

# UNITED STATES POKER ASSOCIATION



**THE LAWS OF POKER**  
**September 2004**



# UNITED STATES POKER ASSOCIATION

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# UNITED STATES POKER ASSOCIATION

## THE LAWS OF POKER

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(In the Laws of Poker, the gender used in relation to any person is understood to include both genders.)

### 1. ETIQUETTE

#### 1.1 Introduction –

This Section provides guidelines on the manner in which the game should be played. If they are followed, all players will gain maximum enjoyment from the game. The overriding principle is that consideration should be shown to others at all times during play.

#### 1.2 Spirit of the Laws –

The game of poker is one that is played in an environment that ranges from large, high-stakes *tournaments* with spectators and media present to friendly games played in the *host's* breakfast room. The Laws of Poker are designed to cover all of these environments and give the players an opportunity to compete equally based upon their knowledge, skill and, of course, luck. While the Laws cannot anticipate every variance that may exist, their interpretation by a qualified *referee* will mediate most misunderstandings that may arise.

#### 1.3 Etiquette –

##### 1.3.1 Code of Conduct

1.3.1.1 The *host* must attempt to maintain a pleasant environment for all players, spectators, media and officials, but is not responsible for the conduct of any player. The following code of conduct will be enforced at all times, and the *host* may deny the use of the facility to anyone who violates it.

1.3.1.2 The following is not permitted:

1.3.1.2.1. Collusion with another player or any other form of cheating.

1.3.1.2.2. Verbally or physically threatening anyone present. Using profanity or obscene language.

1.3.1.2.3. Creating a disturbance by arguing, shouting, or making excessive noise.

1.3.1.2.4. Throwing, tearing, bending, or crumpling cards. Destroying or defacing property. Using an illegal substance.

1.3.1.2.5. Carrying a weapon.

**1.3.2 Player Etiquette** - The following *actions* are improper, and their violation is grounds for warning, suspending, or disqualifying a violator:

1.3.2.1. Deliberately acting out of turn.

1.3.2.2. Deliberately splashing chips into the pot.

1.3.2.3. Agreeing to *check* a *hand* out when a third player is *all-in*. Reading a *hand* for another player at the *showdown* before it has been placed faceup on the table.

1.3.2.4. Telling anyone to turn a *hand* faceup at the *showdown*.

1.3.2.5. Revealing the contents of a live *hand* in a multihanded pot before the betting is complete.

1.3.2.6. Needlessly stalling the *action* of a game.

1.3.2.7. Deliberately discarding *hands* away from the *muck*. Cards should be released in a low line of flight, at a moderate rate of speed (not at the *dealer's hands* or chip-rack).

1.3.2.8. Stacking chips in a manner that interferes with dealing or viewing cards.

1.3.2.9. Making statements or taking *action* that could unfairly influence the course of play, whether or not the offender is involved in the pot.

**1.3.3 Tobacco** (These rules are for facilities that do not completely ban smoking.)

1.3.3.1. The seat on each side of the *dealer* is a nonsmoking seat.

1.3.3.2. Cigar or pipe smoking is not allowed in the playing area.

1.3.3.3. Smoking by a guest or spectator is not allowed.

## **1.4 Penalties for Breach –**

If there is a violation of Section 1.3.1.2.1, hereof, all violators shall be immediately disqualified.

If a player consistently disregards these guidelines during an *event* or over a period of time to the detriment of others, it is recommended that the *referee* consider taking appropriate disciplinary action against the offending player. Such action may, for example, include prohibiting play for a limited period of time or for the remainder of the *event*.

In the case of serious, or repeated, breach of this section, the *referee* may disqualify the player.

**{Section Ends}**

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### 2.1 Introduction –

The following terms are used throughout these Laws. In all cases, when the term is a defined one, it will be in italics.

### 2.2 Definitions of Terms –

ACES UP: Two pair, a pair of Aces and any other pair.

ACTION: A *fold*, *check*, *call*, *bet*, or *raise*. For certain situations, doing something formally connected with the game that conveys information about your *hand* may also be considered as having taken *action*. Examples would be showing your cards at the end of the *hand*, or indicating the number of cards you are taking at *draw*.

ACTIVE PLAYER: A player still involved in a *hand*.

AGGRESSIVE ACTION: A *wager* that could enable a player to win a pot without a *showdown*; a *bet* or *raise*.

ALL BLUE: A *flush* containing either clubs or spades.

ALL-IN: When you have put all of your playable money and chips into the pot during the course of a *hand*, you are said to be *all-in*.

ALL PINK: A *flush* containing either diamonds or hearts.

ANTE: A prescribed amount posted before the start of a *hand* by all players.

BACK DOOR: Making a *hand* that the player wasn't drawing at.

BACK RAISE: To *reraise* another player's *raise*.

BAD BEAT: A *hand* being beat by another *hand* that had a very low percentage of becoming a winning *hand*.

BET: The act of placing a *wager* in turn into the pot on any betting round, or the chips put into the pot.

BIG BLIND: The largest regular *blind* in a game.

BLANK: A card that has little value to the *hand*.

BLIND: A required *bet* made before any cards are dealt.

BLIND GAME: A game which utilizes a *blind*.

BLUFF: A *bet* or *raise* with a *hand* that is unlikely to beat the other players.

BOARD:

(1) The *board* on which a waiting *list* is kept for players wanting seats in specific games.

(2) Cards faceup on the table common to each of the *hands*.

**BOARDCARD:** A community card in the center of the table, as in Texas Hold'em or Omaha Hold'em.

**BOTTOM PAIR:** Pairing the lowest card on the *board*.

**BOXED CARD:** A card that appears faceup in the *deck* where all other cards are facedown.

**BROKEN GAME:** A game no longer in *action*.

**BUTTON:** A player who is in the designated *dealer position*. See "DEALER BUTTON".

**BUTTON GAMES:** Games in which a *dealer button* is used.

**BUY-IN:** The minimum amount of money required to enter any game.

**CALIFORNIA LOWBALL:** Ace-to-five *lowball* with a *joker*.

**CALL:** To match the previous *wager*.

**CARDS SPEAK:** The face value of a *hand* in a *showdown* is the true value of the *hand*, regardless of a verbal announcement (i.e., "two pairs of queens" is actually four queens).

**CAPPED:** Describes the situation in limit poker in which the maximum number of *raises* on the betting round have been reached.

**CHASE:** To play a *hand* that is most likely worse than at least one other player.

**CHECK:** To waive the right to initiate the betting in a round, but to retain the right to act if another player initiates the betting.

**CHECK-RAISE:** To waive the right to *bet* until a *bet* has been made by an opponent, and then to increase the *bet* by at least an equal amount when it is your turn to act.

**COLD CALL:** To *call* a *bet* or multiple *bets* for the first time in a round.

**COLLECTION:** The fee charged in a game (taken either out of the pot or from each player).

**COLLECTION DROP:** A fee charged for each *hand* dealt.

**COLOR CHANGE:** A request to change the chips from one denomination to another.

**COMMON CARD:** A card dealt faceup to be used by all players at the *showdown* in the games of stud poker whenever there are insufficient cards left in the *deck* to *deal* each player a card individually.

**COMMUNITY CARDS:** The cards dealt faceup in the center of the table that can be used by all players to form their best *hand* in the games of Texas Hold'em and Omaha Hold'em.

**COMPLETE THE BET:** To increase an *all-in bet* or *forced bet* to a full *bet* in limit poker.

**CUT:** To divide the *deck* into two sections in such a manner as to change the order of the cards.

**CUT-CARD:** Another term for the bottom card.

**DEAD CARD:** A card that is not legally playable.

DEAD COLLECTION *BLIND*: A fee posted by the player having the *dealer button*, used in some games as an alternative method of seat rental.

DEAD HAND: A *hand* that is not legally playable.

DEAD MONEY: Chips that are taken into the center of the pot because they are not considered part of a particular player's *bet*.

DEAL: To give each player cards, or put cards on the *board*. As used in these Laws, each *deal* refers to the entire process from the shuffling and dealing of cards until the pot is awarded to the winner.

DEALER: The person who deals the cards during a game of poker. The *dealer* can be either a player or an employee or designee of the *host*. In the latter case, the *dealer* is an assistant *referee*.

DEALER BUTTON: A flat disk that indicates the player who would be in the dealing *position* for that *hand* (if there were not a *host dealer*). Normally just called "the *button*."

DEAL OFF: To take all the *blinds* and the *button* before changing seats or leaving the table. That is, participate through all the *blind positions* and the *dealer position*.

DEAL TWICE: When there is no more betting, agreeing to have the rest of the cards to come determine only half the pot, removing those cards, and dealing again for the other half of the pot.

DECK: A set of playing-cards. In these games, the *deck* consists of either:

- (1) 52 cards in seven-card stud, Texas Hold'em, and Omaha Hold'em.
- (2) 53 cards (including the *joker*), often used in ace-to-five *lowball* and *draw high*.

DIRECTOR: In a *tournament*, the individual in charge of that *event*.

DISCARD(S): In a *draw* game, to throw cards out of your *hand* to make room for replacements, or the card(s) thrown away; the *muck*.

DOWNCARDS: Cards that are dealt facedown in a stud game.

DRAW:

- (1) The poker form where players are given the opportunity to replace cards in the *hand*. In some places like California, the word "*draw*" is used referring to *draw high*, and *draw low* is called "*lowball*."
- (2) The act of replacing cards in the *hand*.
- (3) The point in the *deal* where replacing is done is called "the *draw*."

DRAWING DEAD: Drawing to a *hand* that cannot win because someone already holds a *hand* that will beat what you are drawing to.

DOMINATED: A *hand* that yields three or less *outs* which makes improving it very difficult.

EARLY POSITION: A *position* in which you must act before most of the players during a round.

**EVENT:** An occasion in which the game of poker is played and in which the Laws of Poker are in effect. An *event* will be under the supervision of a *referee*.

**FACECARD:** A king, queen, or jack.

**FIXED LIMIT:** In limit poker, any betting structure in which the amount of the *bet* on each particular round is pre-set.

**FLASHED CARD:** A card that is partially exposed.

**FLOORPERSON:** A designee of the *host* who seats players and makes certain decisions.

**FLOP:**

- (1) The first three *community cards* dealt up at one time at a poker table.
- (2) In Texas Hold'em or Omaha Hold'em, the three *community cards* that are turned simultaneously after the first round of betting is complete.

**FLUSH:** A poker *hand* consisting of five cards of the same suit.

**FOLD:** To throw a *hand* away and relinquish all interest in a pot.

**FOURTH STREET:** The second upcard in seven- card stud or the first *boardcard* after the *flop* in Texas or Omaha Hold'em (also called the *turn* card).

**FOULED HAND:** A *dead hand*.

**FORCED BET:** A required *wager* to start the *action* on the first betting round (the normal way *action* begins in a stud game).

**FREE ROLL:** A chance to win something at no risk or cost.

**FULL BUY:** A *buy-in* of at least the minimum requirement of chips needed for a particular game.

**FULL HOUSE:** A *hand* consisting of three of a kind and a pair.

**HAND:**

- (1) All a player's personal cards.
- (2) The five cards determining the poker ranking.
- (3) A single poker *deal*.

**HEADS-UP PLAY:** Only two players involved in play.

**HOST:** The person or establishment that provides the facilities and staffing for an *event*.

**INSURANCE:** A side agreement when someone is *all-in* for a player in a pot to put up money that guarantees a payoff of a set amount in case the opponent wins the pot.

**JOKER:** The *joker* is a "partially wild card" in high *draw* poker and ace-to-five *lowball*. In high, it is used for aces, *straights*, and *flushes*. In *lowball*, the *joker* is the lowest unmatched rank in a *hand*.

**KANSAS CITY LOWBALL:** A form of *draw* poker low also known as deuce-to-seven, in which the best *hand* is 7-5-4-3-2 and *straights* and *flushes* count against you.

**KICKER:** The highest unpaired card that helps determine the value of a five-card poker *hand*.

**KILL (OR KILL *BLIND*):** An oversize *blind*, usually twice the size of the *big blind* and doubling the limit. Sometimes a "half-kill" increasing the *blind* and limits by fifty percent is used. A *kill* can be either voluntary or mandatory. The most common requirements of a mandatory *kill* are for winning two pots in a row at *lowball* and other games, or for scooping a pot in high-low split.

**KILL BUTTON:** A *button* used in a *lowball* game to indicate a player who has won two pots in a row and is required to *kill* the pot.

**KILL POT:** A pot with a forced *kill* by the winner of the two previous pots, or the winner of an entire pot of sufficient size in a high-low split game. (Some pots can be voluntarily killed.)

**LATE POSITION:** A *position* in which you act after most of the other players during a round.

**LEG UP:** Being in a situation equivalent to having won the previous pot, and thus liable to have to *kill* the following pot if you win the current pot.

**LIVE BLIND:** A *blind bet* giving a player the *option* of raising if no one else has raised.

**LIST:** The ordered roster of players waiting for a game.

**LOCK-UP:** A chip marker that holds a seat for a player.

**LOOSE:** Playing more *hands* than normal.

**LOOSE GAME:** A game with a lot of players in most *hands*.

**LOWBALL:** A *draw* game where the lowest *hand* wins.

**LOWCARD:** The lowest upcard at seven-card stud, which is required to *bet*.

**MIDDLE PAIR:** Pairing the second highest card on the *board*.

**MIDDLE POSITION:** A *position* in which you act somewhere between most of the other players during a round.

**MISCALL:** An incorrect verbal declaration of the ranking of a *hand*.

**MISDEAL:** A mistake on the dealing of a *hand* which causes the cards to be reshuffled and a new *hand* to be dealt.

**MISSED *BLIND*:** A required *bet* that is not posted when it is your turn to do so.

**MUCK:**

(1) The pile of *discards* gathered facedown in the center of the table by the *dealer*.

(2) To *discard* a *hand*.

**MUST-MOVE:** In order to protect the main game, a situation where the players of a second game must move into the first game as openings occur.

NO-LIMIT: A betting structure where players are allowed to *wager* any or all of their chips in one *bet*.

NUTS: The best possible *hand*.

OPENER: The player who made the first voluntary *bet*.

OPENER BUTTON: A *button* used to indicate who opened a particular pot in a *draw* game.

OPENERS: In jacks-or-better *draw*, the cards held by the player who opens the pot that show the *hand* qualifies to be opened. Example: You are first to *bet* and have a pair of kings; the kings are called your *openers*.

OPTION: The choice to *raise* a *bet* given to a player with a *blind*.

OUTS: The cards that will improve a *hand* to win.

OVERBLIND: Also called oversize *blind*. A *blind* used in some pots that is bigger than the regular *big blind*, and usually increases the stakes proportionally.

OVERCARD: A hole card that is higher than any other card on the *board*.

OVERPAIR: Two hole cards paired and higher than any card on the *board*.

PASS:

(1) Decline to *bet*. In a *pass-and-out* game, this differs from a *check*, because a player who passes must *fold*.

(2) Decline to *call* a *wager*, at which point you must *discard* your *hand* and have no further interest in the pot.

PASSIVE: Checking and calling *hands* rather betting and raising *hands*.

PAT: Not drawing any cards in a *draw* game.

PLAY BEHIND: Have chips in play that are not in front of you (allowed only when waiting for chips that are already purchased). This differs from *table stakes*.

PLAY THE BOARD: Using all five *community cards* for your *hand* in Texas Hold'em.

PLAY OVER: To play in a seat when the occupant is absent.

PLAYOVER BOX: A clear plastic box used to cover and protect the chips of an absent player when someone plays over that seat.

POSITION:

(1) The relation of a player's seat to the *blinds* or the *button*.

(2) The order of acting on a betting round or *deal*.

POT-LIMIT: The betting structure of a game in which you are allowed to *bet* up to the amount of the pot.

POTTING OUT: Agreeing with another player to take money out of a pot, often to buy food, cigarettes, or drinks, or to make side *bets*.

PROPOSITION BETS: Side *bets* between players that are not related to the outcome of the *hand*.

PROTECTED HAND: A *hand* of cards that the player is physically holding, or has topped with a chip or some other object to prevent a *fouled hand*.

PUSH: When a new *dealer* replaces an existing *dealer* at a particular table.

PUSHING BETS: The situation in which two or more players make an agreement to return *bets* to each other when one of them wins a pot in which the other or others play. Also called *saving bets*.

RACK:

(1) A container in which chips are stored while being transported.

(2) A tray in front of the *dealer*, used to hold chips and cards.

RAGS: Cards generally not worth playing. IE: 2,7 in Texas Hold'em.

RAISE: To increase the amount of a previous *wager*. This increase must meet certain specifications, depending on the game, to reopen the betting and count toward a limit on the number of *raises* allowed.

REFEREE: The person designated by either the USPA (in sanctioned *events*) or the *host* (in all other *events*) and responsible for making all rulings on, decisions about and interpretations of these Laws. All decisions of the *referee* are final.

RERAISE: To *raise* someone's *raise*.

RIVER: The final card dealt.

SAVING BETS: Same as *pushing bets*.

SCOOP: To win both the high and the low portions of a pot in a split-pot game.

SCRAMBLE: A facedown mixing of the cards.

SETUP: Two *suited decks*, each with different colored backs, to replace the current *decks* in a game.

SIDE POT: A separate pot formed when one or more players are all in.

SHORT BUY: A *buy-in* that is less than the required minimum *buy-in*.

SHOWDOWN: The final act of determining the winner of the pot after all betting has been completed.

SHUFFLE: The act of mixing the cards before a *hand*.

SMALL BLIND: In a game with multiple *blind bets*, the smallest *blind*.

SPLIT POT: A pot that is divided among players, either because of a tie for the best *hand* or by agreement prior to the *showdown*.

**SPLITTING BLINDS:** When no one else has entered the pot, an agreement between the *big blind* and *small blind* to each take back their *blind bets* instead of playing the *deal* (chopping).

**SPLITTING OPENERS:** In high *draw* jacks-or-better poker, dividing *openers* in hopes of making a different type of *hand*. Example: You open the pot with a pair of aces. One of your aces is a spade, as are the three other cards in the *hand*. If you throwaway the non-spade ace to go for the *flush*, you announce to the table, "*Splitting openers*."

**STACK:** Chips in front of a player.

**STEAL:** To *bet* or *raise* causing an opponent to *fold* when you may not hold the best *hand*.

**STRADDLE:** An additional *blind bet* placed after the forced *blinds*, usually double the *big blind* in size or in *lowball*, a multiple *blind game*.

**STRAIGHT:** Five cards in consecutive rank.

**STRAIGHT FLUSH:** Five cards in consecutive rank of the same suit.

**STREET:** Cards dealt on a particular round in stud games. For instance, the fourth card in a player's *hand* is often known as *fourth street*, the sixth card as sixth street, and so on.

**STRING RAISE:** A *bet* made in more than one motion, without the declaration of a *raise* (not allowed).

**STUB:** The portion of the *deck* which has not been dealt.

**SUPERVISOR:** A designee of the *host*, other than the *referee*, qualified to make rulings in the absence of the *referee*.

**SUITED:** Cards are of the same suit.

**TABLE STAKES:**

(1) The amount of money you have on the table. This is the maximum amount that you can lose or that anyone can win from you on anyone *hand*.

(2) The requirement that players can *wager* only the money in front of them at the start of a *hand*, and can only buy more chips between *hands*.

**TIGHT:** Playing fewer *hands* than normal.

**TIGHT GAME** - A game with fewer players than normal in fewer *hands*.

**"TIME":** An expression used to stop the *action* on a *hand*. Equivalent to "Hold it."

**TIME COLLECTION:** A fee for a seat rental, paid in advance.

**TOP PAIR:** Pairing the highest card on the *board*.

**TOURNAMENT:** A poker competition, normally with an entry fee and prizes.

**TURN:** The fourth card dealt on the *board* during community card games.

**TURNCARD:** The *fourth street* card in Texas Hold'em or Omaha Hold'em.

UPCARDS: Cards that are dealt faceup for opponents to see in stud games.

WAGER:

(1) To *bet* or *raise*.

(2) The chips used for betting or raising.

WEAK: One who *folds* too many *hands*.

**{Section Ends}**

# THE LAWS OF THE GAME

## 3.1 Law 1 – The Game

### 3.1.1 **Poker *Hand* Rankings** (from highest to lowest)

3.1.1.1. *Royal Flush* – A, K, W, J, 10 all of the same suit.

3.1.1.2. *Straight Flush* – Any five cards sequence in the same suit (Example: 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of hearts).

3.1.1.3. *Four of a Kind* – All four cards of the same index (Example: Q, Q, Q, Q, 3).

3.1.1.4. *Full House* – Three of a kind combined with a pair (Example: K, K, 3, 3, 3).

3.1.1.5. *Flush* – Any five cards of the same suit, but not in sequence.

3.1.1.6. *Straight* – Any five cards in sequence, but not in the same suit.

3.1.1.7. *Three of a Kind* – Three cards of the same index.

3.1.1.8. *Two Pair* – Two separate pairs (Example: Q, Q, 3, 3, 7).

3.1.1.9. *Pair* – Two cards of the same index.

3.1.1.10. *High Card* – Highest card is an Ace.

### 3.1.2 **Types of Play**

#### 3.1.2.1 Sanctioned

Sanctioned play is a *tournament* environment approved by the USPA. It may, or may not, be hosted by the USPA. The *referee* is designated by the USPA.

#### 3.1.2.2 Sponsored

Sponsored play may, or may not, be a *tournament* environment. The *host* is a professional organization, such as a casino or cardroom, with dedicated facilities and support personnel familiar with the Laws of Poker. The *referee* is designated by the *host* and may be an employee of the *host*, but not a player.

#### 3.1.2.3 Recreational

Recreational play is an informal environment such as a home, private club, etc. The *host* is an individual or non-professional organization. The *referee* is designated by the *host* and may be a player.

### 3.1.3 **The *Buy-In***

3.1.3.1. When you enter a game, you must make a *full buy-in* for that particular game. A *full buy-in* at limit poker is at least ten times the maximum *bet* for the game being played, unless designated otherwise.

3.1.3.2. You are allowed to make only one *short buy-in* for a game. Adding to your *stack* is not considered a *buy-in*, and may be done in any quantity between *hands*.

3.1.3.3. A player who is forced to transfer from a *broken game* or *must-move* game to a game of the same limit may continue to play the same amount of money, even if it is less than the minimum *buy-in*. A player switching games voluntarily must have the proper *buy-in* size for the new game.

### 3.1.4 **Misdeals**

3.1.4.1 The following circumstances 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, as explained in section 3.1.4.2 hereof)

3.1.4.1.1. The first or second card of the *hand* has been dealt faceup or exposed through *dealer* error.

3.1.4.1.2. Two or more cards have been exposed by the *dealer*.

3.1.4.1.3. Two or more *boxed cards* (improperly faced cards) are found.

3.1.4.1.4. Two or more extra cards have been dealt in the starting *hands* of a game.

3.1.4.1.5. An incorrect number of cards has been dealt to a player, except the top card may be dealt if it goes to the player in proper sequence.

3.1.4.1.6. Any card has been dealt out of the proper sequence (except an exposed card may be replaced by the burncard).

3.1.4.1.7. The *button* was out of *position*.

3.1.4.1.8. The first card was dealt to the wrong *position*.

3.1.4.1.9. Cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player

3.1.4.1.10. 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*.

3.1.4.2 *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 two players after the *blinds* have acted on their *hands*. Once *action* occurs, a *misdeal* can no longer be declared. The *hand* will be played to conclusion and no money will be returned to any player whose *hand* is fouled.

### 3.1.5 **Dead Hands:**

3.1.5.1 Your *hand* is declared dead if:

3.1.5.1.1. You *fold* or announce that you are folding when facing a *bet* or a *raise*.

3.1.5.1.2. You throw your *hand* away in a forward motion causing another player to act behind you (even if not facing a *bet*).

3.1.5.1.3. In stud, when facing a *bet*, you pick your *upcards* off the table, turn your *upcards* facedown, or mix your *upcards* and *downcards* together.

3.1.5.1.4. The *hand* does not contain the proper number of cards for that particular game (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). [See APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker," EXPLANATION #4, for more information on the stud portion of this rule.]

3.1.5.1.5. You act on a *hand* with a *joker* as a holecard in a game not using a *joker*. (A player who acts on a *hand* without looking at a card assumes the liability of finding an improper card, as given in section 3.1.6.8, hereof).

3.1.5.1.6. You have the clock on you when facing a *bet* or *raise* and exceed the specified time limit.

3.1.5.2 Cards thrown into the *muck* may be ruled dead. However, a *hand* that is clearly identifiable may be retrieved at *referee's* discretion 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.

3.1.5.3 Cards thrown into another player's *hand* are dead, whether they are faceup or facedown.

### **3.1.6 Irregularities:**

3.1.6.1. In *button games*, if it is discovered that the *button* was placed incorrectly on the previous *hand*, the *button* and *blinds* will be corrected for the new *hand* in a manner that gives every player one chance for each *position* on the round (if possible).

3.1.6.2. You must protect your own *hand* at all times. Your cards may be protected with your *hands*, a chip, or other object placed on top of them. If you fail to protect your *hand*, you will have no redress if it becomes fouled or the *dealer* accidentally *kills* it

3.1.6.3. If a card with a different color back appears during a *hand*, all *action* is void and all chips in the pot are returned to the respective bettors. If a card with a different color back is discovered in the *stub*, all *action* stands.

3.1.6.4. If two cards of the same rank and suit are found, all *action* is void, and all chips in the pot are returned to the players who wagered them (subject to section 3.1.6.5, hereof).

3.1.6.5. A player who knows the *deck* is defective has an obligation to point this out. If such a player instead tries to win a pot by taking aggressive *action* (trying for a freeroll), the player may lose the right to a refund, and the chips may be required to stay in the pot for the next *deal*.

3.1.6.6. If there is extra money in the pot on a *deal* as a result of forfeited money from the previous *deal* (as per section 3.1.6.5, hereof), or some similar reason, only a player dealt in on the previous *deal* is entitled to a *hand*.

3.1.6.7. A card discovered faceup in the *deck* (*boxed card*) will be treated as a meaningless scrap of paper. A card being treated as a scrap of paper will be replaced by the next card below it in the *deck*, except when the next card has already been dealt facedown to another player and mixed in with other *downcards*. In that case, the card that was faceup in the *deck* will be replaced after all other cards are dealt for that round.

3.1.6.8. A *joker* that appears in a game where it is not used is treated as a scrap of paper. Discovery of a *joker* does not cause a *misdeal*. If the *joker* is discovered before a

player acts on his or her *hand*, it is replaced as provided in section 3.1.6.7, hereof. If the player does not call attention to the *joker* before acting, then the player has a *dead hand*.

3.1.6.9. If you play a *hand* without looking at all of your cards, you assume the liability of having an irregular card or an improper *joker*.

3.1.6.10. One or more cards missing from the *deck* does not invalidate the results of a *hand*.

3.1.6.11. Before the first round of betting, if a *dealer deals* one additional card, it is returned to the *deck* and used as the burncard.

3.1.6.12. Procedure for an exposed card varies with the poker form, and is given in the Laws for each form of play. A card that is flashed by a *dealer* is treated as an exposed card. A card that is flashed by a player is in play. To obtain a ruling on whether a card was exposed and should be replaced, a player should announce that the card was flashed or exposed before looking at it. A downcard dealt off the table is an exposed card.

3.1.6.13. If a card is exposed due to *dealer* error, a player does not have an *option* to take or reject the card. The situation will be governed by the Laws for the particular game being played.

3.1.6.14. If you drop a card on the floor out of your *hand*, you must still play that card.

3.1.6.15. If the *dealer* prematurely *deals* any cards before the betting is complete, those cards will not play, even if a player who has not acted decides to *fold*.

### **3.1.7 Betting and Raising**

3.1.7.1 *Check-raise* is permitted in all games, except in certain forms of *lowball*.

3.1.7.2 In *no-limit* and *pot-limit* games, unlimited raising is allowed.

3.1.7.3 In limit poker, for a pot involving three or more players who are not *all-in*, these limits on *raises* apply:

3.1.7.3.1. A game with three or more betting rounds allows a maximum of a *bet* and three *raises*.

3.1.7.3.2. A game with two betting rounds (such as *lowball* or *draw*) allows a maximum of a *bet* and four *raises*. (See APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker" EXPLANATION #6, for more information on this rule.)

3.1.7.4 Unlimited raising 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.

3.1.7.5 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* may *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 \$20 betting round, raising a \$15 *all-in bet* to \$35).

3.1.7.6 Any *wager* must be at least the size of the previous *bet* or *raise* in that round, unless a player is going *all-in*.

3.1.7.7 The smallest chip that may be *wagered* in a game is the smallest chip used in the *antes*, *blinds*, *rake*, or *collection*. (Certain games may use a special rule that does not allow chips used only in house revenue to play.) Smaller chips than this do not play even in quantity, so a player wanting *action* on such chips must change them up between *deals*. If betting is in dollar units or greater, a fraction of a dollar does not play. A player going *all-in* must put all chips that play into the pot.

3.1.7.8 A verbal statement 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*.

3.1.7.9 Rapping the table with your *hand* is a *pass*.

3.1.7.10 Deliberately acting out of turn will not be 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.

3.1.7.11 To retain the right to act, a player must stop the *action* by calling "*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.

3.1.7.12 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.

3.1.7.13 In limit poker, if you make a forward motion with chips and thus cause another player to act, you may be forced to complete your *action*.

3.1.7.14 *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.)

3.1.7.15 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 \$3-\$6 game, when a player *bets* \$6 and the next player puts a \$25 chip in the pot without saying anything, that player has merely called the \$6 *bet*.

3.1.7.16 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* is supposed to be made in a rounded off amount, is not, and must be corrected, it shall be changed to the proper amount nearest in size. No one who has acted may change a *call* to a *raise* because the *wager* size has been changed.

### 3.1.8 The Showdown

3.1.8.1. A player must show all cards in the *hand* face-up on the table to win any part of the pot.

3.1.8.2. *Cards speak* (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. (For more information on miscalling a *hand* see 3.2.8 "Lowball", sections 3.2.8.5.1.15 and 3.2.8.5.1.16, hereof.)

3.1.8.3. Any player, *dealer*, or *referee* 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.

3.1.8.4. All losing *hands* will be killed by the *dealer* before a pot is awarded.

3.1.8.5. Any player who has been dealt in may 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 may 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.

3.1.8.6. If you show cards to another player during or after a *deal*, any player at the table has the right to see those exposed cards. Cards shown during a *deal* to a player not in the pot should only be shown to all players when the *deal* is finished.

3.1.8.7. If everyone *checks* (or is *all-in*) on the final betting - round, the player who acted first is the first to show the *hand*. If there is wagering on the final betting round, 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.

### 3.1.9 Ties

3.1.9.1 The ranking of suits from highest to lowest is spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs. Suits never break a tie for winning a pot. Suits are used to break a tie between cards of the same rank (no redeal or redraw).

3.1.9.2 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 things like who gets the *button* in a new game, or seating order coming from a *broken game*.

3.1.9.3 An odd chip will be broken down to the smallest unit used in the game.

3.1.9.4 No player may receive more than one odd chip.

3.1.9.5 If two or more *hands* tie, an odd chip will be awarded as follows:

3.1.9.5.1. In a *button* game, the first *hand* clockwise from the *button* gets the odd chip.

3.1.9.5.2. In a stud game, the odd chip will be 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*.)

3.1.9.5.3. 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.

3.1.9.5.4. All *side pots* and the main pot will be split as separate pots, not mixed together.

## 3.2 **Law 2 – The Forms of Play**

### 3.2.1 **Texas Hold'em**

#### 3.2.1.1 General

In Texas Hold'em, players receive two *downcards* as their personal *hand* (holecards), after which there is a round of betting. Three *boardcards* are turned simultaneously (called the "*flop*") and another round of betting occurs. The next two *boardcards* are turned one at a time, with a round of betting after each card. The *boardcards* are *community cards*, and a player may use any five-card combination from among the *board* and personal cards. A player may even use all of the *boardcards* and no personal cards to form a *hand* (*play the board*). A *dealer button* is used. The usual structure is to use two *blinds*, but it is possible to play the game with one *blind*, multiple *blinds*, an *ante*, or combination of *blinds* plus an *ante*.

#### 3.2.1.2 Object

The best possible five card poker *hand*, using any combination of hole cards and *community cards*, wins the pot.

#### 3.2.1.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.1.3.1. The *dealer deals* each player their own two cards face-down (pocket cards).

3.2.1.3.2. First betting round.

3.2.1.3.3. The *dealer* burns a card then turns over three *community cards* face-up (the *flop*).

3.2.1.3.4. Second betting round.

3.2.1.3.5. The *dealer* burns another card then turns over one more community card (the turn or 4th street).

3.2.1.3.6. Third betting round.

3.2.1.3.7. The *dealer* burns another card then turns over one final community card (the *river* or 5th street).

3.2.1.3.8. Last betting round.

3.2.1.3.9. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first).

#### 3.2.1.4 *Showdown Options*

All remaining players must use one of the following choices at the *showdown*:

1. Two pocket cards and three *boardcards*,
2. One pocket card and four *boardcards*, or
3. No pocket cards and five *boardcards* (called “playing the *board*”).

#### 3.2.1.5 Rules

3.2.1.5.1. If the first holecard dealt is exposed, a *misdeal* results. The *dealer* will retrieve the card, reshuffle, and recut the cards. If any other holecard is exposed due to a *dealer* error, the *deal* continues. The exposed card may not be kept. After completing the *hand*, the *dealer* replaces the card with the top card on the *deck*, and the exposed card is then used for the burncard. If more than one holecard is exposed, this is a *misdeal* and there must be a redeal.

3.2.1.5.2. If the *flop* contains too many cards, it must be redealt. (This applies even if it were possible to know which card was the extra one.)

3.2.1.5.3. If the *flop* needs to be redealt because the cards were prematurely flopped before the betting was complete, or the *flop* contained too many cards, the *boardcards* are mixed with the remainder of the *deck*. The burncard remains on the table. After shuffling, the *dealer* cuts the *deck* and deals a new *flop* without burning a card. (See – APPENDIX II, “Explanations of the Laws of Poker”. EXPLANATION #2, hereof, for more information on this rule.)

3.2.1.5.4. If the *dealer* turns the fourth card on the *board* before the betting round is complete, the card is taken out of play for that round, even if subsequent players elect to *fold*. The betting is then completed. The *dealer* burns and turns what would have been the fifth card in the fourth card's place. After this round of betting, the *dealer* reshuffles the *deck*, including the card that was taken out of play, but not including the burncards or *discards*. The *dealer* then cuts the *deck* and turns the final card without burning a card. If the fifth card is turned up prematurely, the *deck* is reshuffled and dealt in the same manner. (See – APPENDIX II, “Explanations of the Laws of Poker”. EXPLANATION #2, hereof, for more information on this rule.)

3.2.1.5.5. If the *dealer* mistakenly deals the first player an extra card (after all players have received their starting *hands*), the card will be returned to the *deck* and used for the burncard. If the *dealer* mistakenly deals more than one extra card, it is a *misdeal*.

3.2.1.5.6. You must declare that you are playing the *board* before you throw your cards away; otherwise you relinquish all claims to the pot.

### 3.2.2 Omaha Hold'em

#### 3.2.2.1 General

Omaha Hold'em is similar to Texas Hold'em in using a three-card *flop* on the *board*, a fourth *boardcard*, and then a fifth *boardcard*. Each player is dealt four holecards (instead of two) at the start. In order to make a *hand*, a player must use precisely two holecards with three *boardcards*. The betting is the same as in Texas Hold'em. At the *showdown*, the entire four-card *hand* should be shown to receive the pot.

#### 3.2.2.2 Object

The best possible five card poker *hand*, using exactly two hole cards and three *community cards*, wins the pot.

#### 3.2.2.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.2.3.1. The *dealer deals* each player their own four cards face- down (pocket cards).

3.2.2.3.2. First betting round.

3.2.2.3.3. The *dealer* burns a card then turns over three *community cards* face-up (the *flop*)

3.2.2.3.4. Second betting round.

3.2.2.3.5. The *dealer* burns another card, and then turns over one more community card (the *turn* or 4th street).

3.2.2.3.6. Third betting round.

3.2.2.3.7. The *dealer* burns another card, and then turns over one final community card (the *river* or 5th street).

3.2.2.3.8. Last betting round.

3.2.2.3.9. *Showdown*. (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first).

#### 3.2.2.4 Showdown Options

All remaining players must use two of their pocket cards and three *boardcards*.

#### 3.2.2.5 Rules

##### 3.2.2.5.1 General

3.2.2.5.1.1. All the rules of Texas Hold'em apply to Omaha Hold'em except the rule on playing the *board*, which is not possible in Omaha Hold'em (because you must use two cards from your *hand* and three cards from the *board*).

3.2.2.5.2 High-Low - Omaha Hold'em is often played high-low, 8-or-better. All the rules of Omaha Hold'em apply to Omaha Hold'em high-low split except the following.

3.2.2.5.2.1. The player may use any combination of two holecards and three *boardcards* for the high *hand* and another (or the same) combination of two holecards and three board cards for the low *hand*.

3.2.2.5.2.2. A qualifier of 8-or-better for low applies to all high-low split games, unless a specific posting to the contrary is displayed. If there is no qualifying *hand* for low, the best high *hand* wins the whole pot.

### 3.2.3 Seven-Card Stud

#### 3.2.3.1 General

Seven-card stud is played with two *downcards* and one upcard dealt before the first betting round, followed by three more *upcards* (with a betting round after each card). After the last downcard is dealt, there is a final round of betting. The best five-card poker *hand* wins the pot. In all fixed-limit games, the smaller *bet* is wagered on the first two betting rounds, and the larger *bet* is wagered after the betting rounds on the fifth, sixth, and seventh cards. If there is an open pair on the fourth card, any player has the *option* of making the smaller or larger *bet*. Deliberately changing the order of your *upcards* in a stud game is improper because it unfairly misleads the other players.

#### 3.2.3.2 Object

The best five card poker *hand*, out of seven cards, wins the pot.

#### 3.2.3.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.3.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.3.3.2. Each player is dealt two cards face-down (hole cards) and one card face-up (door card)

3.2.3.3.3. First betting round

3.2.3.3.4. Each player is dealt one card face-up (4th street)

3.2.3.3.5. Second betting round

3.2.3.3.6. Each player is dealt another card face-up (5th street)

3.2.3.3.7. Third betting round

3.2.3.3.8. Each player is dealt another card face-up (6th street)

3.2.3.3.9. Fourth betting round

3.2.3.3.10. Each player is dealt a last card face-down (*river*)

3.2.3.3.11. Last betting round

3.2.3.3.12. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

#### 3.2.3.4 Showdown Options

Players may use any 5 of their 7 cards to make their best *hand*.

#### 3.2.3.5 Rules

3.2.3.5.1. The first round of betting starts with a *forced bet* by the lowest upcard by suit. On subsequent betting rounds, the high *hand* on *board* initiates the *action* (a tie is broken by *position*, with the player who received cards first acting first).

3.2.3.5.2. The player with the *forced bet* has the *option* of opening for a full *bet*.

3.2.3.5.3. Increasing the amount wagered by the opening *forced bet* up to a full *bet* does not count as a *raise*, but merely as a completion of the *bet*. For example: In \$15-\$30 stud, the *lowcard* opens for \$5. If the next player increases the *bet* to \$15 (completes the *bet*), up to three *raises* are then allowed when using a three-*raise* limit.

3.2.3.5.4. In all fixed-limit games, when an open pair is showing on *fourth street* (second upcard), any player has the *option* of betting either the lower or the upper limit. For example: In a \$5-\$10 game, if you have a pair showing and are the high *hand*, you may *bet* either \$5 or \$10. If you *bet* \$5, any player then has the *option* to *call* \$5, *raise* \$5, or *raise* \$10. If a \$10 *raise* is made, then all other *raises* must be in increments of \$10. If the player high with the open pair on *fourth street* *checks*, then subsequent players have the same *options* that were given to the player who was high.

3.2.3.5.5. If your first or second holecard is accidentally turned up by the *dealer*, then your third card will be dealt down. If both holecards are dealt up, you have a *dead hand* and receive your *ante* back. If the first card dealt faceup would have been the *lowcard*, *action* starts with the first *hand* to that player's left. That player may *fold*, open for the *forced bet*, or open for a full *bet* (In *tournament* play, if a downcard is dealt faceup, a *misdeal* is called.)

3.2.3.5.6. If you are not present at the table when it is your turn to act on your *hand*, you forfeit your *ante* and your *forced bet*, if any. If you have not returned to the table in time to act, the *hand* will be killed when the betting reaches your seat.

3.2.3.5.7. If a *hand* is folded when there is no *wager*, that seat will continue to receive cards until the *hand* is killed as a result of a *bet*.

3.2.3.5.8. If you are all in for the *ante* and have the *lowcard*, the player to your left acts first. That player may *fold*, open for the *forced bet*, or open for a full *bet*.

3.2.3.5.9. If the wrong person is designated as low and that person *bets*, the *action* will be corrected to the true *lowcard* if the next player has not yet acted. The incorrect *lowcard* takes back the *wager* and the true *lowcard* must *bet*. If the next *hand* has acted after the incorrect *lowcard* *wager*, the *wager* stands, *action* continues from there, and the true *lowcard* has no obligations.

3.2.3.5.10. If you pick up your *upcards* without calling when facing a *wager*, this is a *fold* and your *hand* is dead. This act has no significance at the *showdown* because betting is over; the *hand* is live until *discarded*.

3.2.3.5.11. A card dealt off the table must play and it is treated as an exposed card.

3.2.3.5.12. In all games, the *dealer* announces the *lowcard*, the *high hand*, all *raises*, and all *pairs*. *Dealers* do not announce possible *straights* or *flushes* (except for specified low-stakes games).

3.2.3.5.13. If the *dealer* burns two cards for one round or fails to burn a card, the cards will be corrected, if at all possible, to their proper *positions*. If this should happen on a final downcard, and either a card intermingles with a player's other holecards or a player looks at the card, the player must accept that card.

3.2.3.5.14. If the *dealer* burns and *deals* one or more cards before a round of betting has been completed, the card(s) must be eliminated from play. After the betting for that round is completed, an additional card for each remaining player still active in the *hand* is also eliminated from play (to later *deal* the same cards to the players who would have received them without the error). After that round of betting has concluded, the *dealer* burns a card and play resumes. The removed cards are held off to the side in the *event* the *dealer* runs out of cards. If the prematurely dealt card is the final downcard and has been looked at or intermingled with the player's other holecards, the player must keep the card, and on sixth street betting may not *bet* or *raise* (because the player now has all seven cards).

3.2.3.5.15. If there are not enough cards left in the *deck* for all players, all the cards are dealt except the last card, which is mixed with the burncards (and any cards removed from the *deck*, as in section 3.2.3.5.14, hereof). The *dealer* then *scrambles* and *cuts* these cards, burns again, and delivers the remaining *downcards*, using the last card if necessary. If there are not as many cards as players remaining without a card, the *dealer* does not burn, so that each player can receive a fresh card. If the *dealer* determines that there will not be enough fresh cards for all of the remaining players, then the *dealer* announces to the table that a *common card* will be used. The *dealer* will burn a card and turn one card faceup in the center of the table as a *common card* that plays in everyone's *hand*. The player who is now high using the *common card* initiates the *action* for the last round.

3.2.3.5.16. An *all-in* player should receive holecards dealt facedown, but if the final holecard to such a player is dealt faceup, the card must be kept, and the other players receive their normal card.

3.2.3.5.17. If the *dealer* turns the last card faceup to any player, the *hand* now high on the *board* using all the *upcards* will start the *action*. The following rules apply to the dealing of cards:

3.2.3.5.17.1. If there are more than two players, all remaining players receive their last card facedown. A player whose last card is faceup has the *option* of declaring *all-in* (before betting *action* starts).

3.2.3.5.17.2. If there are only two players remaining and the first player's final downcard is dealt faceup, the second player's final downcard will also be dealt faceup, and the betting proceeds as normal. In the *event* the first player's final card is dealt facedown and the opponent's final card is dealt faceup, the player with the faceup final card has the *option* of declaring *all-in* (before betting *action* starts).

3.2.3.5.18. A *hand* with more than seven cards is dead. A *hand* with less than seven cards at the *showdown* is dead, except any player missing a seventh card

may have the *hand* ruled live. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker". EXPLANATION #4, hereof, for more information on this rule.]

3.2.3.5.19. A player who *calls* a *bet* even though beaten by an opponent's *upcards* is not entitled to a refund. (The player is receiving information about an opponent's *hand* that is not available for free.)

### 3.2.4 Five-Card Stud

#### 3.2.4.1 General

Five-card stud is played with one downcard and one upcard dealt before the first betting round, followed by three more *upcards* (with a betting round after each card). The best five-card poker *hand* wins the pot. In all fixed-limit games, the same *bet* is wagered on all betting rounds. Deliberately changing the order of your *upcards* in a stud game is improper because it unfairly misleads the other players.

#### 3.2.4.2 Object

The best five-card poker *hand* wins the pot.

#### 3.2.4.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.4.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.4.3.2. Each player is dealt one card face-down (hole card) and one card face-up (door card)

3.2.4.3.3. First betting round

3.2.4.3.4. Each player is dealt one card face-up (4th street)

3.2.4.3.5. Second betting round

3.2.4.3.6. Each player is dealt another card face-up (5th street)

3.2.4.3.7. Third betting round

3.2.4.3.8. Each player is dealt a final card face-up (*river*)

3.2.4.3.9. Last betting round

3.2.4.3.10. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

#### 3.2.4.4 Showdown Options

The best five-card poker *hand* wins the pot.

#### 3.2.4.5 Rules

3.2.4.5.1. Except for the number of cards dealt, the rules for five-card stud are the same as for seven-card stud.

### 3.2.5 Mississippi Seven-Card Stud

#### 3.2.5.1 General

Starting and raising requirements in Mississippi are about the same as seven-card stud, with some marginal *hands* being made playable by the two card *flop*: high pairs decrease in profitability, while *straights* and *flushes* improve. Small pairs with *kickers* do better against the high pairs, but lose more often to *straights* and *flushes*, so they remain about the same. Rolled-up trips occur in 1/424 *hands*.

#### 3.2.5.2 Object

The best five card poker *hand*, out of seven cards, wins the pot.

#### 3.2.5.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.5.3.1. *Ante*, then deal two cards down and one up: *Lowcard* must *bet* in limit-betting games, high card must *bet* or *fold* in big-*bet* games.

3.2.5.3.2. *Deal* each *active player* two more *upcards*; *bet* from highest *hand*.

3.2.5.3.3. *Deal* each player a fourth *upcard*: *bet* from highest *hand*.

3.2.5.3.4. *Deal* each player a fifth *upcard*: *bet* from highest *hand* and *showdown*.

#### 3.2.5.4 Showdown Options

Players may use any five of their seven cards to make their best *hand*.

#### 3.2.5.5 Rules

##### 3.2.5.5.1. Betting structures -

3.2.5.5.1.1. Half-pot, *pot-limit* and *no-limit* betting: in big-*bet* (i.e., non-limit) games, all forms of stud require an *ante* from each player, with the highest card or *hand* speaking first in all rounds of play: in the first round the high card must either *bet* or *fold*, in later rounds the high *hand* can either *bet* or *check*. The initial *bet* size is at the discretion of the *opener* and can usually be as small as one *ante*, or up to the maximum *bet* size allowed in the form used: i.e., half the total *antes* in half-pot, the total *antes* in full-pot and as much as you wish in *no-limit*.

3.2.5.5.1.2. Limit betting structures: there is an *ante*, a compulsory bring-in from the *lowcard* and *bets* typically double for the last two rounds, though this can be varied according to player's tastes. The *bets* are usually *capped* at three per round, except in head-to-head pots.

3.2.5.5.1.2.1. Low *ante*: *ante* one unit, bring-in 2 units, *raise* 10 units. The maximum *bet* for the first two rounds is 10 units, with *bets* doubling for the third and fourth rounds.

3.2.5.5.1.2.2. High *ante*: *ante* four units, bring-in five units, *raise* 10 units. *Bets* double to 20 units for the third and fourth rounds.

### 3.2.6 RAZZ (Seven-Card Stud Low)

#### 3.2.6.1 General

The lowest *hand* wins the pot. The format is similar to seven-card stud high, except the high card (aces are low) is required to make the *forced bet* on the first round, and the low *hand* acts first on all subsequent rounds. *Straights* and *flushes* have no ranking, so the best possible *hand* is 5-4-3-2-A (a wheel). An open pair does not affect the betting limit.

#### 3.2.6.2 Object

The lowest *hand* wins the pot. Aces are low, and *straights* and *flushes* have no effect on the low value of a *hand*. The best possible *hand* is 5-4-3-2-A.

#### 3.2.6.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.6.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.6.3.2. Each player is dealt two cards face-down (hole cards) and one card face-up (door card)

3.2.6.3.3. First betting round

3.2.6.3.4. Each player is dealt one card face-up (4th street)

3.2.6.3.5. Second betting round

3.2.6.3.6. Each player is dealt another card face-up (5th street)

3.2.6.3.7. Third betting round

3.2.6.3.8. Each player is dealt another card face-up (6th street)

3.2.6.3.9. Fourth betting round

3.2.6.3.10. Each player is dealt a last card face-down (*river*)

3.2.6.3.11. Last betting round

3.2.6.3.12. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

#### 3.2.6.4 Showdown Options

The lowest *hand* wins the pot. Aces are low, and *straights* and *flushes* have no effect on the low value of a *hand*. The best possible *hand* is 5-4-3-2-A.

#### 3.2.6.5 Rules

3.2.6.5.1. All seven-card stud rules apply in RAZZ except as otherwise noted.

3.2.6.5.2. The highest card by suit starts the *action* with a *forced bet*. The low *hand* acts first on all subsequent rounds. If the low *hand* is tied, the first player clockwise from the *dealer* starts the *action*.

3.2.6.5.3. Fixed-limit games use the lower limit on third and *fourth streets* and the upper limit on subsequent streets. An open pair does not affect the limit.

3.2.6.5.4. The *dealer* announces all pairs the first time they occur, except pairs of *facecards*, which are never announced.

### 3.2.7 Seven-Card Stud High/Low

#### 3.2.7.1 General

Seven-card stud high-low split is a stud game which is played both high and low. A qualifier of 8-or-better for low applies to all high-low split games, unless a specific posting to the contrary is displayed. The *lowcard* initiates the *action* on the first round, with an ace counting as a high card for this purpose. On subsequent rounds, the high *hand* initiates the *action*. If the high *hand* is tied, the first player clockwise from the *dealer* acts first. Fixed-limit games use the lower limit on third and *fourth street* and the upper limit on subsequent betting rounds, and an open pair does not affect the limit. Aces may be used for high or low. *Straights* and *flushes* do not affect the low value of a *hand*. A player may use any five cards to make the best high *hand*, and the same or any other grouping of five cards to make the best low *hand*.

#### 3.2.7.2 Object

Seven-card stud high-low split is a stud game which is played both high and low with the high and low *hands* splitting the pot

#### 3.2.7.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.7.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.7.3.2. Each player is dealt two cards face-down (hole cards) and one card face-up (door card)

3.2.7.3.3. First betting round

3.2.7.3.4. Each player is dealt one card face-up (4th street)

3.2.7.3.5. Second betting round

3.2.7.3.6. Each player is dealt another card face-up (5th street)

3.2.7.3.7. Third betting round

3.2.7.3.8. Each player is dealt another card face-up (6th street)

3.2.7.3.9. Fourth betting round

3.2.7.3.10. Each player is dealt a last card face-down (*river*)

3.2.7.3.11. Last betting round

3.2.7.3.12. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

#### 3.2.7.4 Showdown Options

A player may use any five cards to make the best high *hand*, and the same or any other grouping of five cards to make the best low *hand*.

#### 3.2.7.5 Rules

3.2.7.5.1. All rules for seven-card stud apply to seven-card stud high-low split, except as otherwise noted.

3.2.7.5.2. A qualifier of 8-or-better for low applies to all high-low split games, unless a specific posting to the contrary is displayed. If there is no qualifying *hand* for low, the best high *hand* wins the whole pot.

3.2.7.5.3. A player may use any five cards to make the best high *hand* and any five cards, whether the same as the high *hand* or not, to make the best low *hand*.

3.2.7.5.4. The *lowcard* by suit initiates the *action* on the first round, with an ace counting as a high card for this purpose.

3.2.7.5.5. An ace may be used for high or low.

3.2.7.5.6. *Straights* and *flushes* do not affect the value of a low *hand*.

3.2.7.5.7. Fixed-limit games use the lower limit on third and *fourth streets* and the upper limit on subsequent rounds. An open pair on *fourth street* does not affect the limit.

3.2.7.5.8. Splitting pots is only determined by the cards and not by agreement among players.

3.2.7.5.9. When there is an odd chip in a pot, the chip goes to the high *hand*. If two players split the pot by tying for both the high and the low, the pot shall be split as evenly as possible, and the player with the highest card by suit receives the odd chip. When making this determination, all cards are used, not just the five cards used for the final *hand* played.

3.2.7.5.10. When there is one odd chip in the high portion of the pot and two or more high *hands* split all or half the pot, the odd chip goes to the player with the high card by suit. When two or more low *hands* split half the pot, the odd chip goes to the player with the *lowcard* by suit.

### 3.2.8 Lowball

#### 3.2.8.1 General

*Lowball* is *draw* poker with the lowest *hand* winning the pot. Each player is dealt five cards facedown, after which there is a betting round. Players are required to open with a *bet* or *fold*. The players who remain in the pot after the first betting round now have an *option* to improve their *hand* by replacing cards in their *hands* with new ones. This is the *draw*. The game is normally played with one or more *blinds*, sometimes with an *ante* added. Some betting structures allow the *big blind* to be called; other structures require the minimum open to be double the *big blind*. In limit poker, the usual structure has the limit double after the *draw* (Northern California is an exception). The most popular forms of *lowball* are ace-to-five *lowball* (also known as *California lowball*), and deuce-to-seven *lowball*.

(also known as *Kansas City lowball*). Ace-to-five *lowball* gets its name because the best *hand* at that form is 5-4-3-2-A. Deuce-to-seven *lowball* gets its name because the best *hand* at that form is 7-5-4-3-2 (not of the same suit). For a further description of the forms of '*lowball*', please see the individual section for each form of play. All rules governing *kill pots* are listed in 3.6 Law 6 - *Kill Pots*.

### 3.2.8.2 Object

*Lowball* is a five-card *draw* game in which the lowest *hand* wins.

### 3.2.8.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.8.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.8.3.2. Each player is dealt five cards facedown.

3.2.8.3.3. First betting round. (Players are required to open with a *bet* or *fold*.)

3.2.8.3.4. The players who remain in the pot after the first betting round now have an *option* to improve their *hand* by replacing cards in their *hands* with new ones.

3.2.8.3.5. Last betting round

3.2.8.3.6. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

### 3.2.8.4 Showdown Options

The lowest five card *hand* wins.

### 3.2.8.5 Rules

#### 3.2.8.5.1 General

3.2.8.5.1.1. The rules governing *misdeals* for Texas Hold'em and other *button games* will be used for *lowball*. [See – APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #7, for more information of this rule.]

3.2.8.5.1.2. In limit play, a *bet* and four *raises* are allowed in multihanded pots. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #6, for more information on this rule.]

3.2.8.5.1.3. As a new player, you have two *options*:

3.2.8.5.1.3.1. To wait for the *big blind*.

3.2.8.5.1.3.2. To *kill* the pot for double the amount of the *big blind*.

3.2.8.5.1.4. In a single-blind *game*, a player who has less than half a *blind* may receive a *hand*. However, the next player is obligated to take the *blind*. If the *all-in* player wins the pot or buys in again, that player will then be obligated to either take the *blind* on the next deal or sit out until due for the *big blind*.

3.2.8.5.1.5. In single-*blind games*, half a *blind* or more constitutes a full *blind*.

3.2.8.5.1.6. In single-*blind games*, if you fail to take the *blind*, you may only be dealt in on the *blind*.

3.2.8.5.1.7. In multiple-*blind games*, if for any reason the *big blind* passes your seat, you may either wait for the *big blind* or *kill* the pot in order to receive a *hand*. This does not apply if you have taken all of your *blinds* and changed seats. In this situation, you may be dealt in as soon as your *position* relative to the *blinds* entitles you to a *hand* (the *button* may go by you once without penalty).

3.2.8.5.1.8. Before the *draw*, whether an exposed card must be taken depends on the form of *lowball* being played; see that form. (The player never has an *option*.)

3.2.8.5.1.9. On the *draw*, an exposed card cannot be taken. The *draw* is completed to each player in order, and then the exposed card is replaced.

3.2.8.5.1.10. A player may *draw* up to four consecutive cards. If a player wishes to *draw* five new cards, four are dealt right away, and the fifth card after everyone else has drawn cards. If the last player wishes to *draw* five new cards, four are dealt right away, and a card is burned before the player receives a fifth card. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #9, for more information about this rule.]

3.2.8.5.1.11. Five cards constitute a playing *hand*; more or fewer than five cards after the *draw* constitutes a *fouled hand*. Before the *draw*, if you have fewer than five cards in your *hand*, you may receive additional cards, provided no *action* has been taken by the first player to act (unless that *action* occurs before the *deal* is completed). However, the *dealer position* may still receive a missing fifth card, even if *action* has taken place. If *action* has been taken, you are entitled on the *draw* to receive the number of cards necessary to complete a five-card *hand*.

3.2.8.5.1.12. You may change the number of cards you wish to *draw*, provided:

3.2.8.5.1.12.1. No card has been dealt off the *deck* in response to your request (including the burncard).

3.2.8.5.1.12.2. No player has acted, in either the betting or Indicating the number of cards to be drawn, based on the number of cards you have requested.

3.2.8.5.1.13. If you are asked how many cards you drew by another *active player*, you are obligated to respond until there has been *action* after the *draw*, and the *dealer* is also obligated to respond. Once there is any *action* after the *draw*, you are no longer obliged to respond and the *dealer* cannot respond.

3.2.8.5.1.14. Rapping the table in turn constitutes either a *pass* or the declaration of a *pat hand* that does not want to *draw* any cards, depending on the situation.

3.2.8.5.1.15. *Cards speak* (read) for themselves. However, you are not allowed to claim a better *hand* than you hold. (Example: If a player *calls* an "8", that player must produce at least an "8" low or better to win. But if a player erroneously calls the second card incorrectly, such as "8-6" when actually holding an 8-7, no penalty applies.) If you *miscal* your *hand* and cause another player to foul his or her *hand*, your *hand* is dead. If both *hands* remain intact, the best *hand* wins. If a miscalled *hand* occurs in a multihanded pot, the miscalled *hand* is dead, and the best remaining *hand* wins the pot. For your own protection, always hold your *hand* until you see your opponent's cards.

3.2.8.5.1.16. Any player spreading a *hand* with a pair in it must announce "pair" or risk losing the pot if it causes any other player to foul a *hand*. If two or more *hands* remain intact, the best *hand* wins the pot.

3.2.8.5.2. Ace-To-Five *Lowball* - In ace-to-five *lowball*, the best *hand* is any 5-4-3-2-A. *Straights* and *flushes* do not count against your *hand*.

3.2.8.5.2.1. If a *joker* is used, it becomes the lowest card not present in your *hand*. The *joker* is assumed to be in use unless the contrary is posted.

3.2.8.5.2.2. In limit play, *check-raise* is not permitted (unless the players are alerted that it is allowed).

3.2.8.5.2.3. In limit ace-to-five *lowball*, before the *draw*, an exposed card of seven or under must be taken, and an exposed card higher than a seven must be replaced after the *deal* has been completed. This first exposed card is used as the burncard. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #8, for more information on this rule.)

3.2.8.5.2.4. In limit play, the "sevens rule" is assumed to be in use (the players should be alerted if it is not). If you *check* a seven or better and it is the best *hand*, all *action* after the *draw* is void, and you cannot win any money on any subsequent *bets*. You are still eligible to win whatever existed in the pot before the *draw* if you have the best *hand*. If you *check* a seven or better and the *hand* is beaten, you lose the pot and any additional *calls* you make. If there is an *all-in bet* after the *draw* that is less than half a *bet*, a seven or better may just *call* and win that *bet*. However, if another player overcalls this short *bet* and loses, the person who overcalls receives the *bet* back. If the seven or better completes to a full *bet*, this fulfills all obligations.

3.2.8.5.3 Deuce-To-Seven *Lowball* - In deuce-to-seven *lowball* (sometimes known as *Kansas City lowball*), in most respects, the worst conventional poker *hand* wins. *Straights* and *flushes* count against you, crippling the value of a *hand*. The ace is used only as a high card. Therefore, the best *hand* is 7-5-4-3-2, not all of the same suit. The *hand* 5-4-3-2-A is not considered to be a *straight*, but an ace-5 high, so it beats other ace-high *hands* and pairs, but loses to king-high. A pair of aces is the highest pair, so it loses to any other pair. The rules for deuce-

to-seven *lowball* are the same as those for ace-to-five *lowball*, except for the following differences:

3.2.8.5.3.1. The best *hand* is 7-5-4-3-2 of at least two different suits. *Straights* and *flushes* count against you, and aces are considered high only.

3.2.8.5.3.2. Before the *draw*, an exposed card of 7, 5, 4, 3, or, 2 must be taken. Any other exposed card must be replaced (including a 6).

3.2.8.5.3.3. *Check-raise* is allowed on any *hand* after the *draw*, and a seven or better is not required to *bet*.

#### 3.2.8.5.4 *No-Limit* and *Pot-Limit Lowball* -

3.2.8.5.4.1. All the rules for *no-limit* and *pot-limit* poker apply to *no-limit* and *pot-limit lowball*. All other *lowball* rules apply, except as noted.

3.2.8.5.4.2. A player is not entitled to know that an opponent does not hold the best possible *hand*, so these rules for exposed cards before the *draw* apply:

3.2.8.5.4.2.1. In ace-to-five *lowball*, a player must take an exposed card of A, 2, 3, 4, or 5, and any other card must be replaced.

3.2.8.5.4.2.2. In deuce-to-seven *lowball*, the player must take an exposed card of 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7, and any other card including a 6 must be replaced.

3.2.8.5.4.3. After the *draw*, any exposed card must be replaced.

3.2.8.5.4.4. After the *draw*, a player may *check* any *hand* without penalty (The sevens rule is not used).

3.2.8.5.4.5. *Check-raise* is allowed.

### 3.2.9 **Draw Jacks or Better**

#### 3.2.9.1 General

There are two betting rounds, one before the *draw* and one after the *draw*. The game is played with a *button* and an *ante*. Players in turn may *check*, open for the minimum, or open with a *raise*. After the first betting round the players have the opportunity to *draw* new cards to replace the ones they *discard*. *Action* after the *draw* starts with the *opener*, or next player proceeding clockwise if the *opener* has folded. The betting limit after the *draw* is twice the amount of the betting limit before the *draw*.

#### 3.2.9.2 Object

A five-card *draw* game in which the best *hand* wins. A pair of jacks or better are required to open the pot.

#### 3.2.9.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.9.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.9.3.2. Each player is dealt five cards facedown.

3.2.9.3.3. First betting round. (A pair of jacks or better are required to open the pot. If no player has *openers*, then play is returned to step 1.)

3.2.9.3.4. The players who remain in the pot after the first betting round now have an *option* to improve their *hand* by replacing cards in their *hands* with new ones.

3.2.9.3.5. Last betting round

3.2.9.3.6. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

#### 3.2.9.4 *Showdown Options*

The best five-card poker *hand* wins.

#### 3.2.9.5 Rules

3.2.9.5.1. A pair of jacks or better is required to open the pot. If no player opens the pot, the *button* moves forward and each player must *ante* again, unless the limit of *antes* has been reached for that particular game. (Most games allow three consecutive deals before *anteing* stops.)

3.2.9.5.2. If the *opener* should show false *openers* before the *draw*, any other *active player* has the opportunity to declare the pot opened. However, any player who originally passed *openers* is not eligible to declare the pot open. The false *opener* has a *dead hand* and the opening *bet* stays in the pot. Any other *bet* placed in the pot by the *opener* may be withdrawn, provided the *action* before the *draw* is not completed. If no other player declares the pot open, all *bets* are returned except the *opener's* first *bet*. The first *bet* and *antes* will remain in the pot, and all players who were involved in that *hand* are entitled to play the next *hand* after *anteing* again.

3.2.9.5.3. Any player who has legally declared the pot opened must prove *openers* in order to win the pot.

3.2.9.5.4. In all cases, the pot will play (even if the *opener* shows or declares a *fouled hand*) if there has been a *raise*, two or more players *call* the opening *bet*, or all *action* is completed before the *draw*.

3.2.9.5.5. Even if you are all in for just the *ante* (or part of the *ante*), you may declare the pot open if you have *openers*. If you are all in and falsely declare the pot open, you will lose the *ante* money and may not continue to play on any subsequent deals until a winner is determined. Even if you buy in again, you must wait until the pot has been legally opened and someone else has won it before you can resume playing.

3.2.9.5.6. Once *action* has been completed before the *draw*, the *opener* may not withdraw any *bets*, whether or not the *hand* contains *openers*.

3.2.9.5.7. An *opener* may be allowed to retrieve a *discarded hand* to prove *openers*, at the *referee's* discretion.

3.2.9.5.8. Any player may request that the *opener* retain the opening *hand* and show it after the winner of the pot has been determined.

3.2.9.5.9. You may split *openers*, but you must declare that you are splitting and place all *discards* under a chip to be exposed by the *dealer* after the completion of the *hand*. If you declare that you are *splitting openers*, but it is determined that you could not possibly have had *openers* when your final *hand* is compared with your *discards*, you will lose the pot.

3.2.9.5.10. You are not *splitting openers* if you retain *openers*. If you begin with the ace, *joker*, king, queen of spades, and the ten of clubs, you are not splitting if you throw the ten of clubs away. You are breaking a *straight* to *draw* to a royal *flush*, and in doing so, you have retained *openers* (ace-*joker* for two aces).

3.2.9.5.11. After the *draw*, if you *call* the *opener's bet* and cannot beat *openers*, you will not get your *bet* back. (You have received information about *opener's hand* that is not free.)

### 3.2.10 Draw High

#### 3.2.10.1 General

There are two betting rounds, one before the *draw* and one after the *draw*. The game is played with a *button* and an *ante*. Players in turn may *check*, open for the minimum, or open with a *raise*. After the first betting round the players have the opportunity to *draw* new cards to replace the ones they *discard*. *Action* after the *draw* starts with the *opener*, or next player proceeding clockwise if the *opener* has folded. The betting limit after the *draw* is twice the amount of the betting limit before the *draw*. Some *draw high* games allow a player to open on anything; others require the *opener* to have a pair of jacks or better.

#### 3.2.10.2 Object

A five-card *draw* game in which the best *hand* wins.

#### 3.2.10.3 Betting Rounds

3.2.10.3.1. Players must place an *ante* into the pot.

3.2.10.3.2. Each player is dealt five cards facedown.

3.2.10.3.3. First betting round.

3.2.10.3.4. The players who remain in the pot after the first betting round now have an *option* to improve their *hand* by replacing cards in their *hands* with new ones.

3.2.10.3.5. Last betting round

3.2.10.3.6. *Showdown* (Every remaining player shows *hand* with bettor showing first)

#### 3.2.10.4 Showdown Options

The best five-card poker *hand* wins.

### 3.2.10.5 Rules

3.2.10.5.1. A maximum of a *bet* and four *raises* is permitted in multihanded pots. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #6, for more information on this rule.]

3.2.10.5.2. *Check-raise* is permitted both before and after the *draw*.

3.2.10.5.3. Any card that is exposed by the *dealer* before the *draw* must be kept.

3.2.10.5.4. Five cards constitute a playing *hand*. Less than five cards for a player (other than the *button*) before *action* has been taken is a *misdeal*. If *action* has been taken, a player with fewer than five cards may *draw* the number of cards necessary to complete a five--card *hand*. The *button* may receive the fifth card even if *action* has taken place. More or fewer than five cards after the *draw* constitutes a *fouled hand*.

3.2.10.5.5. A player may *draw* up to four consecutive cards. If a player wishes to *draw* five new cards, four are dealt right away, and the fifth card after everyone else has drawn cards. If the last player wishes to *draw* five new cards, four are dealt right away, and a card is burned before the player receives a fifth card. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #9, for more information about this rule.]

3.2.10.5.6. You may change the number of cards you wish to *draw*, provided:

3.2.10.5.6.1. No cards have been dealt off the *deck* in response to your request (including the burncard).

3.2.10.5.6.2. No player has acted, in either the betting or Indicating the number of cards to be drawn, based on the number of cards you have requested.

3.2.10.5.7. If you are asked how many cards you drew by another *active player*, you are obligated to respond until there has been *action* after the *draw*, and the *dealer* is also obligated to respond. Once there is any *action* after the *draw*, you are no longer obliged to respond and the *dealer* cannot respond.

3.2.10.5.8. On the *draw*, an exposed card cannot be taken. The *draw* is completed to each player in order, and then the exposed card is replaced.

3.2.10.5.9. Rapping the table in turn constitutes either a *pass* or the declaration of a *pat hand* that does not want to *draw* any cards, depending on the situation. A player who indicates a *pat hand* by rapping the table, not knowing the pot has been raised, may still play his or her *hand*.

3.2.10.5.10. You may not change your seat between *hands* when there are multiple *antes* or forfeited money in the pot.

3.2.10.5.11. You have the right to pay the *ante* (whether single or multiple) at any time and receive a *hand*, unless there is any additional money in the pot that has been forfeited during a *hand* in which you were not involved.

3.2.10.5.12. If the pot has been declared open by an *all-in* player playing for just the *antes*, all callers must come in for the full opening *bet*.

3.2.10.5.13. If you have only a full *ante* and no other chips on the table, you may play for just the *antes*. If no one opens and there is another *ante*, you may still play for that part of the *antes* that you have matched, without putting in any more money.

### 3.3 Law 3 – Tournaments

#### 3.3.1 General

By participating in any *tournament*, you agree to abide by the rules and behave in a courteous manner. A violator may be verbally warned, suspended from play for a specified length of time, or disqualified from the *tournament*. Chips from a disqualified participant will be removed from play.

#### 3.3.2 Rules

3.3.2.1. *Tournaments* will be played under the Laws of Poker. All disputes of the Laws of Poker will be settled by the *referee*.

3.3.2.2. Initial seating is determined by random *draw* or assignment. (For a one-table satellite *event*, cards to determine seating may be left faceup so the earlier entrants can pick their seat, since the *button* is assigned randomly.)

3.3.2.3. A change of seat is not allowed after play starts, except as assigned by the *director*.

3.3.2.4. The appropriate starting amount of chips will be placed on the table for each paid entrant at the beginning of the *event*, whether the person is present or not. Absent players will be dealt in, and all chips necessary for *antes* and *blinds* will be put into the pot.

3.3.2.5. If a paid entrant is absent at the start of a *tournament*, at some point an effort will be made to locate and contact the player. If the player requests the chips be left in place until arrival, the request will be honored. If the player is unable to be contacted, the chips may be removed from play at the discretion of the *director* anytime after a new betting level is begun or a half-hour has elapsed, whichever occurs first.

3.3.2.6. A starting *stack* of chips may be placed in a seat to accommodate late entrants (so all *antes* and *blinds* have been appropriately paid). An unsold seat will have such a *stack* removed at a time left to the discretion of the *director*.

3.3.2.7. Limits and *blinds* are raised at regularly scheduled intervals.

3.3.2.8. If there is a signal designating the end of a betting level, the new limits apply on the next *deal*. (A *deal* begins with the first riffle of the *shuffle*.)

3.3.2.9. The lowest denomination of chip in play will be removed from the table when it is no longer needed in the *blind* or *ante* structure. All lower-denomination chips that are of sufficient quantity for a new chip will be changed up directly. The method for removal of odd chips is to *deal* one card to a player for each odd chip possessed. Cards are dealt clockwise starting with the 1-seat, with each player receiving all cards before any cards are dealt to the next player. The player with the highest card by suit gets enough odd chips to exchange for one new chip, the second-highest card gets to exchange for the

next chip, and so forth, until all the lower-denomination chips are exchanged. If an odd number of lower-denomination chips are left after this process, the player with the highest card remaining will receive a new chip if he has half or more of the quantity of lower-denomination chips needed, otherwise nothing.

3.3.2.10. An absent player is always dealt a *hand*, and will be put up for *blinds*, *antes*, and the *forced bet* if low.

3.3.2.11. A player must be present at the table to stop the *action* by calling "time."

3.3.2.12. If you are not present when it becomes your turn to act, your *hand* is dead. This includes situations in which a *live blind* is not present to act, since an absent player cannot exercise the *option to raise*.

3.3.2.13. As players are eliminated, tables are broken in a pre-set order, with players from the broken tables assigned to empty seats at other tables.

3.3.2.14. The number of players at each table will be kept reasonably balanced by the transfer of a player as needed. With more than six tables, table size will be kept within two players. With six tables or less, table size will be kept within one player.

3.3.2.15. In all *events*, there is a redraw for seating when the field is reduced to three tables, two tables, and one table. (Redrawing at three tables is not mandatory in small *tournaments* with only four or five starting tables.)

3.3.2.16. A player who declares all in and loses the pot, then discovers that one or more chips were hidden, is not entitled to benefit from this. That player is eliminated from the *tournament* if the opponent had sufficient chips to cover the hidden ones (A rebuy is okay if allowable by the rules of the *tournament*). If another *deal* has not yet started, the *director* may rule the chips belong to the opponent who won that pot, if that obviously would have happened with the chips out in plain view. If the next *deal* has started, the discovered chips are removed from the *tournament*.

3.3.2.17. If a player lacks sufficient chips for a *blind* or a *forced bet*, the player is entitled to get *action* on whatever amount of money remains. A player who posts a short *blind* and wins does not need to make up the *blind*.

3.3.2.18. All players must leave their seat immediately after being eliminated from an *event*.

3.3.2.19. Showing cards from a live *hand* during the *action* injures the rights of other players still competing in an *event*, who wish to see contestants eliminated. A player may not show any cards during a *deal* (unless the *event* has only two remaining players). If a player deliberately shows a card, that *hand* may be ruled dead and the player penalized.

3.3.2.20. Inappropriate behavior like throwing cards that go off the table may be punished with a penalty such as being dealt out for a length of time. A severe infraction such as abusive or disruptive behavior may be punished by disqualification from the *tournament*.

3.3.2.21. The *deck* is not changed on request. *Decks* change when the *dealers* change, unless there is a damaged card.

3.3.2.22. In all *tournament* games using a *dealer button*, the starting *position* of the *button* is determined by dealing for the high card.

3.3.2.23. The *dealer button* remains in *position* until the appropriate *blinds* are taken. Players must post all *blinds* every round. Because of this, the *button* may stay in front of the same player for two consecutive *hands*.

3.3.2.24. New players are dealt in immediately unless they sit down in the *small blind* or *button position*. In these two cases, they must wait until the *button* passes.

3.3.2.25. In *heads-up play* with two *blinds*, the *small blind* is on the *button*.

3.3.2.26. At stud, if a downcard on the initial *hand* is dealt faceup, a *misdeal* is called.

3.3.2.27. If a player announces the intent to rebuy before cards are dealt, that player is playing behind and is obliged to make the rebuy.

3.3.2.28. All *hands* will be turned faceup whenever a player is *all-in* and betting *action* is complete.

3.3.2.29. If two (or more) players go broke during the same *hand*, the player starting the *hand* with the larger amount of money finishes in the higher *tournament* place for point and cash awards.

3.3.2.30. Neither the *director* nor the *referee* is required to rule on any private deals, side *bets*, or redistribution of the prize pool among finalists.

3.3.2.31. Private agreements by remaining players in an *event* regarding distribution of the prize pool are not condoned. (However, if such an agreement is made, the *director* has the *option* of ensuring that it is carried out by paying those amounts.) Any private agreement that excludes one or more active competitors is improper by definition.

3.3.2.32. A *tournament* is expected to be played until completion. A private agreement that removes all prize money from being at stake in the competition is unethical.

3.3.2.33. The *director* retains the right to cancel any *tournament*, or alter it in a manner fair to the players.

## **3.4     Law 4 – No Limit and Pot Limit Betting**

### **3.4.1     General**

A *no-limit* or *pot-limit* betting structure for a game gives it a different character from limit poker, requiring a separate set of rules in many situations. All the rules for limit games apply to *no-limit* and *pot-limit* games, except as noted in this section. *No-limit* means that the amount of a *wager* is limited only by the *table stakes* rule, so any part or all of a player's chips may be wagered. The rules of *no-limit* play also apply to *pot-limit* play, except that a *bet* may not exceed the pot size. For those rules that apply only to *no-limit* and *pot-limit lowball*, see section 3.2.8.5.4.

### **3.4.2     No-Limit Betting**

3.4.2.1. The number of *raises* in any betting round is unlimited.

3.4.2.2. All *bets* must be at least equal to the minimum bring-in, unless the player is going *all-in*.

3.4.2.3. All *raises* must be equal to or greater than the size of the previous *bet* or *raise* on that betting round, except for an *all-in wager*. A player who has already *checked* or called

may not subsequently *raise* an *all-in bet* that is less than the full size of the last *bet* or *raise*. (The half-the-size rule for reopening the betting is for limit poker only.) Example: Player A *bets* \$100 and Player B *raises* \$100 more, making the total *bet* \$200. If Player C goes all in for less than \$300 total (not a full \$100 *raise*), and Player A *calls*, then Player B has no *option* to *raise* again, because he wasn't fully raised. (Player A could have raised, because Player B raised.)

3.4.2.4. A *wager* is not binding until the chips are actually released into the pot, unless the player has made a verbal statement of *action*.

3.4.2.5. If there is a discrepancy between a player's verbal statement and the amount put into the pot, the *bet* will be corrected to the verbal statement.

3.4.2.6. If a *call* is short due to a counting error, the amount must be corrected, even if the bettor has shown down a superior *hand*.

3.4.2.7. Because the amount of a *wager* at big-*bet* poker has such a wide range, a player who has taken *action* based on a gross misunderstanding of the amount wagered needs some protection. A bettor should not show down a *hand* until the amount put into the pot for a *call* seems reasonably correct, or it is obvious that the caller understands the amount wagered. The *referee* is allowed considerable discretion in ruling on this type of situation. A possible rule-of-thumb is to disallow any claim of not understanding the amount wagered if the caller has put eighty percent or more of that amount into the pot. Example: On the end, a player puts a \$500 chip into the pot and says softly, "Four hundred." The opponent puts a \$100 chip into the pot and says, "*Call*." The bettor immediately shows the *hand*. The *dealer* says, "He *bet* four hundred." The caller says, "Oh, I thought he *bet* a hundred." In this case, the recommended ruling normally is that the bettor had an obligation to not show the *hand* when the amount put into the pot was obviously short, and the "*call*" can be retracted. Note that the character of each player can be a factor.

3.4.2.8. A player who says "*raise*" is allowed to continue putting chips into the pot with more than one move; the *wager* is assumed complete when the player's *hands* come to rest outside the pot area. (This rule is used because *no-limit* play may require a large number of chips be put into the pot.)

3.4.2.9. A *bet* of a single chip or bill without comment is considered to be the full amount of the chip or bill allowed. However, a player acting on a previous *bet* with a larger denomination chip or bill is calling the previous *bet* unless this player makes a verbal declaration to *raise* the pot. (This includes acting on the *forced bet* of the *big blind*.)

3.4.2.10. If a player tries to *bet* or *raise* less than the legal minimum and has more chips, the *wager* must be increased to the proper size. (This does not apply to a player who has unintentionally put too much in to *call*.) The *wager* is brought up to the sufficient amount only, no greater size.

3.4.2.11. All *wagers* may be required to be in the same denomination of chip (or larger) used for the minimum bring-in, even if smaller chips are used in the *blind* structure. If this is done, the smaller chips do not play except in quantity, even when going *all-in*.

3.4.2.12. In non-*tournament* games, one optional live *straddle* is allowed. The player who posts the *straddle* has last *action* for the first round of betting and is allowed to *raise*. To *straddle*, a player must be on the immediate left of the *big blind* and must post an amount twice the size of the *big blind*.

3.4.2.13. In all *no-limit* and *pot-limit* games, the *referee* has the right to place a maximum time limit for taking *action* on your *hand*. The clock may be put on someone by the *dealer* as directed by a *referee*, if another player requests it. If the clock is put on you when you are facing a *bet*, you will have one additional minute to act on your *hand*. You will have a ten-second warning, after which your *hand* is dead if you have not acted.

3.4.2.14. The Rules do not condone "*insurance*" or any other "proposition" wagers. The *referee* will decline to make decisions in such matters, and the pot will be awarded to the best *hand*. Players are asked to refrain from instigating proposition wagers in any form. The players are allowed to agree to *deal twice* (or three times) when someone is *all-in*. "Dealing twice" means the pot is divided in two, with each portion being dealt for separately.

### 3.4.3 **Pot-Limit Betting**

3.4.3.1. If a *wager* is made that exceeds the pot size, the surplus will be given back to the bettor as soon as possible, and the amount will be reduced to the maximum allowable.

3.4.3.2. The *dealer* or any player in the game can and should call attention to a *wager* that appears to exceed the pot size (this also applies to heads-up pots). The oversize *wager* may be corrected at any point until all players have acted on it.

3.4.3.3. If an oversize *wager* has stood for a length of time with someone considering what *action* to take, that person has had to act on a *wager* that was thought to be a certain size. If the player then decides to *call* or *raise*, and attention is called at this late point to whether this is an allowable amount, the *referee* may rule that the oversize amount must stand (especially if the person now trying to reduce the amount is the person that made the *wager*).

3.4.3.4. The maximum amount a player can *raise* is the amount in the pot after the *call* is made. Therefore, if a pot is \$100, and someone makes a \$50 *bet*, the next player can *call* \$50 and *raise* the pot \$200, for a total *wager* of \$250.

3.4.3.5. In *pot-limit* play, it is advisable in many structures to round off the pot size upward to produce a faster pace of play. This is done by treating any odd amount as the next larger size. For example, if the pot size of \$80 would be treated as a pot size of \$100.

3.4.3.6. In *pot-limit* Texas Hold'em and *pot-limit* Omaha Hold'em, many structures treat the little *blind* as if it were the same size of the *big blind* in computing pot size. In such a structure, a player can open for a maximum of four times the size of the *big blind*. For example, if the *blinds* are \$5 and \$10, a player may open with a *raise* to \$40. (The range of *options* is to either open with a *call* of \$10, or *raise* in increments of five dollars to any amount from \$20 to \$40.) Subsequent players also treat the \$5 as if it were \$10 in computing the pot size, until the *big blind* is through acting on the first betting round.

3.4.3.7. In *pot-limit*, if a chip or a bill larger than the pot size is put into the pot without comment, it is considered to be a *bet* of the pot size.

## 3.5 **Law 5 – Buttons and Blinds**

### 3.5.1 **General**

In *button games*, a non-playing *dealer* normally does the actual dealing. A round disk called the *button* is used to indicate which player has the *dealer position*. The player with the *button* is last to receive cards on the initial *deal* and has the right of last *action* after

the first betting round. The *button* moves clockwise after a *deal* ends to rotate the advantage of last *action*. One or more *blind bets* are usually used to stimulate *action* and initiate play. *Blinds* are posted before the players look at their cards. *Blinds* are part of a player's *bet*, unless the structure of a game or the situation requires part or all of a particular *blind* to be "dead." Dead chips are not part of a player's *bet*. With two *blinds*, the *small blind* is posted by the player immediately clockwise from the *button*, and the *big blind* is posted by the player two *positions* clockwise from the *button*. With more than two *blinds*, the little *blind* is normally left of the *button* (not on it). *Action* is initiated on the first betting round by the first player to the left of the *blinds*. On all subsequent betting rounds, the *action* begins with the first *active player* to the left of the *button*.

### 3.5.2 Rules

3.5.2.1. Each round every player must get an opportunity for the *button*, and meet the total amount of the *blind* obligations. Either of the following methods of *button* and *blind* placement may be designated to do this:

3.5.2.1.1. Moving *button* - The *button* always moves forward to the next player and the *blinds* adjust accordingly. There may be more than one *big blind*.

3.5.2.1.2. Dead *button* - The *big blind* is posted by the player due for it, and the *small blind* and *button* are positioned accordingly, even if this means the *small blind* or the *button* is placed in front of an empty seat, giving the same player the privilege of last *action* on consecutive *hands*.

3.5.2.2. A player who posts a *blind* has the *option* of raising the pot at the first turn to act. (This does not apply when a "dead *blind*" for the *collection* is used in a game and has been posted).

3.4.2.3. In *heads-up play* with two *blinds*, the *small blind* is on the *button*.

3.5.2.4. A new player entering the game has the following *options*:

3.5.2.4.1. Wait for the *big blind*.

3.5.2.4.2. Post an amount equal to the *big blind* and immediately be dealt a *hand*. (In *lowball*, a new player must either post an amount double the *big blind* or wait for the *big blind*.)

3.5.2.5. A new player who elects to let the *button* go by once without posting is not treated as a player in the game who has missed a *blind*, and needs to post only the *big blind* when entering the game.

3.5.2.6. A person playing over is considered a new player, and must post the amount of the *big blind* or wait for the *big blind*.

3.5.2.7. A new player cannot be dealt in between the *big blind* and the *button*. *Blinds* may not be made up between the *big blind* and the *button*. You must wait until the *button* passes. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #3, for more information on this rule.]

3.5.2.8. When you post the *big blind*, it serves as your opening *bet*. When it is your next turn to act, you have the *option* to *raise*.

3.5.2.9. A player who misses any or all *blinds* can resume play by either posting all the *blinds* missed or waiting for the *big blind*. If you choose to post the total amount of the

*blinds*, an amount up to the size of the minimum opening *bet* is live. The remainder is taken by the *dealer* to the center of the pot and is not part of your *bet*. When it is your next turn to act, you have the *option* to *raise*.

3.5.2.10. If a player who owes a *blind* (as a result of a *missed blind*) is dealt in without posting, the *hand* is dead if the player looks at it before putting up the required chips, and has not yet acted. If the player acts on the *hand* and plays it, putting chips into the pot before the error is discovered, the *hand* is live, and the player is required to post on the next *deal*.

3.5.2.11. A player who goes *all-in* and loses is obligated to make up the *blinds* if they are missed before a rebuy is made. (The person is not treated as a new player when reentering.)

3.5.2.12. These rules about *blinds* apply to a newly started game:

3.5.2.12.1. Any player who drew for the *button* is considered active in the game and is required to make up any *missed blinds*.

3.5.2.12.2. A new player will not be required to post a *blind* until the *button* has made one complete revolution around the table, provided a *blind* has not yet passed that seat.

3.5.2.12.3. A player may change seats without penalty, provided a *blind* has not yet passed the new seat.

3.5.2.13. In all multiple-*blind* games, a player who changes seats will be dealt in on the first available *hand* in the same relative *position*. Example: If you move two active *positions* away from the *big blind*, you must wait two *hands* before being dealt in again. If you move closer to the *big blind*, you can be dealt in without any penalty. If you do not wish to wait and have not yet missed a *blind*, then you can post an amount equal to the *big blind* and receive a *hand*. (Exception: At *lowball* you must *kill* the pot, wait for the same relative *position*, or wait for the *big blind*; see section 3.2.8.6.1.7, hereof.)

3.5.2.14. A player who "deals off" (by playing the *button* and then immediately getting up to change seats) can allow the *blinds* to pass the new seat one time and reenter the game behind the *button* without having to post a *blind*.

3.5.2.15. A live "*straddle bet*" is not allowed at limit poker except in specified games.

## 3.6 **Law 6 – Kill Pots**

### 3.6.1 **General**

To *kill* a pot means to post an *overblind* that increases the betting limit. A full *kill* is double the amount of the *big blind*, and doubles the betting limits. A half *kill* is one-and-a-half times the *big blind*, and increases the betting limits by that amount. A *kill* may be optional in a game, and is often used at *lowball* when a player wants to be dealt in right away instead of waiting to take the *big blind*. A *kill* may be required in a game for any time a specified occurrence takes place. In high-low split games using a required *kill*, a player who *scoops* a pot bigger than a set size must *kill* the next pot. In other games using a required *kill*, a player who wins two consecutive pots must *kill* the next pot. In this type of *kill* game, a marker called a "*kill button*" indicates which player has won the pot, and the winner keeps this marker until the next *hand* is completed. If the player who has the *kill*

*button* wins a second consecutive pot and it qualifies monetarily, that player must *kill* the next pot.

### 3.6.2 Rules

3.6.2.1. The *kill button* is neutral (belonging to no player) if:

3.6.2.1.1. It is the first *hand* of a new game.

3.6.2.1.2. The winner of the previous pot has quit the game.

3.6.2.1.3. The previous pot was split and neither player had the *kill button*.

3.6.2.2. In a *kill pot*, the killer acts in proper turn (after the person on the immediate right).

3.6.2.3. There is no pot-size requirement for the first pot or "leg" of a *kill*. For the second "leg" to qualify for a *kill*, you must win at least one full *bet* for whatever limit you are playing, and it cannot be any part of the *blind* structure.

3.6.2.4. If a player with one "leg up" splits the next pot, that player still has a "leg up" for the next *hand*. If the player who split the pot was the *kill* in the previous *hand*, then that player must also *kill* the next pot.

3.6.2.5. A person who leaves the table with a "leg up" toward a *kill* still has a "leg up" upon returning to the game.

3.6.2.6. A player who is required to post a *kill* must do so that same *hand* even if wishing to quit or be dealt out. A player who fails to post a required *kill blind* will not be allowed to participate in any game until the *kill* money is posted.

3.6.2.7. *Kill blinds* are considered part of the pot. If a player with a required *kill* wins again, then that player must *kill* it again (for the same amount as the previous *hand*).

3.6.2.8. When a player wins both the high and the low pot ("scoops") in a split-pot game with a *kill* provision, the next *hand* will be killed only if the pot is at least five times the size of the upper limit of the game.

3.6.2.9. If you are unaware that the pot has been killed and put in a lesser amount, if it is a required *kill pot* with the *kill button* faceup, you must put in the correct amount. If not, you may withdraw the chips and reconsider your *action*.

3.6.2.10. In *lowball*, an optional rule is allowing players to look at their first two cards and then opt whether to *kill* the pot. The pot may no longer be killed if any player in the game has received a third card. In order to *kill* the pot voluntarily, you must have at least four times the amount of the *kill blind* in your *stack*. For example: If the *big blind* is two chips, and the *kill blind* is four chips, the voluntary killer must have at least 16 chips prior to posting the *kill*. If this rule is used, it is in conjunction with having the killer act last on the first betting round rather than in proper order.

3.6.2.11. Only one *kill* is allowed per *deal*.

3.6.2.12. A new player is not entitled to play in a killed pot, but may do so by agreeing to *kill* the next pot.

3.6.2.13. *Broken game* status is allowed only for players of the same limit and game type. For this purpose, a game with a required *kill* is considered a different type of game than an otherwise similar game without a required *kill*.

### **3.7    Law 7 – {Open}**

### **3.8    Law 8 – {Open}**

### **3.9    Law 9 – Applicability, Penalties and Interpretations**

#### **3.9.1    Applicability**

These Laws of Poker are in force at any time at which the game of poker is being played. This applies to *tournament*, formal or informal play.

#### **3.9.2    Penalties**

The penalties for failure to abide by the Laws of Poker shall be at the sole discretion of the *referee*.

#### **3.9.2    Interpretations**

Interpretations of the Laws of Poker shall be promulgated and distributed, from time to time, by the Rules Committee of the USPA.

**{Section Ends}**

# APPENDIX I

## POLICY ON GAMBLING AND RESPONSIBLE GAMING

### 1. Introduction

Intrinsic to the game of poker is wagering on the outcome of the game. Therefore, the USPA believes that responsible gaming is an integral part of the game.

The USGA and its members pledge to the public to make responsible gaming the central tenant of the game. This pledge encompasses all aspects of the game, from host employee assistance and training to alcohol service, advertising and marketing. This policy also covers the commitment of our members to provide support for research initiatives and public awareness surrounding responsible gaming and underage gambling. The following Policy details this pledge and how we plan to meet it.

### 2. Legality

All aspects of this Policy are subject to local, state and federal laws. The play of the game of poker in those jurisdictions where the same is illegal is prohibited by this Policy. In those jurisdictions where the play of the game is legally permitted, all of the local laws, statutes and regulations covering such play shall prevail over this Policy and the Laws of Poker.

### 3. Education

- **For Our Members**

- \* The USPA will publish this Policy, in its entirety, on its website.
- \* The USPA will prominently display a toll-free help-line number on the homepage of its website.
- \* The USPA will make available to anyone who enquires on its toll-free number, the toll-free help-line number.
- \* The USPA will make available brochures describing responsible gaming and where to find assistance.

- **For Our Hosts**

- \* USPA hosts will educate new employees on responsible gaming.
- \* USPA hosts will train gaming floor employees on responsible gaming and provide periodic refresher training.
- \* USPA hosts will implement communications programs for employees to improve understanding of responsible gaming and related policies and procedures.
- \* USPA hosts will distribute to new employees brochures describing responsible gaming and where to find assistance. Hosts will make copies of these brochures available to employees.
- \* USPA hosts will post responsible gaming awareness signage bearing a toll-free help-line number at various locations where employees congregate.

- **For The Public**

- \* USPA and its members will make available brochures describing responsible gaming and where to find assistance.
- \* USPA and its members will make available on their Web sites information describing responsible gaming and where to find assistance.
- \* USPA hosts will display in all gaming areas signage that can be easily read bearing a toll-free help-line number.
- \* USPA hosts will make available to players, guests and employees information generally explaining the probabilities of winning or losing at the various games offered.
- \* Each USPA host will provide opportunities for players to request in writing that they not be sent promotional mailings and for revocation of their privileges for specific casino services or promotions. In addition, each USPA host shall make reasonable efforts to honor a written request from any person that it not knowingly grant that person access to gaming activities.

#### **4. Minors**

It is the Policy of the USPA to prevent gambling by underage minors and to remove unattended minors from those places where gaming is present. To accomplish this:

- \* USPA members will make diligent efforts to prevent underage individuals from loitering in the gaming areas.
- \* USPA member will communicate the legal age to gamble through appropriate signage and/or brochures.
- \* Employees working in relevant areas will receive training in appropriate procedures for dealing with unattended children, underage gambling, and the purchase and consumption of alcohol and tobacco by minors.
- \* If a child appears to be unsupervised or in violation of local curfews and other laws, appropriate personnel will be contacted and remain with the child while reasonable steps are taken to locate the parent or responsible adult. If these efforts are unsuccessful, appropriate personnel will contact a responsible third party, such as the police or department of youth services, and release the unattended child to their care.

#### **5. Alcohol**

USPA members will observe a responsible beverage service policy at all venues where the game is played. This Policy shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- \* Members will not knowingly serve alcoholic beverages to a minor.
- \* Members will not knowingly serve alcoholic beverages to a visibly intoxicated person.
- \* Members will make a diligent effort not to permit gaming by a visibly intoxicated person.
- \* Hosts will train appropriate employees in the responsible alcoholic beverage service policy, and will provide periodic refresher training to those employees.

## **6. Advertising**

This Policy applies to the advertising and marketing of gaming by USPA members. For the purposes of this Policy, advertising and marketing include radio and television ads, print, direct mail, billboard and Internet promotions.

- Member advertising and marketing will:
  - \* Contain a responsible gaming message and/or a toll-free help-line number where practical.
  - \* Reflect generally accepted contemporary standards of good taste.
  - \* Strictly comply with all state and federal standards to make no false or misleading claims.
- Member advertising and marketing materials will not:
  - \* Contain cartoon figures, symbols, celebrity/entertainer endorsements and/or language designed to appeal specifically to children and minors.
  - \* Feature current collegiate athletes.
  - \* Feature anyone who is or appears to be below the legal age to participate in gaming activity.
  - \* Contain claims or representations that gambling activity will guarantee an individual's social, financial or personal success.
  - \* Be placed in media where a significant portion of the audience is reasonably expected to be below the legal age to participate in gaming activity.
  - \* Imply, suggest or endorse any illegal activity of any kind.
  - \* Be placed in media specifically oriented to children and/or minors.
  - \* Appear adjacent to, or in close proximity to, comics or other youth features, to the extent controlled by the USPA member.
  - \* Be placed at any venue where most of the audience is normally expected to be below the legal age to participate in gaming activity.

## **7. Addiction Assistance**

The game of poker can be an addictive activity. It is the Policy of the USPA to combat addictive play through education and research. To provide the addicted player with assistance the USPA will:

- Publish this Policy, in its entirety, on its website.
- Prominently display a toll-free help-line number on the homepage of its website.
- Make available to anyone who enquires on its toll-free number, the toll-free help-line number.
- Make available brochures, free of charge, describing responsible gaming and where to find assistance.

## **8. Research**

The USPA believes that scientific research into responsible gaming is in the best interests of the industry and the public. Therefore, to promote such research, we will:

- Provide funding to responsible institutes and individuals pursuing scientific research and information on gambling and health.
- Promote USGA members use of this research to identify the best practices to follow to promote responsible gaming.
- Develop a dialogue surrounding scientific research on gambling and health to communicate to and educate members, employees, policy-makers and the public.

## APPENDIX II

### EXPLANATIONS OF THE LAWS OF POKER

**EXPLANATION #1.** (*Buttons and Blinds*) The only place in these Laws that an alternative is mentioned other than in this section is in the method of *button* and *blind* placement. That rule is repeated below for convenience. "Each round all participating players must get an opportunity for the *button*, and meet the total amount of the *blind* obligations. Either of the following methods of *button* and *blind* placement may be designated to do this:

(a) Moving *button* - The *button* always moves forward to the next player and the *blinds* adjust accordingly. There may be more than one *big blind*.

(b) Dead *button* - The *big blind* is posted by the player due for it, and the *small blind* and *button* are positioned accordingly, even if this means the *small blind* or the *button* is placed in front of an empty seat, giving the same player the privilege of last *action* on consecutive *hands*."

Poker tradition has a lot to do with the fact that both of these methods are in widespread use, but neither method is superior in all situations. The moving *button* makes sure no player gets the advantage of last *action* twice on a round (a big advantage at *no-limit* or *pot-limit* play). On the other hand, a player may get to post a *blind* when on the *button*, which is more advantageous than posting in front of the *button*. The moving *button* creates a situation where two *big blinds* may be posted on a *deal*, which speeds up the action. At *tournament* play this speed-up can be undesirable, as when dealing is being done *hand-for-hand* to balance the pace of play between two remaining tables. A *host* or *referee* may either decide for the sake of simplicity to use only one method, or decide to tailor the method to the game and situation.

**EXPLANATION #2.** (Texas Hold'em) We believe that the Laws given for rectifying a Texas hold'em situation where the *dealer* has dealt the *flop* or another *boardcard* before all the betting *action* on a round are inferior because the *dealer* is told to not burn a card on a *redeal*. Since the "no bum" rule is so common, there was no choice but to use it here. However, we suggest that the Laws (sections 3.2.1.5.3 and 3.2.1.5.4, hereof) should be interpreted as follows and encourage the host and/or referee to use such interpretation whenever possible.

The Law in question states "If the cards are prematurely flopped before the betting is complete, or if the *flop* contains too many cards, the *boardcards* are mixed with the remainder of the *deck*. The burncard remains on the table. After shuffling, the *dealer cuts* the *deck* and *deals* a new *flop* without burning a card." "If the *dealer* turns the fourth card on the *board* before the betting round is complete, the card is taken out of play for that round, even if subsequent players elect to *fold*. The betting is then completed. The *dealer* burns and turns what would have been the fifth card in the fourth card's place. After this round of betting, the *dealer* reshuffles the *deck*, including the card that was taken out of play, but not including the burncards or *discards*. The *dealer* then *cuts* the *deck* and turns the final card without burning a card. (If the fifth card is turned up prematurely, the *deck* is reshuffled and dealt in the same manner.)" Since it is much harder for the *dealer* to control the card to be dealt if a burn is required, the applicable sentence in the Laws should read, "The *dealer* then *cuts* the *deck*, burns a card, and turns the final card."

**EXPLANATION #3.** (*Bullets and Blinds*) Section 3.5.2.7, hereof, says, "A new player cannot be dealt in between the *big blind* and the *button*. *Blinds* may not be made up between the *big blind* and the *button*. You must wait until the *button* passes." This rule is standard practice, but allowing a new player or player making up *blinds* to come in between the *blinds* is better (if *dealers* are trained how to handle the resulting situations), because it gets players eager to join or rejoin the game into action faster.

**EXPLANATION #4.** (Stud) Most poker rules say you have a *dead hand* at the *showdown* if you do not have the proper number of cards for that game. At stud, this rule is too strict. An inexperienced player sometimes does not pay sufficient attention to the final card when holding a big *hand* like a *flush* or *full house* (where improvement is neither likely to happen nor be needed), and fails to protect that card. If the

*dealer* erroneously puts that final card into the *muck* after the player fails to take it in, the rules should give the decision-maker an *option* to rule such a *hand* live. Section 3.2.3.5.18, hereof, reads as below: "A *hand* with more than seven cards is dead. A *hand* with less than seven cards at the *showdown* is dead, except any player missing a seventh card may have the *hand* ruled live."

**EXPLANATION #5.** (Use of Cash) The Laws require all cash to be changed into chips. In some situations this can be a bit impractical for various reasons. If the *host* chooses to allow cash, only \$100 bills should be permitted.

**EXPLANATION #6.** (Number of *Raises*) Most poker rulebooks follow the usual California practice in multihanded pots at limit poker of allowing a *bet* and six *raises* for *lowball* and *draw* high. The number of allowable *raises* for those games is given in these Laws as a *bet* and four *raises* because this cuts down on the effect of collusion between players, and more *raises* than four are hardly ever needed to define the strength of two *hands* when another player is calling.

**EXPLANATION #7.** (*Lowball*) *Lowball* has historically had less stringent demands on the order of cards or acceptability of exposed cards than in most other poker forms. These Laws follow the modern trend at *lowball* regarding *misdeals* of requiring the cards to be dealt facedown and in proper order.

**EXPLANATION #8.** (Ace-to-five *Lowball*) At ace-to-five limit *lowball*, an exposed card rule used less often, but probably a superior rule, is to not let a player take an exposed six or seven (the rule for no-limit ace-to-five *lowball*). If a player gets to keep only a card that might make a perfect *hand*, having a card exposed is less advantageous, and the opponent must reckon with the possibility of a perfect *hand*.

**EXPLANATION #9.** (Drawing Five Cards) At *lowball* and *draw* high, some rule sets allow a player to *draw* five consecutive cards. The rule used here disallowing this makes cheating more difficult. Section 3.2.8.5.10 in *lowball* and section 3.2.10.5.5 in *draw* high say, "A player may *draw* up to four consecutive cards. If a player wishes to *draw* five new cards, four are dealt right away, and the fifth card after everyone else has drawn cards. If the last player wishes to *draw* five new cards, four are dealt right away, and a card is burned before the player receives a fifth card."

**EXPLANATION #10.** (Absent Player) In *tournament* play, there are two ways the *hand* of an absent player may be treated. Section 3.3.2.12 states "If you are not present when it becomes your turn to act, your *hand* is dead. This includes situations in which a *live blind* is not present to act, since an absent player cannot exercise the *option* to *raise*." This speeds up play, and also prevents a player from facing situations like thinking he is moving *all-in* heads-up against a short *stack* and an absent player comes back to the table to enter the pot. The alternative is: "If a player is absent, the *hand* shall not be killed until that seat faces a *wager*. An absent player's *hand* is dead at the *showdown*." This rule gives the absent player the maximum amount of time to return and be able to play the *hand*.

## APPENDIX III

### DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY OF THE HOST

#### 1. General

The following are guidelines for use by the *host* in managing an *event*. While the following is not Law, its interpretation should assist the *host* in holding a successful *event*.

#### 2. Decision Making

1. The *host*, in conjunction with the *referee*, reserves the right to make decisions in the spirit of fairness, even if a strict interpretation of the Laws may indicate a different ruling. (See Section 1.1.)

2. As to the Laws, decisions of the *referee* are final. In all other matters, the decisions of the *host* are final.

3. The proper time to *draw* attention to an error or irregularity is when it occurs or is first noticed. Any delay may affect the ruling.

4. If an incorrect interpretation or decision on the Laws is made by a *referee* in good faith, the *host* has no liability.

5. A ruling may be made regarding a pot if it has been requested before the next *deal* starts (or before the game either ends or changes to another table). Otherwise, the result of a *deal* must stand. The first riffle of the *shuffle* marks the start for a *deal*.

6. If a pot has been incorrectly awarded and mingled with chips that were not in the pot, but the time limit for a ruling request given in the previous rule has been complied with, the *referee* may determine how much was in the pot by reconstructing the betting, and then transfer that amount to the proper player.

7. To keep the action moving, it is possible that a game may be asked to continue even though a decision is delayed for a short period. The delay could be needed to *check* the overhead camera tape, get the *referee* to give the ruling, or some other good reason. In such circumstances, a pot or portion thereof may be impounded by the *host* while the decision is pending.

8. The same *action* may have a different meaning, depending on who does it, so the possible intent of an offender will be taken into consideration. Some factors here are the person's amount of poker experience and past record.

#### 3. Procedures

1. The *host* will decide when to start or close any *event*.

2. *Collections* (seat rental fees) are paid in advance. In all time-collection games, the *dealer* is required to pick up the *collection* from each player before dealing the first *hand*. A player not wishing to pay *collection* may play one courtesy *hand* in stud, and may play until the *blind* in *button games*, provided no one is waiting for the game. If there is more than one person on the *list* for that game when the *collection* becomes due, everyone must pay *collection*. A new player is not required to pay if there is either no *list* or only one person waiting.

3. Cash is not permitted on the table. All cash should be changed into chips in order to play. If a player appears unaware of this rule and attempts to play unnoticed cash that was on the table during a pot, the *dealer* may let the cash play if no one in the pot objects, then have all the cash changed into chips after the *hand*. Any chips from another establishment are not permitted on the table, do not play in the game, and if discovered will be treated similarly to unnoticed cash. [See - APPENDIX II, "Explanations of the Laws of Poker", EXPLANATION #5, for more information on this rule.]
4. The *host* is not responsible for any shortage or removal of chips left on the table during a player's absence, even though it should try to protect everyone as best it can.
5. All games are *table stakes* (except "playing behind" as given in the next rule). All chips and money must be kept in plain view. Chips may be removed for security purposes when leaving the table, but must be fully restored upon return. If you return to the same game within one hour of cashing out, your *buy-in* must be equal to the amount removed when leaving that game.
6. "Playing behind" is allowed only for the amount of purchased chips while awaiting their arrival. The amount in play must be announced to the table, or only the amount of the minimum *buy-in* plays.
7. Playing out of a *rack* is not allowed.
8. Only one person may play a *hand*.
9. No one is allowed to play another player's chips.
10. Permission is required before taking a seat in a game.
11. Playing over without permission from the *referee* is not allowed. A *playover box* is required. Permission from the absent player is not necessary.
12. *Pushing bets* ("saving" or "*potting out*") is not allowed.
13. Pushing an *ante* or posting for another person is not allowed.
14. Splitting pots will not be allowed in any game. Chopping the big and *small blind* by taking them back when all other players have folded is allowed in *button games*.
15. *Insurance* propositions are not allowed. Dealing twice (or three times) when *all-in* is permitted at big-*bet* poker.
16. The game's betting limit will not be changed if two or more players object. Raising the limit is subject to the *host's* approval.
17. Players must keep their cards in full view. This means above table-level and not past the edge of the table. The cards should not be covered by the *hands* in a manner to completely conceal them.
18. Any player is entitled to a clear view of an opponent's chips. Higher denomination chips should be easily visible.
19. Your chips may be picked up if you are away from the table for more than 30 minutes. Your absence may be extended if you notify the *referee* in advance. Frequent or continuous absences may cause your chips to be picked up from the table.

20. A *lock-up* in a new game will be picked up after five minutes if someone is waiting to play. No seat may be locked up for more than ten minutes if someone is waiting to play.
21. A new *deck* must be used for at least a full round (once around the table) before it may be changed, and a new *setup* must be used for at least an hour, unless a *deck* is defective or damaged, or cards become sticky.
22. Looking through the *discards* or *deck stub* is not allowed.
23. After a *deal* ends, *dealers* are asked to not show what card would have been dealt.
24. A player is expected to pay attention to the game and not hold up play. Activity that interferes with this such as reading at the table is discouraged, and the player will be asked to cease if a problem is caused.
25. A non-player may not sit at the table.
26. In non-*tournament* games, you may have a guest sit behind you if no one in the game objects. It is improper for a guest to look at any *hand* other than your own.
27. Speaking a foreign language during a *deal* is not allowed.

#### 4. **Seating:**

1. You must be present to add your name to a waiting *list*.
2. It is the player's responsibility to be in the playing area and hear the *list* being called. A player who intends to leave the playing area should notify the list-person, and can leave money for a lockup. The lockup amount is set by the *host*.
3. When there is more than one game of the same stakes and poker form, and a *must-move* is not being used, the *host* will control the seating of new players to best preserve the viability of existing games. A new player will be sent to the game most in need of an additional player. A transfer to a similar game is not allowed if it makes the game being left shorter handed than the game being entered.
4. A player may not hold a seat in more than one game.
5. The *host* reserves the right to require that any two players not play in the same game (husband and wife, relatives, business partners, and so forth).
6. When a *button* game starts, *active players* will *draw* a card for the *button position*. The *button* will be awarded to the highest card by suit for all high and high-low games, and to the lowest card by suit for all low games.
7. In a new game, the player who arrives at the table the earliest gets first choice of remaining seats. If two players want the same seat and arrive at the same time, the higher player on the *list* has preference. A player playing a pot in another game may have a designated seat locked up until that *hand* is finished. The *host* may reserve a certain seat for a player, as to assist in ease of reading the *board* for a person with a vision problem, or some other good reason.
8. To avoid a seating dispute, the *host* may decide to start the game with one extra player over the normal number participating. If so, a seat will be removed as soon as someone quits the game.

9. In order to protect an existing game, a forced move may be invoked when an additional game of the same type and limit is started. The *must-move list* is maintained in the same order as the original waiting *list*. If a player refuses to move into the main game, that player will be forced to quit, and may not play in the *must-move* game or get on that *list* for one hour.
10. You must play in a new game or *must-move* game to retain your place on the *list*, if by your playing there would be three or fewer empty seats.
11. In all *button games*, a player going from a *must-move* game to the main game may play until due for the *big blind*. The player must then enter the game as a new player, and may either post an amount equal to the *big blind* or wait for the *big blind*. In all stud games, a player may play only one more *hand* before moving.
12. A player who is already in the game has precedence over a new player for any seat when it becomes available. However, no change will occur after a new player has been seated, or after that player's *buy-in* or marker has been placed on the table, unless that particular seat had been previously requested. For players already in the game, the one who asks the earliest has preference for a seat change.
13. In all *button games*, a player voluntarily locking up a seat in another game must move immediately if there is a waiting *list* of two or more names for the seat being vacated, except that the player is entitled to play the *button* if a *blind* has already been taken. Otherwise, a player may play up to the *blind* before moving. In a stud game, a player changing tables may play only the present *hand* if someone is waiting for the seat being vacated, or one more *hand* when no one is waiting.
14. When a game breaks, each player may *draw* a card to determine the seating order for a similar game. The *referee* *draws* a card for an absent player. If the card entitles the absent player to an immediate seat, the player has until due for the *big blind* in a *button* game to take the seat (two *hands* in a stud game), and will be put first up on the *list* if not back in time.