

# **MaryportPoker**

## **Rules**

**Amended 04/12/2007**

# **Robert's Rules of Poker**

## **Version 10 (Amended By MaryportPoker)**

“Robert’s Rules of Poker” is authored by Robert Ciaffone, better known in the poker world as Bob Ciaffone, a leading authority on cardroom rules. He is the person who has selected which rules to use, and formatted, organized, and worded the text. **Nearly all these rules are substantively in common use for poker**, but many improved ideas for wording and organization are employed throughout this work. A lot of the rules are similar to those used in the rulebook of cardrooms where he has acted as a rules consultant and rules drafter. Ciaffone authored the rulebook for the Poker Players Association (founded in 1984, now defunct), the first comprehensive set of poker rules for the general public. He has done extensive work on rules for the Las Vegas Hilton, The Mirage, and Hollywood Park Casino, and assisted many other cardrooms. Ciaffone is a regular columnist for Card Player magazine, and can be reached through that publication. This rulebook will be periodically revised, so suggestions are welcome.

Poker rules are widely used and freely copied, so it is impossible to construct a rulebook without using many rules that exist as part of a rule set of some cardroom. If such a rule is used, no credit is given to the source (which is unlikely to be the original one for the rule).

The goal of this rulebook is to produce the best set of rules in existence, and make it generally available, so any person or cardroom can use it who so desires. The purpose is the betterment of poker.

The general philosophy used in this rulebook is to make the rules sufficiently detailed so a decision-maker will know what the proper ruling is in each situation. A rule should do more than produce the right ruling. It should be stated so the decision-maker can refer to specific language in the rulebook, to have the ruling is accepted as correct.

The author has strongly supported uniform poker rules, and applauds the work done in this direction by the Tournament Director’s Association (TDA). Nearly all the rules herein are compatible with the TDA rules, although there are some slight differences in wording.

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Welcome to our cardroom. **Your presence in our establishment means that you agree to abide by our rules and procedures. By taking a seat in one of our card games, you are accepting our management to be the final authority on all matters relating to that game.**

**THIS IS THE OFFICIAL RULEBOOK FOR OUR CARDROOM**

# INDEX

<b>SECTION 1 - PROPER BEHAVIOR.....</b>	<b>4</b>
CONDUCT CODE.....	4
POKER ETIQUETTE .....	4
<b>SECTION 2 - HOUSE POLICIES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
DECISION-MAKING .....	5
PROCEDURES .....	5
SEATING.....	6
<b>SECTION 3 - GENERAL POKER RULES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
MISDEALS.....	7
DEAD HANDS .....	7
IRREGULARITIES .....	8
BETTING AND RAISING .....	9
THE SHOWDOWN .....	10
<b>SECTION 4 - BUTTON AND BLIND USE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
RULES FOR USING BLINDS .....	12
<b>SECTION 5 - HOLD'EM.....</b>	<b>13</b>
RULES .....	13
<b>SECTION 6 - NO LIMIT RULES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION 7 - TOURNAMENTS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SECTION 8 - EXPLANATIONS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CHANGES MADE BY MARYPORTPOKER.....</b>	<b>27</b>

# SECTION 1 - PROPER BEHAVIOR

## CONDUCT CODE

Management will attempt to maintain a pleasant environment for all our customers and employees, but is not responsible for the conduct of any player. We have established a code of conduct, and may deny the use of our cardroom to violators. The following are not permitted:

- ❖ Collusion with another player or any other form of cheating.
- ❖ Verbally or physically threatening any patron or employee.
- ❖ Creating a disturbance by arguing, shouting, or making excessive noise.
- ❖ Throwing, tearing, bending, or crumpling cards.
- ❖ Destroying or defacing property.

## POKER ETIQUETTE

The following actions are improper, and grounds for warning, suspending, or barring a violator:

- ❖ Deliberately acting out of turn.
- ❖ Deliberately splashing chips into the pot.
- ❖ 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 face up on the table.
- ❖ Telling anyone to turn a hand face up at the showdown.
- ❖ Revealing the contents of a live hand in a multi-handed pot before the betting is complete.
- ❖ Revealing the contents of a folded hand before the betting is complete. Do not divulge the contents of a hand during a deal even to someone not in the pot, so you do not leave any possibility of the information being transmitted to an active player.
- ❖ Needlessly stalling the action of a game.
- ❖ 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).
- ❖ Stacking chips in a manner that interferes with dealing or viewing cards.
- ❖ Making statements or taking action that could unfairly influence the course of play, whether or not the offender is involved in the pot.

# SECTION 2 - HOUSE POLICIES

## DECISION-MAKING

1. Management reserves the right to make decisions in the spirit of fairness, even if a strict interpretation of the rules may indicate a different ruling.
2. Decisions of the Management are final.
3. The proper time to draw attention to a mistake is when it occurs or is first noticed. Any delay may affect the ruling.
4. If an incorrect rule interpretation or decision by an employee is made in good faith, the establishment 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 of a deal.**
6. If a pot has been incorrectly awarded and mingled with chips that were not in the pot, and the time limit for a ruling request given in the previous rule has been observed, management 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. The delay could be to get the Management to give the ruling, or for some other good reason. In such circumstances, a pot or portion of it may be impounded by the house 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.
9. A player, before he acts, is entitled to request and receive information as to whether any opposing hand is alive or dead, or whether a wager is of sufficient size to reopen the betting.

## PROCEDURES

1. Only one person may play a hand.
2. No one is allowed to play another player's chips, except to post the required blind if the player is away from the table or to help an inexperienced player make a bet if asked by the player.
3. Management will decide when to start or close any game.
4. Collections (seat rental fees) are paid in advance.
5. Cash is not allowed on the table. All cash should be changed into chips in order to play. Any chips from another cardroom are not permitted on the table.

6. Money and chips may be removed for security purposes when leaving the table. The establishment is not responsible for any shortage or removal of chips left on the table during a player's absence, even though we will try to protect everyone as best we can. All removed funds must be fully restored when returning to the game.
7. All games are table stakes. Only the chips in front of a player at the start of a deal may play for that hand, except for chips not yet received that a player has purchased. Awareness of the amount being in play for each opponent is an important part of poker. All chips and money must be kept in plain view.
8. 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.
9. Any player is entitled to a clear view of an opponent's chips. Higher denomination chips should be easily visible.
10. 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 a floor person in advance. Frequent or continuous absences may cause your chips to be picked up from the table.
11. Looking through the discards or deck stub is not allowed.
12. After a deal ends, dealers are asked to not show what card would have been dealt.
13. A player is expected to pay attention to the game and not hold up play. Activity that interferes with this is discouraged, and the player will be asked to cease if a problem is caused.
14. A non-player may not sit at the table.
15. 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.

## **SEATING**

1. It is the player's responsibility to be in the playing area. A player who intends to leave the playing area should notify the floor person
2. A player may not hold a seat in more than one game.
3. The house reserves the right to require that any two players not play in the same game (husband and wife, relatives, business partners, and so forth).
4. When a 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. This rule may be overruled by a card draw before the beginning of the game.

# SECTION 3 - GENERAL POKER RULES

## MISDEALS

1. Once action begins, a misdeal cannot be called. The deal will be played, and no money will be returned to any player whose hand is fouled. In button games, action is considered to occur when two players after the blinds have acted on their hands.
2. The following circumstances cause a misdeal, provided attention is called to the error before two players have acted on their hands.
  - ❖ The first or second card of the hand has been exposed by a dealer error.
  - ❖ Two or more cards have been exposed by the dealer.
  - ❖ Two or more boxed cards (improperly faced cards) are found.
  - ❖ Two or more extra cards have been dealt in the starting hands of a game.
  - ❖ An incorrect number of cards have been dealt to a player, except the top card may be dealt if it goes to the player in proper sequence.
  - ❖ Any card has been dealt out of the proper sequence (except an exposed card may be replaced by the burncard).
  - ❖ The button was out of position.
  - ❖ The first card was dealt to the wrong position.
  - ❖ Cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player not entitled to a hand.
  - ❖ 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.

## DEAD HANDS

1. Your hand is declared dead if:
  - ❖ You fold or announce that you are folding when facing a bet or a raise.
  - ❖ You throw your hand away in a forward motion causing another player to act behind you (even if not facing a bet).
  - ❖ The hand does not contain the proper number of cards for that particular game
  - ❖ 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 Irregularities, rule #8.)

- ❖ You have the clock on you when facing a bet or raise and exceed the specified time limit.
2. Cards thrown into the muck may be ruled dead. However, a hand that is clearly identifiable may be retrieved and ruled live at management'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 incorrect information given to the player.
  3. Cards thrown into another player's hand are dead, whether they are face up or facedown.

## **IRREGULARITIES**

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).
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. 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.
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 next rule).
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.
6. If there is extra money in the pot on a deal as a result of forfeited money from the previous deal (as per rule #5), or some similar reason, only a player dealt in on the previous deal is entitled to a hand.
7. A card discovered face up 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 face up in the deck will be replaced after all other cards are dealt for that round.
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 in the previous rule. If the player does not call attention to the joker before acting, then the player has a dead hand.
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.
10. One or more cards missing from the deck does not invalidate the results of a hand.

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.
12. Procedure for an exposed card varies with the poker form, and is given in the section for each game. A card that is flashed by a dealer is treated as an exposed card. A card that is flashed by a player will 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.
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 rules for the particular game being played.
14. If you drop any cards out of your hand onto the floor, you must still play them.
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.
16. If the dealer fails to burn a card or burns more than one card, the error should be corrected if discovered before betting action has started for that round. Once action has been taken on a boardcard, the card must stand. Whether the error is able to be corrected or not, subsequent cards dealt should be those that would have come if no error had occurred. For example, if two cards were burned, one of the cards should be put back on the deck and used for the burncard on the next round. On the last round, if there was no betting because a player was all-in, the error should be corrected if discovered before the pot has been awarded, provided the deck stub, boardcards, and burncards are all sufficiently intact to determine the proper replacement card.
17. If the deck stub gets fouled for some reason, such as the dealer believing the deal is over and dropping the deck, the deal must still be played out, and the deck reconstituted in as fair a way as possible.

## **BETTING AND RAISING**

1. Check-raise is permitted in all games, except in certain forms of lowball.
2. In no-limit and pot-limit games, unlimited raising is allowed.
3. Any wager not all-in must be at least the size of the previous bet or raise in that round.
4. 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 who has not yet acted (or had the betting reopened to him by another player's action), facing an all-in wager of 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 on a 20 betting round is raising a 15 all-in bet to 35.) Multiple all-in wagers, each of an amount too small to individually qualify as a raise, still act as a raise and reopen the betting if the resulting wager size to a player qualifies as a raise.
5. A verbal statement in turn denotes your action, is binding, and takes precedence over a differing physical action.
6. Rapping the table with your hand is a pass.

7. 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. A player who has called out of turn may not change his wager to a raise on the next turn to act. An action or verbal declaration out of turn is binding unless the action to that player is subsequently changed by a bet or raise. If there is an intervening call, an action may be ruled binding.
8. 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.
9. A player who bets or calls by releasing chips into the pot is bound by that action and must make the amount of the wager correct. (This also applies right before the showdown when putting chips into the pot causes the opponent to show the winning hand before the full amount needed to call has been put into the pot.) 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. At pot-limit or no-limit betting, if there is a gross misunderstanding concerning the amount of the wager, see Section 14, Rule 8.
10. String raises are not allowed. The dealer should enforce obvious infractions to this string-raise law without being asked. 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.)
11. 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.
12. 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.

## **THE SHOWDOWN**

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

3. Any player, dealer, or floorperson who sees an incorrect amount of chips put into the pot, or an error about to be made in awarding a pot, has an ethical obligation to point out the error. Please help keep mistakes of this nature to a minimum.
4. Show one, show all. Players are entitled to receive equal access to information about the contents of another player's hand. After a deal, if cards are shown to another player, every player at the table has a right to see those cards. During a deal, cards that were shown to an active player who might have a further wagering decision on that betting round must immediately be shown to all the other players. If the player who saw the cards is not involved in the deal, or cannot use the information in wagering, the information should be withheld until the betting is over, so it does not affect the normal outcome of the deal. Cards shown to a person who has no more wagering decisions on that betting round, but might use the information on a later betting round, should be shown to the other players at the conclusion of that betting round. If only a portion of the hand has been shown, there is no requirement to show any of the unseen cards. The shown cards are treated as given in the preceding part of this rule.
5. If there is a side pot, the winner of that pot should be decided before the main pot is awarded. If there are multiple side pots, they are decided and awarded by having the pot with the players starting the deal with the greatest number of chips settled first, and so forth.
6. 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 are one or more side pots (because someone is all-in), players are asked to aid in determining the pot winner by not showing their cards until a pot they are in is being settled.

## SECTION 4 - BUTTON AND BLIND USE

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 on all but the first betting round. The button moves one seat 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 a certain structure or situation specifies otherwise). A blind other than the big blind may be treated as dead (not part of the poster's bet) in some structures, as when a special additional "dead blind" for the collection is specified by a cardroom. With two blinds, the small blind is posted by the first player clockwise from the button and the big blind is posted by the second player clockwise from the button. With more than two blinds, the smallest blind is normally left of the button (not on it). On the initial betting round, action starts with the first player to the left of the blinds. On all subsequent betting rounds, the action starts with the first active player to the left of the button.

### RULES FOR USING BLINDS

1. The minimum bring-in and allowable raise size for the opener is specified by the poker form used and blind amounts set for a game. They remain the same even when the player in the blind does not have enough chips to post the full amount.
2. 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:
  - ❖ Moving button – The button always moves forward to the next player and the blinds adjust accordingly. There may be more than one big blind.
  - ❖ 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. [See "Section 8 – Explanations," discussion #1, for more information on this rule.]
3. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is on the button.
4. Chips posted by the big blind are treated as a bet.
5. A player posting a blind in the game's regular structure has the option of raising the pot at the first turn to act. This option to raise is retained if someone goes all-in with a wager of less than the minimum raise.

## SECTION 5 - HOLD'EM

In 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 common cards used by all players, 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.

### RULES

These rules deal only with irregularities. See the previous chapter, “Button and Blind Use,” for rules on that subject.

1. If the initial holecard dealt to the first or second player is exposed, a misdeal results. The dealer will retrieve the card, reshuffle, and re-cut 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.
2. 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. If the flop contains too many cards, it must be re-dealt. (This applies even if it were possible to know which card was the extra one.)
4. If the dealer failed to burn a card before dealing the flop, or burned two cards, the error should be rectified by using the proper burncard and flop, if no boardcards were exposed. The deck must be reshuffled if any boardcards were exposed.
5. If the dealer burns and turns before a betting round is complete, the card(s) may not be used, even if all subsequent players elect to fold. Nobody has an option of accepting or rejecting the card. The betting is then completed, and the error rectified in the prescribed manner for that situation.
6. If the dealer fails to burn a card or burns more than one card, the error should be corrected if discovered before betting action has started for that round. Once action has been taken on a boardcard by any player, the card must stand. Whether the error is able to be corrected or not, subsequent cards dealt should be those that would have come if no error had occurred. For example, if two cards were burned, one of the cards should be put back on the deck and used for the burncard on the next round. If there was no betting on a round because a player was all-in, the error should be corrected if discovered before the pot has been awarded.
7. If the flop needs to be re-dealt for any reason, 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.

8. A dealing error for the fourth boardcard is rectified in a manner to least influence the identity of the boardcards that would have been used without the error. The dealer burns and deals 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 deals 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.
9. You must declare that you are playing the board before you throw your cards away. Otherwise, you relinquish all claims to the pot. (The rule for tournament play is you must retain your hand and show it if asked, in order to win part of the pot.)

## SECTION 6 - NO LIMIT RULES

A no-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. The player is responsible for determining the pot size at no-limit, not the dealer.

1. The number of raises in any betting round is unlimited.
2. The minimum bet size is the amount of the minimum bring-in, unless the player is going all-in. The minimum bring-in is the size of the big blind unless the structure of the game is preset by the house to some other amount (such as double the big blind). The minimum bet remains the same amount on all betting rounds. If the big blind does not have sufficient chips to post the required amount, a player who enters the pot on the initial betting round is still required to enter for at least the minimum bet (unless going all-in for a lesser sum) and a pre-flop raiser must at least double the size of the big blind. At all other times, when someone goes all-in for less than the minimum bet, a player has the option of just calling the all-in amount. If a player goes all-in for an amount that is less than the minimum bet, a player who wishes to raise must raise at least the amount of the minimum bet. For example, if the minimum bet is 100, and a player goes all-in on the flop for 20, a player may fold, call 20, or raise to at least a total of 120.
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. Example: Player A bets 100 and player B raises to 200. Player C wishing to raise must raise at least 100 more, making the total bet at least 300. A player who has already acted and is not facing a full-size wager may not subsequently raise an all-in bet that is less than the minimum bet or 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.)
4. Multiple all-in wagers, each of an amount too small to qualify as a raise, still act as a raise and reopen the betting if the resulting wager size to a player qualifies as a raise. 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.)
5. 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.) A verbal statement giving the amount of the raise is also allowed.
6. A wager is not binding until the chips are actually released into the pot, unless the player has made a verbal statement of action.
7. 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.
8. 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.

9. A bet of a single chip without comment is considered to be the full amount of the chip allowed. However, a player acting on a previous bet with a larger denomination chip 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.)
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 (but no greater). This does not apply to a player who has unintentionally put too much in to call.
11. 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 may receive some protection by the decision-maker. A "call" or "raise" may be ruled not binding if it is obvious that the player grossly misunderstood the amount wagered, provided no damage has been caused by that action. Example: Player A bets 300, player B re-raises to 1200, and Player C puts 300 into the pot and says, "call." It is obvious that player C believes the bet to be only 300 and he should be allowed to withdraw his 300 and reconsider his wager. 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 decision-maker 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. (Unfortunately, situations can arise at big-bet poker that are not so clear-cut as this.)
12. In all no-limit and pot-limit games, the house 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 floorperson, if a 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.
13. The cardroom does not condone "insurance" or any other "proposition" wagers. The management declines 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.

## SECTION 7 - TOURNAMENTS

By participating in a 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. Players, whether in the hand or not, may not discuss the hands until the action is complete. Players are obligated to protect the other players in the tournament at all times. Discussing cards discarded or hand possibilities is not allowed. A penalty may be given for discussion of hands during the play.

1. Whenever possible, all rules are the same as those that apply to live games.
2. Initial seating is determined by random draw or assignment. (For a one-table satellite event, cards to determine seating may be left face up so the earlier entrants can pick their seat, since the button is assigned randomly.)
3. A change of seat is not allowed after play starts, except as assigned by the director.
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.
5. If a paid entrant is absent at the start of an event, 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.
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.
7. A no-show or absent player is always dealt a hand and that player's stack will post chips for blinds.
8. In all tournament games using a dealer button, the starting position of the button is determined by the players drawing for the high card. This may be overruled by drawing for a seat before the beginning of the tournament.
9. Limits and blinds are raised at regularly scheduled intervals.
10. If there is a signal designating the end of a betting level, the new limits apply on the next deal. **The deal begins with the first riffle of the shuffle.**
11. 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 the odd chips will be rounded up to the smallest chip allowable in play, e.g. if you have 3 100 chips, you will receive a 500 chip and if you have 6 100 chips, you will receive a 1000 chip.
12. A player must be present at the table to stop the action by calling "time."

13. A player must be at the table by the time it is his time to act or that hand will be folded, even if he has chips on the table, e.g. the small blind. The only exception to this rule is when the missing player has posted the big blind and no-one has raised.
14. 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.
15. In button games, if a player is needed to move from a table to balance tables, the player due for the big blind will be automatically selected to move, and will be given the earliest seat due for the big blind if more than one seat is open.
16. New players to a table as a result of balancing tables are dealt in immediately unless they are in the small blind or button position, where they must wait until the button has passed to the player on their left. The number of players at each table will be kept reasonably balanced by the transfer of a player as needed. Table size will be kept to within two players.
17. 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 and two tables is not mandatory in small tournaments with only four or five starting tables.)
18. 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 is left in his stack. A player who posts a short blind and wins does not need to make up the blind.
19. 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 re-buy is okay if allowable by the rules of that event). 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.
20. All players must leave their seat immediately after being eliminated from an event.
21. 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 in a multi-handed pot may not show any cards during a deal. Heads-up, a player may not show any cards unless the event has only two remaining players, or is winner-take-all. If a player deliberately shows a card, the player may be penalized (but his hand will not be ruled dead). Verbally stating one's hand during the play may be penalized.
22. Non-tournament chips are not allowed on the table.
23. Higher-denomination chips must be placed where they are easily visible to all other players.
24. 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 or number of hands. A severe infraction such as abusive or disruptive behavior may be punished by eviction from the tournament.
25. The deck is changed only when a card is damaged.
26. The dealer button remains in position until the appropriate blinds are taken. Players must post all blinds every round. Because of this, last action may be given to the same player for

two consecutive hands by the use of a “dead button.” [See “Section 8 – Explanations,” discussion #1, for more information on this rule.]

27. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is on the button.
28. If a player announces the intent to re-buy before cards are dealt, that player is playing behind and is obligated to make the re-buy.
29. All hands will be turned face up whenever a player is all-in and betting action is complete.
30. If multiple players go broke on the same hand, the player starting the hand with the larger amount of chips finishes in the higher place for prize money and any other award. Players eliminated on the same deal who start their final hand with an equal amount of chips receive equal prize money, with the best hand on that deal receiving any non-divisible award.
31. Management is not required to rule on any private deals, side bets, or redistribution of the prize pool among finalists.
32. 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 does not include one or more active competitors is improper by definition.
33. A tournament event is expected to be played until completion. A private agreement that removes all prize money from being at stake in the competition is unethical.
34. Management retains the right to cancel any event, or alter it in a manner fair to the players.

## SECTION 8 - EXPLANATIONS

1. The only place in this set of rules that an alternative is mentioned other than in this section is in the method of button and blind placement. That rule (the first rule in “Section 4 – Button and Blind Use”) is repeated in an abbreviated version below for convenience.

“Each round all players must get the button, and meet the total amount of the blind obligations.” Either of the following methods of button and blind placement may be used:

- (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 a player 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 cardroom may either decide for the sake of simplicity to use only one method, or decide to tailor the method to the game and situation.

2. The rules given for rectifying a 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 burn” rule is so common, there was no choice but to use it here. It would be better for poker if the rule were changed to always burning a card. Here are these rules:

“If the cards are 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 up the final card without burning a card.”

The portion of this rule saying the dealer does not burn a card on the redeal is inferior. It is harder for the dealer to control the card to be dealt if a burn is required. The sentence in the rule should read:

“The dealer then cuts the deck, burns a card, and turns the final card.”

The present method for handling a premature dealing on the turn is used to have what would have been the last board-card used on the turn, and not reshuffling the deck until just before the last card is dealt. This method has four-fifths of the boardcards remaining the same, albeit in a different order. It would be better to reshuffle before the turn, preserving the chance of receiving the prematurely dealt card on either of the last two cards, as opposed to cutting that chance in half. The superiority of reshuffling right away is illustrated if the prematurely dealt card makes a gutshot straight-flush for a player.

3. Rule seven in “Section 4 – Button and Blind Use” 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.

# GLOSSARY

**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.

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

**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.

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

**BET:** (1) The act of making a wager before anyone else on a betting round. (2) The chips used by a player to bet, call, or raise.

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

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

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

**BOARD:** (1) The board on which a waiting list is kept for players wanting seats in specific games. (2) Cards face up on the table common to each of the hands.

**BOARDCARD:** A community card in the center of the table, as in hold-em or Omaha.

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

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

**BURNCARD:** After the initial round of cards is dealt, the first card off the deck in each round that is placed under a chip in the pot, for security purposes. To do so is to burn the card; the card itself is called the burncard.

**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.

**CARDS SPEAK:** The face value of a hand in a showdown is the true value of the hand, regardless of a verbal announcement.

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

**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.

**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 face up 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.

**COMMUNITY CARDS:** The cards dealt face up in the center of the table that can be used by all players to form their best hand in the games of hold-em and Omaha.

**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 card used to shield the bottom of the deck.

**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 rules, each deal refers to the entire process from the shuffling and dealing of cards until the pot is awarded to the winner.

**DEALER BUTTON:** A flat disk that indicates the player who would be in the dealing position for that hand (if there were not a house 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.

**DECK:** A set of playing-cards. In these games, the deck consists of 52 cards.

**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.

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

**FIXED LIMIT:** In limit poker, a betting structure where the bet size on each round is pre-set.

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

**FLOORPERSON:** A casino employee who seats players and makes decisions.

**FLOP:** In hold-em or Omaha, 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 first boardcard after the flop in 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).

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

**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.

**HOLECARDS:** The cards dealt facedown to a player.

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

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

**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.

**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 allowing players to wager any or all of their chips in one bet.

**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.

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

**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.

**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 hold-em.

**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 BET:** A side bet 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 plays. 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.

**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.

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

**SAVING BETS:** Same as pushing bets.

**SCRAMBLE:** A facedown mixing of the cards.

**SETUP:** Two new decks, each with different colored backs, to replace the current decks.

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

**SHOWDOWN:** The showing of cards to determine the pot-winner after all the betting is over.

**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).

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

**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.

**STRING RAISE:** A wager made in more than one motion, without announcing a raise before going back to your stack for more chips.

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

**SUPERVISOR:** A cardroom employee qualified to make rulings, such as a floorperson, shift supervisor, or the cardroom manager.

**TABLE STAKES:** (1) The amount of money you have on the table. This is the maximum amount that you can win or lose on a 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.

**"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.

**TURNCARD:** The fourth street card in hold-em..

**WAGER:** (1) To bet or raise. (2) The chips used for betting or raising.

# **CHANGES MADE BY MARYPORTPOKER**

Here are the amendments, additions, and clarifications to these rules made by our cardroom:

- 1) December 2007 - rules tidied up and some rules not applicable to Maryport Poker removed.
- 2) Some rules renumbered as needed.