



26-Game Mix Rule Book

BARGE XXVI

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Preface

This document contains the rules of the 26 games used in the BARGE XXVI 26-Game Mix poker tournament. I obtained these rules from a copy of the official rule book for the XXV 25-Game Mix poker tournament played at BARGE XXV in 2015. That rule book was originally written by Patrick Milligan and Rich Bremer and is reproduced here with their permission.

Note that all 26 games are played in a limit format. The chapters are in the order that the games will be played. Four hands of each game are played before switching, and a random game is picked as the starting point when the final table is convened.

This document also includes appendices explaining the “Sevens Rule” (originally written by Michael Weisenberg) and various lowball scales (written by me), along with the structure sheet used at BARGE (created by Rich Bremer).

A chapter has been added for game #1, Duck Flush, that was added for the 2016 tournament by the 2015 XXV 25-Game Mix champion.

Christopher “Tom Bayz” Mecklin

1. Duck Flush

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to five cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Then there is a second draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

This is followed by a third draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best five-card high hand wins the pot, with the restriction that the qualifying hand is a flush or better. If there are no qualifying high hands, then the best five-card Kansas City low hand wins the pot. Notice that this is NOT a split pot game.

Example: Player A makes $A♥ Q♥ J♥ T♥ 2♥$ and Player B makes $K♣ J♣ 8♣ 5♣ 3♣$. Both players qualify for a high hand with their flushes and Player A wins the pot with a better high hand.

Example: Player A makes $8♥ 5♦ 4♣ 3♠ 2♦$, Player B makes $8♣ 6♦ 5♠ 4♥ 3♣$, Player C makes $7♥ 6♣ 5♥ 4♠ 3♦$. Player A wins with the best Kansas City low hand. Notice Player C's straight does not qualify as a high hand.

Reference:

<http://www.parttimepoker.com/duck-flush-a-hot-new-game-for-high-rollers>

2. Omaha High Only

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt four cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot. Hands are made using exactly two cards from each player's hand and exactly three cards from the board.

3. Five Card Stud

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The low card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The 2♣ is the lowest possible card followed by the 2♦.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt one card face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Action starts with the highest hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot.

4. Hold'em

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt two cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot.

5. Badugi

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt four cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to four cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Then there is a second draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

This is followed by a third draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best four-card hand using badugi rules wins the pot. A badugi hand consists of the maximum number of cards that can be played such that there is no duplication of rank or suit. Between hands of the same number of cards, the one with the lowest hand (aces count as low) shall be the best hand. 432A of four different suits is the best possible hand. KQJT of four different suits beats any three-card hand. A three-card hand of 742 beats 75A.

6. Binglaha

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt four cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

At this point a single (standard) die is rolled. If the die result is a 1, 2, or 3, the game is played high/low split eight-or-better. If the die result is 4, 5, or 6, the game is played high only. The die is traditionally rolled by the player on the button, and the die must land flush on the table having traveled at least the distance to the far side of the dealer's box. The die must also tumble, it cannot be slid. The dealer is responsible for calling a valid or invalid roll.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

Either the best high hand and best California low hand of at least eight low or better split the pot or the best high hand scoops the pot, depending on the results of the die roll. Hands are made using exactly two cards from each player's hand and exactly three cards from the board. Note: if there are not three unpaired cards eight or lower on the board, no low hand is possible regardless of the roll of the die. If no qualifying low hand is made, the high hand always scoops the pot.

7. Stud High/Low No Qualifier

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The high card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The $K\spadesuit$ is the highest possible card followed by the $K\heartsuit$.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt two cards face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Note: Unlike seven card stud for high only, even if there is an open pair on fourth street, all bets on this street will always be at the small bet limit. Action starts with the *lowest* hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand and the best California low hand split the pot. There is no qualifier for low.

8. Chowaha

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt two cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three flops are dealt one above the other forming a 3×3 square of cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Two turn cards are dealt vertically to the right of the flop cards from the dealer's perspective. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One river card is placed to the right of the turn cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

At the showdown, the board will look like the following:

```
X X X
      Y
X X X   Z
      Y
X X X
```

The cards labelled "X" are the flop cards, the cards indicated as "Y" are the turn cards, and "Z" is the river card.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high hand wins the pot. The high hand consists of a player's hole cards plus the cards from one flop, one turn, and the river. These may be played in any combination EXCEPT that board cards used CANNOT consist of the top row of the flop plus the bottom turn card or the bottom row of the flop plus the top turn card. That is, the flop, turn, and river must all be contiguous cards. Also, as in Omaha, each player must use both hole cards plus three cards from the board to form each portion of their hand.

9. Badacey

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to five cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Then there is a second draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

This is followed by a third draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best four-card hand using badugi rules wins half of the pot. The other half of the pot goes to the best Ace-to-Five lowball hand.

A badugi hand consists of the maximum number of cards that can be played such that there is no duplication of rank or suit. Between hands of the same number of cards, the one with the lowest hand (aces count as low) shall be the best hand. 432A of four different suits is the best possible hand. KQJT of four different suits beats any three-card hand. A three-card hand of 742 beats 75A.

10. Two or Five Omaha Eight-or-Better

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high hand and best California low hand of at least eight low or better splits the pot. Hands are made using *either* exactly two cards from each player's hand and exactly three cards from the board *or* using all five cards in each player's hand, whichever produces the superior hand. A player may use all five cards in one direction and use only two cards in the other. If no qualifying low hand is made, the high hand scoops the pot.

Example: One player is dealt $A♥ Q♥ J♥ T♥ 2♥$. The board is $3♠ 5♥ 7♣ K♥ Q♦$. The player plays the $A♥ 2♥$ from his hand to make a 7532A low, and all five cards from his hand to make a ace-queen high flush.

11. Stud

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The low card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The 2♣ is the lowest possible card followed by the 2♦.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt two cards face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. If a player shows an open pair a bet or raise may optionally be a big bet. In this case a small bet can be met by a big bet raise. A big bet may never be met with a small bet raise. Action starts with the highest hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot.

12. Five Card Draw

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to five cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

There are no restrictions on what the minimum qualifying hand is to open for a raise. This is often called "Guts To Open".

Draw is played with a joker/bug. The joker can only be used as an ace or to complete a straight or flush.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot.

13. Four Card Chowaha Eight-or-Better

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt four cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three flops are dealt one above the other forming a 3×3 square of cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Two turn cards are dealt vertically to the right of the flop cards from the dealer's perspective. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One river card is placed to the right of the turn cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

At the showdown, the board will look like the following:

```
X X X
      Y
X X X   Z
      Y
X X X
```

The cards labelled "X" are the flop cards, the cards indicated as "Y" are the turn cards, and "Z" is the river card.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high hand and best California low hand of at least eight low or better splits the pot. Each hand consists of two cards from the player's hole cards plus the cards from one flop, one turn, and the river. These may be played in any combination EXCEPT that board cards used CANNOT consist of the top row of the flop plus the bottom turn card or the bottom row of the flop plus the top turn card. That is, the flop, turn, and river must all be contiguous cards. Each player may create their best high hand and low hand using different hole cards and/or different board cards. Also, as in Omaha, each player must use exactly two hole cards plus three cards from the board to form each portion of their hand.

14. Razzdugi

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The high card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The $K\spadesuit$ is the highest possible card followed by the $K\heartsuit$.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt two cards face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Action starts with the *lowest* hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best five-card California low hand and the best (ace-to-four) badugi hand splits the pot. Note, there is no qualifier for either the razz or badugi hand. If there is no four-card badugi hand, the best three-card hand wins half the pot.

15. Crazy Pineapple Eight-or-Better

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt three cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Before the next board card is revealed, all players in the hand must discard one of their cards. This is typically done by placing their discard underneath chips that are placed in the pot on the flop.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand and best five-card California low hand of at least eight low or better splits the pot. Hands are made using either zero, one, or two cards from each player's hand and the remaining cards from the board. Note: If there are not three unpaired cards eight or lower on the board, no low hand is possible. If no qualifying low hand is made, the high hand scoops the pot.

16. California Lowball

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to five cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

No check and raise is allowed. The “Sevens Rule” is in effect (see Appendix B).

Lowball is played with a joker/bug. The joker is used as the lowest non-pairing card.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best five-card California lowball hand wins the pot.

17. Courchevel High Only

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, then one community cards (called the “spit” card) is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Two community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot. Hands are made using exactly two cards from each player’s hand and exactly three cards from the board.

18. Stud Eight-or-Better

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The low card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The 2♣ is the lowest possible card followed by the 2♦.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt two cards face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Note: Unlike seven card stud for high only, even if there is an open pair on fourth street, all bets on this street will always be at the small bet limit. Action starts with the *highest* hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand and the best California low hand with a qualifier of eight-or-better split the pot.

19. Lazy Pineapple High Only

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt three cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot. Hands are made using either zero, one, or two cards from each player's hand and the remaining cards from the board.

20. Badeucy

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to five cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Then there is a second draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

This is followed by a third draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best four-card hand using modified badugi rules wins half of the pot. The other half of the pot goes to the best Deuce-to-Seven lowball hand.

In badeucy, an Ace is a high card. A badugi hand consists of the maximum number of cards that can be played such that there is no duplication of rank or suit. Between hands of the same number of cards, the one with the lowest hand shall be the best hand. 5432 of four different suits is the best possible hand. AKQJ of four different suits beats any three-card hand. A three-card hand of 742 beats 753.

21. Omaha Eight-or-Better

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt four cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high hand and best California low hand of at least eight low or better splits the pot. Hands are made using exactly two cards from each player's hand and exactly three cards from the board. Note: If there are not three unpaired cards eight or lower on the board, no low hand is possible. If no qualifying low hand is made, the high hand scoops the pot.

22. Razz

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The high card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The $K\spadesuit$ is the highest possible card followed by the $K\heartsuit$.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt two cards face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Action starts with the *lowest* hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best five-card California low hand wins the pot.

23. Deuce-to-Seven Triple Draw

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Each player in turn discards zero to five cards from their hand. Once all of the discards have been announced, the dealer will deal each player an appropriate number of replacement cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Then there is a second draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

This is followed by a third draw, followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best five-card Kansas City lowball hand wins the pot.

24. Oklahoma

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt four cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three flops are dealt one above the other forming a 3×3 square of cards. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three turn cards (one for each flop) are placed on the board, lined up vertically to the right of the flops (forming a 3×4 grid). This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fifth column of three additional community cards are placed face up. At this point, the board will look like the following:

X1	X1	X1	Y1	Z1
X2	X2	X2	Y2	Z2
X3	X3	X3	Y3	Z3

All the “X” cards are placed on the board on the flop, the “Y” cards on the turn, and the “Z” cards on the river.

Next, the horizontal row of cards (board) with the lowest river card by rank is removed from play. If two river cards share the same lowest rank, then both are removed. If all three river cards share the same rank, *no* boards are removed. (In this way, “tournament” Oklahoma differs from “cash game” Oklahoma.)

For example, if Z1, Z2, and Z3 are the $3\heartsuit$, $8\spadesuit$, and $3\clubsuit$ respectively, then all of the “1” cards and all of the “3” cards will be removed from play.

Board removal is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high hand and best California low hand of at least eight low or better splits the pot. Hands are made using exactly two cards from each player’s hand and exactly three cards from one of the remaining boards. A player may use different cards for their low and high hand, and they may use different boards for their low and high hand.

25. Deuce-to-Seven Razz

Forced Money

The game is played with antes. The high card on the board by rank first and then by suit brings it in. The $A\spadesuit$ is the highest possible card followed by the $A\heartsuit$. Note: Because the game is played using Kansas City lowball rules, aces are always high, so an ace is a high card for bring-in purposes.

Dealing Procedure

Starting with the player in seat one, each player is dealt two cards face down then one card up, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Action starts with the *lowest* hand showing.

A third up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

It is required of each player that they do not alter or obfuscate the order in which they have received their up cards.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best five-card Kansas City low hand wins the pot.

26. Hold'em High/Low Eight-or-Better

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt two cards face down, followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand and best California low hand of at least eight low or better splits the pot. If no qualifying low hand is made, the high hand scoops the pot.

A. Lowball Scales

Badugi

In this game, a *badugi* is defined as a four-card hand that contains no pairs and no repeated suits (i.e. “rainbow”). The best hand in most badugi games is 432A rainbow. In badeucy, which is a split-pot game based on badugi and deuce-to-seven triple draw, the game is modified so that 5432 rainbow is the best badugi, in order to make a “nut-nut” hand possible in that game.

The weakest badugi hand is KQJT rainbow. It would beat any non-badugi hand. If no one makes a badugi, the best three card hand wins. The best three-card is 32A rainbow. If two players have the same three-card, the fourth card is NOT used. For instance, if Player A has 7♠ 3♣ 2♥ A♦ and Player B has 3♣ 3♦ 2♠ A♥, they would split the pot. If Player A has 7♠ 4♣ 2♥ 2♦, they have 742 and beat Player B with 7♦, 5♣, A♥, A♦, which is a 75A. If no one has a three-card hand, then best two-card hand is used, and so on.

California Lowball, aka Ace-to-Five or A-5

In California Lowball, 5432A is the best hand, often called the “wheel”. Aces count low, straights and flushes DO NOT count against for evaluation of the best lowball hand. Think of your hand as a five-digit number with the Ace being a one.

If all players at showdown are paired, the lowest pair would win. For example, AA765 would beat 22345. If players have the same pair, then the lowest remaining part of the hand would win. So AA654 would beat AA732.

If the joker/bug is being used, it is used as the lowest card that does not pair any other card held. If you held 653A-Joker, you would use the Joker as a deuce and your hand would be 6532A.

This scale is used in California Lowball, Badacey, Hold'em High/Low Eight-or-Better, Omaha Eight-or-Better, Bingleaha, Oklahoma, 2 or 5 Omaha Eight-or-Better, 4 Card Chowaha Eight-or-Better, Razz, Razzdugi, Stud Eight-or-Better, and Stud High/Low No Qualifier.

In most split pot games played with the California Lowball scale, an Eight-or-Better is needed to qualify for the low hand. If no player has an Eight-or-Better, then the high hand will scoop the pot. The worst lowball hand that will qualify in Eight-or-Better is 87654.

California Lowball, Badacey, Razz, Razzdugi, and Stud High/Low No Qualifier do not use Eight-or-Better in evaluation of the low hand. California Lowball traditionally uses the “Sevens Rule” and no checkraise.

Kansas City Lowball, aka Deuce-to-Seven or 2-7

In Kansas City Lowball, 75432 (not single suited) is the best hand, also often called the “wheel”. Aces count high, straights and flushes DO count against for evaluation of the best lowball hand. Again, think of your hand as a five-digit number, but the Ace is no longer a one and straights/flushes are bad.

Note that A5432 is NOT a straight in deuce-to-seven. It is a *perfect* Ace high (see below) and would beat all other ace-high hands and any paired hand.

Again, if all players at showdown are paired, the lowest pair would win. But 22345 would beat AA765, as 22 is the lowest pair and AA the highest pair. If somehow all players remaining have a straight, the lowest straight wins. 76543 would beat 87654. Similarly, if all players remaining have a flush, the lowest flush wins. 86543 flush would beat 95432 flush. The joker/bug is rarely used; if it is used, it is used as the lowest card that makes a low hand. For example, if you held Joker-6543, you would use the Joker as an eight and your hand would be 86543. You would not use the Joker as either a deuce or seven because in this case, either of those ranks would make a straight.

This scale is used in Deuce-to-Seven Triple Draw, Badeucy, and Deuce-to-Seven Razz. Check-raise is allowed and no analog of the “Sevens Rule” exists.

Another common game with this scale is No Limit Deuce-to-Seven Lowball, played with a single draw. Traditionally, players must enter the pot for at least a minimum raise in this game (i.e. no limping allowed).

London Lowball, aka Ace-to-Six or A-6

This variation is seldom seen in games played in American casinos. It is similar to California Lowball in that the Ace is low, but unlike California Lowball and similar to Kansas City Lowball in that straights and flushes count against you. The best hand is 6432A (not single suited).

This variation has not yet been used in any BARGE tournament. Probably the most common game that uses it is called “London Lowball”, which is razz played with the Ace-to-Six scale and usually played pot limit rather than fixed limit.

Smooth Hands/Rough Hands/Perfect Hands

You will often hear words such as *smooth*, *rough*, or *perfect* used in describing a lowball hand. Let’s consider California lowball as an example. A *smooth* seven would be a seven-high hand that is one of the lowest sevens, for example 7543A. The “smoothest” seven is called a *perfect* seven, which would be 7432A. Conversely, a *rough* hand is one of the highest sevens, such as 76432. The “roughest” seven would be 76543.

Here’s a Kansas City lowball example: 85432 is the *perfect* eight. 86432 would be described as a *smooth* eight, and sometimes even a hand like 87432 would be described as a *smooth* eight-seven. A hand like 87642 is a *rough* eight. Note that 87654 is not an *rough* eight, but a

straight that would be an extremely poor hand! It is up to debate at what point a hand is no longer *smooth* but is now *rough*.

Rank of Lowball Hands

In lowball, it is traditional to speak of strong hands as “Number x”. For example, if a player announces their hand as “Number 4”, in California Lowball they would have 6542A, and in Kansas City Lowball 76542. Of course, in the table below the hand cannot be single-suited (a flush) to qualify in either Deuce-to-Seven or Ace-to-Six. Notice the Ace-to-Six hands are obtained merely by subtracting one from each “digit” of the corresponding Deuce-to-Seven hand.

Notice in Ace-to-Five there is one five (the wheel or nuts), 5 sixes, and 15 sevens, for a total of 21 hands that are a seven-or-better (i.e. where the “Sevens Rule” would apply). There are 35 eights, so a total of 56 hands that are Eight-or-Better.

In Deuce-to-Seven, there are four sevens, 14 eights, and 34 nines, for a total of 52 hands that are nine-or-better. Number #53 is the perfect ten, in case Bill Chen quizzes you. The same is true in Ace-to-Six; again, merely subtract one from each of these ranks.

Number #	California Ace-to-Five	Kansas City Deuce-to-Seven	London Ace-to-Six
1	5432A	75432	6432A
2	6432A	76432	6532A
3	6532A	76532	6542A
4	6542A	76542	6543A
5	6543A	85432	7432A
6	65432	86432	7532A
7	7432A	86532	7542A
8	7532A	86542	7543A
9	7542A	86543	75432
10	7543A	87432	7632A
11	75432	87532	7642A
12	7632A	87542	7643A
13	7642A	87543	76432
14	7643A	87632	7652A
15	76432	87642	7653A
16	7652A	87643	76532
17	7653A	87652	7654A
18	76532	87653	76542
19	7654A	95432	8432A
20	76542	96432	8532A
21	76543	96532	8542A

Number #	California Ace-to-Five	Kansas City Deuce-to-Seven	London Ace-to-Six
22	8432A	96542	8543A
23	8532A	96543	85432
24	8542A	97432	8632A
25	8543A	97532	8642A
26	85432	97542	8643A
27	8632A	97543	86432
28	8642A	97632	8652A
29	8643A	97642	8653A
30	86432	97643	86532
31	8652A	97652	8654A
32	8653A	97653	86542
33	86532	97654	86543
34	8654A	98432	8732A
35	86542	98532	8742A
36	86543	98542	8743A
37	8732A	98543	87432
38	8742A	98632	8752A
39	8743A	98642	8753A
40	87432	98643	87532
41	8752A	98652	8754A
42	8753A	98653	87542
43	87532	98654	87543
44	8754A	98732	8762A
45	87542	98742	8763A
46	87543	98743	87632
47	8762A	98752	8764A
48	8763A	98753	87642
49	87632	98754	87643
50	8764A	98762	8765A
51	87642	98763	87652
52	87643	98764	87653
53	8765A	T5432	9432A
54	87652	T6432	9532A
55	87653	T6532	9542A
56	87654	T6542	9543A

B. “Sevens Rule”

Most California cardrooms have something called the sevens rule. After the draw, you must bet a 7 or better whenever you are either first to bet, or those ahead of you have passed. If you do not, you cannot win any action after the draw, and, in some clubs, you forfeit the entire pot. Of course, if you have a 7 or better and someone bets ahead of you, you can throw the hand away if you do not think it will win.

Strictly speaking, you can pass a 7 or better after the draw, and then call with it. If you do, though, all you can do is lose. Here's why. If someone bets after you, and hers is a worse hand (and you call), the rules let her remove her money from the pot. If hers is the better hand, however, and you call, your money stays in the pot. In those few clubs in which you lose the entire pot by passing a 7, if you inadvertently make the mistake of passing, just quietly throw your cards away. Don't make a fuss. They won't change the rules just for you.

There actually are an extremely few instances in which it is mathematically sound to pass and then call with a 7 (because you lose less than if you bet). An explanation of when you can profitably do so is way beyond the scope of the early part of this series. I mention it only because renowned poker theoretician David Sklansky has written about when to make the play. For all practical purposes, however, if you just assume that it is never correct to pass and call with a 7 or better, particularly in no-limit lowball, you won't make many mistakes.

Players are likely to inadvertently pass 7s (or better) in two situations:

- A new player gets flustered and forgets the rule. He passes without thinking. Sometimes he remembers the rule before the next player has acted, and tries to un-pass, with some such remark as, “I forget about that sevens rule. Can I make a bet now?” Sometimes he remembers after the next player has acted, often after the next player has already passed, and now when he tries to bet, an argument ensues. No matter how it happens, however, he gives away his hand, and chills the after-the-draw action.
- A player draws several cards, usually three or more, and passes without looking at her cards, unconsciously concluding that she could not possibly make a 7 or better drawing that many cards. Of course, the time she passes blind is often the time she makes that miracle draw. What often happens is that she ends up losing money, because someone would have called a bet.

There are two obvious countermeasures for these situations.

- The first is always be aware of the sevens rule. Remember that it is in force in almost every California cardroom that has lowball. Be aware of what your hand is when it is your turn to act, and don't pass if you have a 7 or better.
- The second is, when you take multiple cards, don't pass blind; don't assume that you can't possibly make a hand. Look at your cards and, again, if you have a 7 or better, bet.

How the sevens rule comes into effect when you call an all-in bet that is less than a full bet:

You can inadvertently run afoul of the sevens rule in the following way.

If someone makes a bet in turn that is less than a full bet, and you just call (rather than completing the bet) with a 7 or better, and someone calls or raises behind you, that person gets his bet back (unless he has you beat, of course).

Example: The limit is \$20. Four players call, so the pot now contains \$80. (For simplicity, let's assume that three of the players are the blinds.) After the draw, John, directly to the left of the button, has only \$15 left, which he bets. You, on the big blind, who drew two cards, got lucky and made a wheel. You don't want to scare either of the two remaining players, so you just call, knowing that you can't win any more from John. Cindy, who had originally opened the pot and was pat, says, "I complete the bet", and puts in \$20. Henry, on the button, who had drawn one card, now raises, by putting in \$40. A side pot is created. The bet skips John, who is out of chips. You say, "I raise", and someone at the table informs you that since check-raising is not permitted in limit poker, all you can do is call.

Cindy, though, reraises, and Henry just calls the bet. You call the extra bet. The hands are shown. John made an 8-4, and is out of contention. You show your wheel, and start to reach for the pot. Cindy shows a 6-4 and Henry shows 6-5-4-3-2. The house dealer pushes all of Cindy's and Henry's post-draw betting back to them, and pushes the center pot to you, consisting of that initial \$80, plus the \$30 that constitutes the \$15 that John bet and you called. You don't win the extra \$120 that Cindy and Henry put in, because what you did is a violation of the sevens rule. Had you *completed the bet*, by putting in an extra \$5 with your \$15, you would have won a lot more.

So here's what to remember. If someone goes all in ahead of you and that bet is less than a full bet, be sure to complete the bet if you have a 7 or better. That is, put enough into the pot to turn your call into as much as the limit of the game. Of course, there's nothing to stop you from completing the bet even if you have worse.

The same thing holds in no-limit lowball. If someone goes all in ahead of you and that bet is less than the minimum bet for the game, be sure to complete the bet if you have a 7 or better. So, for example, if the blinds were \$5-\$5-\$10, the minimum bet would be \$20. If after the draw the player ahead of you goes all in for \$15 and you have a pat wheel and at least one player remains behind you, make sure to put in at least \$20. Since it's a no-limit game, you can of course put in as much more as you like.

From Michael Wiesenbergs' "Go For Low" column in Card Player Magazine