



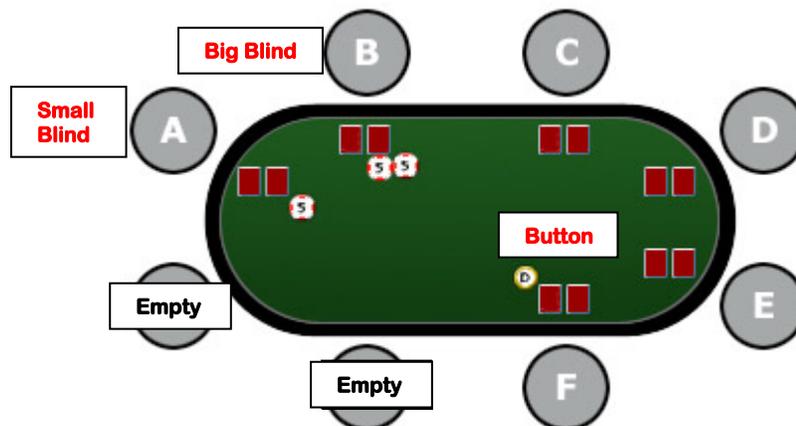
The Introduction:

Texas Holdem is the most popular version of Poker played today in many casinos. It's also the version of Poker seen being played on television shows like the World Poker Tour and World Series of Poker. It's one of the fastest growing phenomenon's today where virtually anyone can strike it rich and become a star. Texas Holdem poker is absolutely the best game for a beginner to learn. And, the game can be learned in only a few minutes by almost anyone. This set of instructions will walk you through a Texas Hold'em game from start to finish. By the time you're done reading the basics and the rules, you'll be ready to "Shuffle Up and Deal!"

The Basics:

A full Texas Holdem table typically has nine players; any less and the game may be referred to as shorthanded. To determine who begins the game a single card is dealt to each player; high card will be the first dealer. Each player will get a turn to be the dealer in a clockwise position around the table. This doesn't mean you'll have to learn how to deal the cards. It means, when it's your turn to be the dealer, the cards will be dealt in front of you first and then to everyone else to your left.

The dealer position is indicated by a white plastic chip referred to as the "**Button**", which is also what the dealer position is called. After each round of play, sometimes called a hand, the dealer **Button** rotates to the left, ensuring that everyone gets to play in this and all other positions.



The Rules:

Texas Holdem is played with a standard 52-card deck. Prior to any cards being dealt, a predetermined amount of money is placed on the betting table in order to insure there is at least something to play for on every hand. This is called "**Posting the Blinds**". The player to the left of the button posts $\frac{1}{2}$ of the minimum bet. This is called the "**Small Blind**". The player to their immediate left posts the full minimum bet which is called the "**Big Blind**".

The Pre-Flop:

The cards will then be dealt to each player face down, starting with the player to the immediate left of the button. One card will be dealt to each player going clockwise around the table and then a second card will be dealt until each player has two cards face down in front of them. These cards are often referred to as "**Hole Cards**". Once the cards are dealt, it is alright to look at the cards however, be careful not to allow any of the other players to see what you have in your hand. When it's your turn, you must decide if you wish to:

- A. "**Call**" the current bet (the **Big Blind**, which is the highest amount bet at this point unless someone else has raised the bet) which means to match the bet. When placing your chips on the table you must say the word "**Call**" to announce your intention to the rest of the players.
- B. "**Fold**" your hand without betting (if you don't like your cards). This is done by simply tossing your hand into the middle of the table **FACE DOWN** so none of the other players will see what you had.
- C. "**Raise**" the bet by putting in more money than what was bet prior to you by the other players. The minimum raise allowed must match the **Big Blind** or whatever greater amount may have been bet prior to you. You should announce the word "**Raise**" so everyone will know exactly what you are doing.
- D. "**Re-raise**" means to increase another player's bet.
- E. "**Check**" the bet. If you are the player at the end of the round of betting and your previous bet is already the highest on the table, you have what is called the option. If you do not wish to raise the bet more, then you can simply announce you wish to "**Check**".

Each player, starting with the seat to the left of the big blind, makes their choice and acts. If a player raises the bet, each player must now call the new amount, including those who may have already called. At any time a player may re-raise, meaning that they raise it again beyond the amount it was raised previously. The round of betting stops when all players have either folded or called the last raise.

The Flop:

Once the **Pre-flop** betting is completed, the dealer burns the top card on the deck and places three cards face-up in the middle of the table. These cards are called the "**Flop**" and make up the first three of five community cards that will be laid out for everyone to utilize. Each player will want to combine the community cards along with their two hole cards in order to make the best five card poker hand possible. You do not have to use your hole cards in order to make a five-card hand. (Example: There might be a straight or a flush already on the table.)(Note: Standard Poker hand ranks are used.)

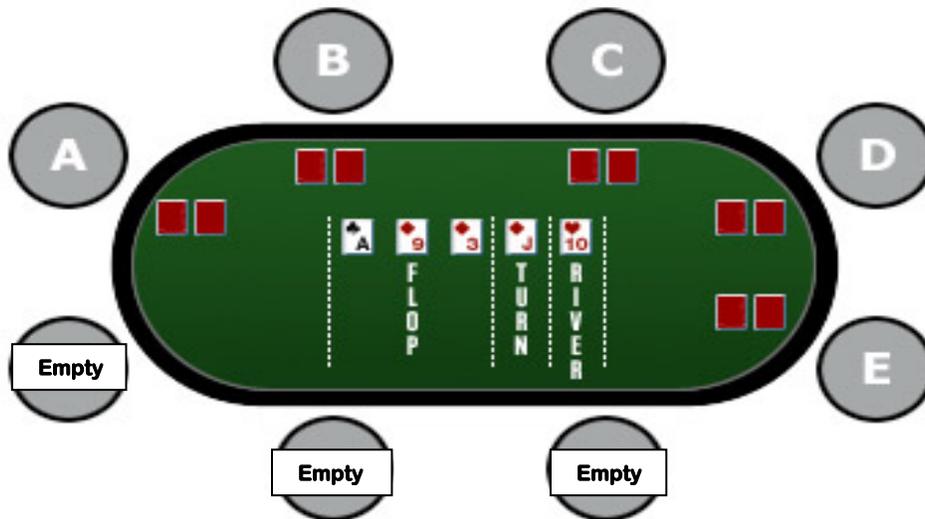
Once the community cards have been placed on the table, the betting begins starting with the first active player sitting to the immediate left of the dealer button. During this round and all future rounds of betting, players can check, call, raise, or fold when it's their turn.

The Turn also called Fourth Street:

The dealer burns another card and places one more face up onto the table. This, the fourth community card and is called the "**Turn**" or "**Fourth Street**." The player to the left of the button then begins the third round of betting.

The River also called Fifth Street:

The dealer burns another card before placing the final community card face-up card on the table. This card is called the "**River**" or "**Fifth Street**." Players begin the final round of betting starting with the active player to the immediate left of the dealer button.



The Winner:

After the final round of betting, all players who remain in the game reveal their hands. The player who made the initial bet or the player who made the last raise shows their hand first. The winner is the player with the best 5-card poker hand. In the event of a tie, the pot is split evenly among each of the active players with winning hands. The button is then passed clockwise to the next player.

Poker Hand Ranks (from best to worst):



1. Royal flush:
This is the highest poker hand possible. This hand consists of AKQJT all in the same suit. As all suits have the same value and all royal flushes are equal.



2. Straight flush:
Five cards of the same suit in sequence, such as 76543 of hearts or any other suit. The ace can play low to make 5432A, the lowest straight flush.



3. Four of a kind:
Four cards of the same rank accompanied by a "kicker", like 44442. Ranked by the quads, so that 44442 beats 3333K.



4. Full house:
Three cards of one rank accompanied by two of another, such as 777JJ. Ranked by the trips, so that 44422 beats 333AA.



5. Flush:
Any five cards of the same suit but not in sequence, such as AJ942 of hearts. Ranked by the top card, and then by the next card, so that AJ942 beats AJ876.



6. Straight:
Five cards in sequence, but not in the same suit. The ace plays either high or low, making AKQJT and 5432A.



7. **Three of a kind:**
Three cards of the same rank and two kickers of different ranks, such as KKK84. Ranked by the trips, so that KKK84 beats QQQAK, but QQQAK beats QQQA7.



8. **Two pair:**
Two cards of one rank, two cards of another rank and a kicker of a third rank, such as KK449. Ranked by the top pair, then the bottom pair and finally the kicker, so that KK449 beats any of QQJJA, KK22Q, and KK445.



9. **One pair:**
Two cards of one rank accompanied by three kickers of different ranks, such as AAK53. Ranked by the pair, followed by each kicker in turn, so that AAK53 beats AAK52.



10. **High card:**
If a Poker hand contains none of the above combinations; it's valued by the highest card in it.

Here are some hints:

The Top 20 Best Starting Hands

1. AA	11. ATs
2. KK	12. KJs
3. QQ	13. AQ
4. JJ	14. 99
5. AKs	15. QJs
6. TT	16. KTs
7. AQs	17. 88
8. AJs	18. QTs
9. AK	19. A9s
10. KQs	20. AJ

Note: "S" refers to "Suited". (Example – AQs would mean Ace & Queen of the same suit.)

Good Luck and have fun!!!