies only after a few games. Experienced players won't play with straight edge strategy, therefore the only way you will learn their secret is to study them.

For example:

- * **Keep track of the way each player bets.** You can achieve this by taking note of who folds and who does not. This will give you an indication on whether the players make strong or weak bets.
- * **After the showdown pay attention to the hands each player had.** Did the player with the weak hand place strong bets? Did the resulting weak hand have potential (for instance, were they missing one card that could have provided them with a flush, etc.)
- * **Identify if a player is passive or aggressive.** Do they constantly raise and stay in the hand for a long time with a weak hand, or do they fold or call often, rarely making a raise?

Remember to:

- Keep track of the way each player bets.
- After the showdown pay attention to the hands each player had.
- Identify if a player is passive or aggressive.

Every player has a certain style, strategy and method of playing their cards. While some will be easy to classify, the more experienced players will be more spontaneous and use more than one approach when playing in order to throw off others who are trying to track and figure out their profile.

When you maintain a positive attitude and have control over your state of mind, you will be more open to improvement and will not limit yourself. Online Poker psychology is an art that requires you to be flexible and focused at the same time. This art is not one that is easy to come by and takes hours of practice. However the rewards that you will reap after taking the time to develop your own online Poker psychology and to learn Hold'em inside and out will be worth all your blood, sweat and tears.

POKER PLAYER PROFILES

Studying your opponents is how you will find out how they play, respond and react during a hand. Even if you fold out of the game, you can still watch the remaining players to see what decisions they make.

Discover if they:

Fold more often than call or raise

Frequently bluff, check/raise or check/fold often

The more you watch your opponents, the better you will be at player profiling. This is a talent that takes time to achieve, especially online, due to the fact that you will rarely play the same players over and over again. Once you are able to distinguish the type of game your opponents like to play, you can then slot them into one of these player profile categories:

1. Straight Player
2. Tight or Conservative Player
3. The Loose Player
4. The Aggressive Player
5. The Immature Player

To gain a better understanding for the way these players function, here is what you can expect from each –

THE AGGRESSIVE PLAYER

Players who are aggressive will try to do all they can to psyche you out and get you to do what they want. They will be the player who

chooses to raise over folding, putting pressure on the other players to either fold or muck their hand at showdown. Really talented aggressive players have a lot of confidence and it shows. They make the other players feel uneasy, often causing them to second guess their position in the game when the stakes are high. If you don't see them coming, a good aggressive player will take control over the way you play and con you out of the pot and your money.

If you want to stand up to the aggressive player you need to show them you have a backbone and that their bullying strategy is not going to work on you. Know your cards and have the courage to give the overly aggressive player a taste of their own medicine.

THE TIGHT/CONSERVATIVE PLAYER

A tight or conservative player is one who does not like to take risks unless they are necessary. He or she will not have the confidence to bet if they that feel their cards are strong enough. More often than not, the tight player knows the rules of the game inside and out, has an excellent memory, as well as a talent for analysing the skills of other players. Therefore, when they do achieve a strong starting hand, they will surprise all the other players and snatch the pot. A talented conservative player is an extremely tactical opponent. When faced with him or her, you will find that they generally fold or call, instead of taking risks. Be wary of this type of player for although you may think they are passive at first, they could very well be waiting for the opportune moment to take the win. Be on the lookout if this player is still in the hand in the later rounds, this usually is a sign that they have a strong hand.

THE LOOSE PLAYER

The loose player is one who is carefree and is more likely to fold or call more often than raise or bluff. They rarely win frequent pots and treat Poker more as a fun pass time than as a serious money-making sport. If you discover the loose player, you can gain the upper hand over them by playing a little more aggressively and intimidate them into folding early, so they don't get the chance to obtain a stronger hand.

THE STRAIGHT PLAYER

The straight player is one who is robotic. He or she rarely takes risks, unless they have a really strong hand. Often these players are beginners and are only following the advice of a programme such as

the odds calculator. You will discover that the more you watch a straight player, the more you will be aware when they have a strong hand because they will play more aggressively and raise, which is a good indication that you should fold. They only play aggressive when their helper program shows the odds are in their favor.

THE IMMATURE PLAYER

The immature player is one who is generally the easiest to recognise. Their Poker style is often cocky, rude, careless and thoughtless. Rarely do these players win big pots because they take foolish risks and are the first to lose all of their money. Immature players are not respected by other players because they don't take the game seriously.

It is easy to take advantage of these players, so use them to put more money in the pot early on in the game. The faster these players are out of the game, the quicker you will increase your winnings, and have more of a budget to play with. Remember, even if you have profiled the players you are up against, you should never underestimate any player at any time. Letting your guard down could be the end of your game. Play the players – don't let them play you!

ESTABLISHING YOUR POKER PLAYER PROFILE

When it comes to establishing your own Poker player profile, it is best to be adaptable. The more you change your tactics and strategies while playing, the harder time the other players will have at figuring out what your next move will be. A player who is adaptable is exceptional, as he or she can outwit all of their opponents when the stakes are high.

Of course, becoming a master of profile changing is not something that comes naturally and like everything else, takes practice and plenty of experience playing against, and studying others.

To help you with this task here are some tips to keep in mind on your quest to become a great player:

Don't be afraid to fold - The best Poker players in the world fold when they know their hand just won't cut it. Folding doesn't make you less of a player - on the contrary it shows that you know how to keep your chips.

Don't study and try to outwit only one player - In online Poker, most of the people you play against at a table will not be there for

long. This strategy can prove to be a waste of your time if you constantly have to face new players.

Keep your emotions in check - If you are feeling upset or frustrated it would be best if you called it a day and calm down before attempting to play again. Negative emotions cause you to become distracted and distractions cause your mind to wonder, allowing the other players to walk all over you.

Don't fall into a routine - You may find that you are extremely comfortable with one strategy but falling into a routine of using only one technique will turn you into a straight player, allowing others to gain a good idea of what your next moves will be.

Don't become too comfortable - If you find that you are comfortable with the way you play, it's time for you to improve your skill and try something new. Comfort is a sign of laziness, which can cause you to remain at one level, limiting your potential as a player and winner.

Keep your mind open for new ideas - Advice and a few pointers never hurt anyone and it could be the one tip you need to progress your abilities. You can always learn something. Whether you get a tip from a professional, a book, a friend or even a kid, show your gratitude and don't forget to return the favor whenever the opportunity presents itself. Being a good Poker player involves knowing how to think and act for yourself. So trust your instincts, learn to be flexible and give it all you've got!

POKER GAME ETIQUETTE

Regardless if you play Poker live or online, etiquette matters. Unfortunately many online players think they can get away with an obnoxious or crass personality, simply because they don't have to look other players in the face. There is no excuse for rudeness. Having respect for yourself and other players is essential when you play online.

How you are perceived as a Poker player should matter to you and is not something you should brush aside. If you expect other players to respect you, you have to show them the same courtesy. Make your mother proud and keep these tips in mind when engaging in online conversation with the fellow members of the site:

Mind your P's and Q's - Watch your language when you are online. Do not use profanity or vulgar language that other players may find offensive. Not only is this extremely immature but you'll soon become unpopular and disliked by others.

Control your pride – No one wants to hear another player boast about their winnings or whine about their loss.

Keep your comments to yourself – Do not make snide remarks about other players or make fun of how they play.

Arguing gets you nowhere – There is no point in arguing with another player. It will only frustrate you and you will not be able to change what has happened. Let it go, move on and keep your focus on the game.

Use your common sense – Stay level headed at all times and adapt to the players and the table you are playing at. Avoid arguments, and do your part to make the game run smoothly. Don't become a problem.

Relax and have Fun – Don't forget that as much as you want to win, it is important to also have fun when you play. So relax, enjoy yourself, make friends and respect the other players.

CONCLUSION

In the end, it does not matter how many techniques you learn, all that matters is how you think and use these strategies for yourself when playing. Being a good Poker player is about knowing how to play smart. Despite all of the strategies that you learn and how well you study the players, the single most important aspect of your Poker game is you.

REMEMBER:

KEEP YOUR EMOTIONS IN CHECK – Stay focused on your cards, the players and the game. You need to think straight and keep your mind on your goal. Don't succumb to your pride should other players try to ruffle your feathers.

KNOW YOUR LIMIT – Keep in mind that you will have more bad hands than you will good ones, so don't get sucked in to becoming obsessed with winning or let the other players intimidate you into continual play when you know you should call it quits. Make sure you:

- * Set a budget for yourself and don't go past it.
- * Know when you should and should not gamble
- * Only play with the money you know you can afford to lose
- * Know when to walk away

STAY REALISTIC – Don't fool yourself into believing that you are ready for the big time like the professional players on TV. Poker for these pros is not only a game - it's their livelihood which they take seriously and is one that they have played for years in order to master.

PRACTICE – the only way you will progress as a player, develop new strategies, learn to read other players and win more pots is to practice. You cannot rely on luck to become a good Poker player or read all the strategy books in the world and expect for it to happen over night. It takes dedication, determination and the drive to win.

Finally, remember that winning is rarely about luck. It's about killer Poker instinct. Thinking like a winner is what sets you apart from the average Poker player and to be a winner, you have to think and act like one. The only way you will achieve such status as a player is to have patience and self-control to know when to hold'em or fold'em. Don't forget to enjoy yourself, and have a great game!

GLOSSARY OF POKER TERMS

While you will find that some of the following terms have appeared in this guide, the others are popular terms you may come across when playing Texas Hold'em.

Aces Up	A two pair where the one pair is A's and the other a lower pair.
Action	Betting activity at a poker table.
All-in	Placing all your chips in the pot with a single bet.
Ante	A compulsory 'blind bet' made before cards are dealt to players.
Back door	Unexpectedly hitting a flush with the last two board cards
Back door	A straight completing an unlikely straight with the last two board cards
Bad Beat	When, against the odds, a good hand is beaten by another player drawing a better one.
Bankroll	A player's stake money.
Bet	To contribute money to the pot.
Betting intervals	Occasions during play when rounds of betting occur.
Bicycle/Wheel	The lowest straight – 5, 4, 3, 2, A.
Big Slick	When you are holding A K as your hole cards.
Blind	Compulsory bet made by two players to the left of the dealer before cards are dealt. The first player to the left of the dealer bets a 'small blind' and the player directly to his left

	bets the 'big blind'. Big blind is double the small blind in value.
Bluff	Attempt to conceal true value of cards held.
Board	5 Community cards revealed on the table made up of the flop, turn and river.
Boat	A full house.
Bump	Increase the betting level.
Burn	Dealer's action of discarding the top card of the deck before the flop, turn and river are dealt. This is to prevent any cheating.
Buy-in	Amount needed to sit in at a poker game.
Call	Match a bet already made to continue playing the hand.
Cash in	Exchanging chips for cash at the end of a game.
Check	To defer the opportunity to bet. You can only check if there are no bets already made in the betting round.
Check raise	When a player checks and then later raises an opponent's bet when the action comes back.
Chips	Round, colored disks that represent cash when playing poker each colour represents a different denomination.
Community Cards	That are revealed on the table and common to all players
Crying call	A call made by a player when he/she does not believe that they can win
Cut	When the deck is divided after the dealer has shuffled the cards.
Dead man's hand	A's and 8's (two pair)
Deuce	The '2' card. A pair of 2's is known as deuces.
Drawing Dead	Being unable to beat an existing hand while still having cards to come
Drop	Another term for fold.
Family Pot	A pot that involved most if not all the players at the table
Fifth Street	Term for the fifth community card dealt – also known as the river card.
Fish	A poor player.
Floorman	General Authority on the rules of the tournament/card room Also arbitrator of disputes
Flop	First three community cards dealt.

Flush	A hand that contains 5 cards of the same suit but not in sequential order.
Fold	Discard the hand.
Fourth Street	The fourth community card dealt – also known as the turn card.
Freeze-out	This term relates to a tournament where all players start with the same amount of chips and are eliminated once their chips are finished.
Full House	Three of a kind and a pair eg: KKK22 or 44499
Gut Straight	Draw - for example if you are holding 7,8,9,J and you are needing the “middle draw pin” to make a straight. In this case the 10. Also known as gut shot.
Hand	The cards each player uses in the game.
Heads up	Playing against just one other opponent
Hole (cards)	First two cards dealt to a player face down. Also known as pocket cards
Inside straight draw	Similar to gut straight draw – but it is the other cards that are needed. Eg: AKQJ and you need the 10.
Kicker	Highest retained card besides the stronger holding eg: If two players have a pair of 9’s the next highest “kicker” card determines who wins. If one has a K and the other’s highest card is a 10, the K wins.
Loose player	Someone who regularly bets against the odds
Main pot	The original pot to the point where a player goes all-in. After which side pots will be formed.
Maniac	A very loose player
Misdeal	Error made in the dealing of a hand.
Muck	Pile of discarded cards. Also describes the act of folding a hand – mucking the hand.
Nuts	Best available hand from the cards played.
Off suit	Cards that do not match suits
On the come	Need to improve the hand in order to have a chance of winning
Open ended straight	A drawing hand with four cards, in consecutive order, where a card on either end will complete the straight. E.g.: QJ109 where either the K or the 8 will complete the straight for you.
Pass	An alternate way of saying “fold”

Pocket pair	Two cards of the same rank dealt to you in the first two cards
Pocket rockets	Pair of Aces.
Poker face	Expressionless facial appearance reveals no emotion at all
Quads	Four of a kind
Rag	A worthless card or hand.
Raise	To call and raise a bet with a minimum of the big blind or the amount of the last raise. A raise can only be less than the minimum when a player calls all-in.
Raiser	The player who makes the raise
River	Final community card dealt. Also known as Fifth Street
Rock	Conservative player who only plays premium hands
Royal Flush	The highest hand in Poker – AKQJ10 of same suit
Run	Another term for a straight.
Rush	A hot streak in poker hands.
Sandbag	To slow play a hand.
See	To call a bet.
Showdown	The moment cards are revealed to determine the winner.
Side Pot	After an all-in, side pots are created for players who wish to continue placing bets. The all-in player is not in the side pot.
Slow Play	Checking or betting lightly to disguise the strength of the hand in an attempt to encourage other players to stay in the hand
Split Pot	Pot shared between 2 or more players who have the same strength hand at the showdown.
Straight	5 consecutive unsuited cards also called a run
Straight Flush	5 consecutive cards of the same suit.
String Bet	Where a player calls a bet and then without announcing raise adds more chips to his bet. This is an illegal move
Sucker	A very bad player.
Tap out	To bet all one's chips.
Tapped out	Out of chips
Tell	An involuntary mannerism that could indicate the strength of the hand.

Tight Player	Someone who bets very cautiously and only on strong hands
Tilt	Wild play without discipline, usually after a series of bad beats.
Trey	Any '3' card
Trips	Three of a kind, short for triplets.
Turn card	Fourth community card dealt. Also known as Fourth Street
Underdog	Hand that is unlikely to win – also called dog.

Pocket Pair and Mixed Pocket Pair Cards:

A♠A♠	Rockets; Bullets; American Airlines
K♥K♦	Cowboys
Q♠Q♣	Canadian Rockets; Canadian Aces; Siegfried & Roy
J♥J♦	Fishhooks; hooks
8♠8♣	Snowmen; Doggie Balls
7♥7♦	Sunset Strip
6♠6♣	Route 66
5♥5♦	Presto; Speed Limit
4♠4♣	Canadian Presto
3♥3♦	Crabs
2♠2♣	Ducks
AK	Big Slick
AQ	Big Chick; Walking Back to Houston
KQ	Suited Marriage
KQ	Off suit Mixed Marriage
KJ	Kojak
K9	Fido; What a Dog
K3	Commander Crab; King Crab
Q7	Computer hand
Q3	Gay Waiter (queen with a tray)
J5	Motown; Jackson Five
T8	Golden Dan
T5	F&W Woolworth's; Five and Dime
T4	Broderick Crawford; Convoy; Good Buddy
T2	Texas Dolly
98	Oldsmobile
96	Big Lick; Dinner for Two
95	Dolly Parton
92	Montana Banana
83	Most feared hand in Holdem

7T **Split**
76 **Union Oil**

Meaning of Shorthand That Some Players use in the Chat?

NH	- Nice Hand
VN / VNH	- Very Nice Hand
TX / TKS / TY	- Thanks / Thank You
WTG	- Way to Go
G1	- Good one
BRB	- Be Right Back
LOL	- Laugh out Loud
ROFL	- Rolling on the Floor Laughing
CYA	- See You Later