



BARGE Rule Book 2019

Christopher J. Mecklin

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Preface



This document contains the rules of many forms of poker, some of which will be played in BARGE 2019 tournaments, others in tournaments in past years, and yet others only in BARGE cash games or home games.

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. Also, rules for some of the stranger games came from an archived version of the BARGE website, called the BARGE Poker Game Rule Archive. <http://web.archive.org/web/20120721203440/http://www.barge.org/rules/>. I have also referred to Bob Ciaffone's *Robert's Rules of Poker*, <http://www.pokercoach.us/robspkrrules4.htm>.

Note that the rule book, unless otherwise noted, is written under the assumption that the games are being played in a limit format, with a small betting limit and a large betting limit. Please make appropriate adjustments when playing that game in the pot-limit or no-limit format.

Chapter 1 describes Betting Formats. Chapter 2 goes into unusual games fea-

tured in BARGE 2019 tournaments that are not usually played in modern card rooms: Short Deck Texas Holdem (to be played as a no limit game), Mississippi Stud/Stud High-Low Eight-or-Better/Razz (these are stud variants that will be used in the Pot Limit HORSE tournament), California Lowball and Archie (both in the Second Chance TESLA event as the L and A, respectively), Korean, and Oklahoma (these last two as their own Second Chance Events). The final Second Chance Event is Limit Holdem Win The Button, which differs from standard limit holdem only in that the winner of the hand inherits the button on the subsequent hand.

Chapter 3 covers games that will be found in the Dealers Choice mix (which features the same set of 20 games that is used by the WSOP in their Dealers Choice tournaments), the Limit 6 Game (HORSE + Badacey) tournament, the Mike Sexton Style Tournament of Champions, along with the PLO and NLHE tournaments, and Chapter 4 will deal with games that are not featured in BARGE 2019 tournaments.

This document also includes Appendices explaining the “Sevens Rule” (originally written by Michael Weisenberg) and various Lowball Scales (written by me).

Chapter 1

Betting Formats

1.1 Limit

In *limit* poker, also called *fixed-limit* poker, the size of the raise a player makes is predetermined by the structure of the game or tournament. The structure will specify the size of the *small bet*, the *large bet*, the *small and big blinds* for games that use blinds, and the *ante* and *bring-in* for games that use them. It is typical in modern play for flop and draw variations to use blinds and for stud variations to use antes and a bring-in. Antes are almost never used in flop or draw variations played in either the limit or pot-limit format, but are commonly implemented in conjunction with the blinds in the no-limit format.

As an example, suppose you are playing limit holdem in a tournament at the 100/200 level. This means that the small blind is 50 (typically half the small bet), the large blind is 100, the small bet is also 100, and the large bet is 200. As this is a flop game, the small bet limit is used pre-flop and after the flop, and the large bet limit is used on the turn and river. In a game with only two rounds of action rather than four, such as California Lowball, the pre-draw action is at the small bet limit and the post-draw action at the large bet limit.

For a second example, suppose you are playing razz in a tournament at the 200/400 level with a 50 ante and a 75 bring-in. Each player will put in 50 before the first three cards are dealt and the player with the highest door card is forced to make a 75 bring-in, with an option to instead *complete* to 200, the full size of the small bet. The small bet of 200 is used for action on third and fourth streets (two rounds), while the large bet of 400 is used on fifth, sixth, and seventh street (three rounds of action). Most stud variations operate on this basis, with the bring-in being either the player with the highest or lowest door card, depending on the game.

An all-in wager of less than half the bet does not reopen the betting for a player that has already acted and is in the pot for all previous bets. A player facing less than half a bet may fold, call, or complete the bet. For example, suppose a player has made an all-in wager of 100 when the limit is 400. A subsequent player who

has not yet acted may fold, call 100, or complete to 400.

An all-in wager of a half bet or more is treated as as a full bet, and a player may fold, call, or make a full raise. For example, suppose a player has made an all-in wager of 300 when the limit is 400. A subsequent player wishing to raise would make it $300+400=700$.

The number of raises that can be made per street varies between different poker rooms. Often a bet and 3 raises is allowed (i.e. it is possible to 4-bet but not to 5-bet); sometimes a bet and 4 raises is allowed. Often the cap on the number of raises is removed when two players are heads-up in a cash game, but typically not for a tournament. Check and raise is usually allowed, except in limit California Lowball.

1.2 No-Limit

In *no-limit* poker, when a player chooses to bet or raise, the size of the raise can be anywhere from the minimum bet to *all-in* (i.e. all of the chips the player has in front of them, or what many of us call the “jam”). The minimum bet will be equal to the size of the large blind. The minimum raise is the size of the last wager. A player who wishes to bet or raise but does not have enough chips to make the minimum wager may go *all-in* with their remaining chips. Stud variations without blinds are rarely played in a no-limit format. The minimum bet would be the size of the bring-in in such a format.

As an example, suppose you are playing no-limit holdem in a tournament at the 100/200 level. Unlike limit, this means that the small blind is 100 and the large blind is 200. Often each player will also put in an ante; this is commonly done in later levels of no-limit holdem tournaments. A recent innovation is the big blind ante, where instead of all players anteing every hand, the players take turns posting a consolidated ante for the whole table, usually when in the big blind.

Suppose the action folds to the player on the button, who says *raise*. The minimum raise in this situation would be 200 (making it 400 to go), and the maximum raise is all chips the button has. Suppose the button raises 300, making it 500 to go. The small blind then may fold, call 300, or raise anywhere from 300 (making it 800 to go) to all their chips. Suppose the small blind raises 700, making it 1200 to go. The big blind's options would be to fold, call 1000 (i.e. 300+700), or raise a minimum of 700. Suppose the big blind folds. The button may now either fold, call 700, or raise a minimum of 700. In our case, the button calls, and a flop is dealt.

Unlike limit poker, the half bet size rule does not apply to no-limit poker. A player who has already acted and is not facing a fullsize 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.

There are an unlimited number of raises available to the players. Check and raise is allowed.

1.3 Pot-Limit

In *pot-limit* poker, when a player chooses to bet or raise, the size of the raise can be anywhere from the minimum bet to the *size of the pot*. The minimum bet will be equal to the size of the large blind. The minimum raise is the size of the last bet or raise.. A player who wishes to bet or raise but does not have enough chips to make the minimum wager may go *all-in* with their remaining chips. Stud variations without blinds are sometimes played in a pot-limit format, with the minimum bet being the size of the bring-in.

For an example, suppose you are playing in a pot-limit Omaha tournament at the 100/200 level. Unlike limit and like no-limit, this means that the small blind is 100 and the large blind is 200. Suppose the action folds to the player on the button, who says *raise*. The minimum raise in this situation would be 200 (making it 400 to go), and the maximum raise would be the size of the pot. As the first player to act pre-flop, the pot size will be 3.5 times the big blind (i.e. 7 times the small blind), so the maximum raise is to make it 700 (a raise of 500). This assumes that the first action is prior to the small blind, both blinds are posted, and that the small blind is exactly half the big blind. Suppose the cut-off makes it 500, a raise of 300. The button says *pot*. The pot-sized bet will be $3L + T$, where L (the last wager, by the button) is $L = 500$ and the trail $T = 300$ (the blinds), Here, that will be equal to $3 * 500 + 300 = 1800$, so the button makes it 1800 to go, a raise of 1300.

For a second example, suppose you are playing a pot-limit London lowball (i.e. Ace-to-Six razz) tournament where the ante is 100 and the bring-in is 150. With eight players, the size of the pot is $8 * 100 + 150 = 950$. Player A brings it in for 150. Player B says *raise*. The minimum raise Player B can make is 150 (the size of the bring-in), to 300, and the maximum raise is $950 + 150 = 1100$, to 1250 (call $150 +$ raise of 1100). Suppose Player B raised 500, to 650, and Player C says *pot*. The pot-sized bet will be $3L + T$, where L (the last wager, by Player B) is $L = 650$, the trail T (the bring-in by Player A and the antes) is $T = 950$, so the pot-sized bet is to $3 * 650 + 950 = 2900$, a raise of 2250. Notice that if we used $3L + T$ for Player B, we get $3 * 150 + 800 = 1250$, a raise of 1100, as we got before.

Unlike limit poker, the half bet size rule does not apply to pot-limit poker. A player who has already acted and is not facing a fullsize 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.

There are an unlimited number of raises available to the players. Check and raise is allowed.

Chapter 2

BARGE 2019 Unusual Tournament Games

2.1 Archie

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 and California low hand splits the pot. A player must have a pair of sixes or better to qualify for the high hand and eight or better to qualify for the low hand. In the case where no player qualifies in either direction, the high hand, even though it is weaker than a pair of sixes, scoops the pot.

NOTE: Sometimes the qualifier for high hand is a pair of nines rather than a pair of sixes.

Reference: <https://www.countingouts.com/archie-introduction>

2.2 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.

California Lowball is usually 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.

NOTE: California Lowball was most commonly played as a limit game, with the Sevens Rule (see **Appendix**) in effect and with no check and raise allowed. It was also sometimes played as a no-limit game, with no Sevens Rule and with check and raise allowed.

2.3 Korean

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 and California low hand splits the pot. A player must have a pair or better to qualify for the high hand and no pair to qualify for the low hand. Notice that unlike Archie, every hand that makes it to showdown will qualify in at least one direction, with straights and flushes qualifying in both directions.

2.4 Mississippi Stud/Stud High-Low Eight-or-Better/Razz

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

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, starting with the player to the left of the big blind (as is usual for games with blinds). For all rounds, the minimum bet will be equal to the size of the big blind and the minimum raise is the size of the last bet or raise. The maximum wager is the size of the pot.

Two up cards are dealt to each player in the way stud up cards are dealt, that is, starting in seat 1. This is followed by a round of betting. The betting is initiated by the best high poker hand showing for stud and stud high-low eight-or-better. The betting is initiated by the best low poker hand for razz.

A fourth up card is dealt to all players. This is followed by a round of betting. The best high poker hand on the board leads the betting for stud and stud high-low eight-or-better. The betting is initiated by the best low poker hand for razz.

A fifth up card is dealt to all players. This is followed by a round of betting starting with the best high poker hand on the board for stud and stud high-low eight-or-better. The betting is initiated by the best low poker hand for razz.

If there are not enough cards in the stub to deal every remaining player a card, a single community card is dealt instead.

It is required of each player that they 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 for Mississippi stud.

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

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

NOTE: The rules for Mississippi Stud were written assuming the game is played pot-limit with blinds. The game was designed by David Zanetti to be a version of stud more amenable to a big-bet format than standard seven-card stud. See <https://web.archive.org/web/20150907103507/http://www.rgpfaq.com/mississippi-stud.html>.

2.5 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:

| | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| X_1 | X_1 | X_1 | Y_1 | Z_1 |
| X_2 | X_2 | X_2 | Y_2 | Z_2 |
| X_3 | X_3 | X_3 | Y_3 | Z_3 |

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, where all three boards are removed and the dealer wins the pot.

For example, if Z_1 , Z_2 , and Z_3 are the $3\heartsuit$, $8\spadesuit$, and $3\clubsuit$ respectively, then all of the cards on both row 1 and row 3 are removed. 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.

2.6 Short Deck Texas Hold'em

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds. A deck of 36 cards is used, where all of the deuces, treys, fours, and fives have been removed, leaving a deck with sixes, sevens, eights, nines, tens, Jacks, Queens, Kings, and Aces in the four suits.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt two cards face down, followed by a round of no-limit betting.

Three community cards are placed face up. This is followed by a round of no-limit betting.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of no-limit betting.

One additional community card is placed face up. This is followed by a round of no-limit betting. This is followed by a showdown.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high five-card hand wins the pot. In this game, a flush outranks a full house. Note that the lowest possible straight in this game is 9876A (the “short deck wheel”) with the AKQJT (broadway) as the highest straight.

Note: This game is also called Six-Plus Texas Holdem and will be played with no-limit betting at BARGE 2019. The game is sometimes played where three-of-a-kind beats a straight. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six-plus_hold_'em

Chapter 3

BARGE 2019 Tournament Games

3.1 Ace-to-Five 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 California lowball hand wins the pot.

NOTE: This game is usually played limit, but is sometimes played as a pot-limit game. It is not played with a joker/bug.

3.2 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*. See the **Appendix** on Lowball Scales for more details.

3.3 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 743 beats 752. See the **Appendix** on Lowball Scales for more details.

3.4 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 $75A$. See the **Appendix** on Lowball Scales for more details.

3.5 Big O

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 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.

NOTE: Big O is usually played as a pot-limit game.

3.6 Deuce-To-Seven 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.

Evaluating the Showdown

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

NOTE: Also known as Kansas City Lowball, this game is most commonly played as a no-limit game. It is not played with a joker/bug.

3.7 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.

NOTE: This game is usually played limit, but is sometimes played as a pot-limit game. It is not played with a joker/bug.

3.8 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”, as opposed to “Jacks or Better”, where the opener must have at least a pair of jacks 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. NOTE: This game was most commonly played as a limit game, although although big-bet formats in either pot-limit or no-limit existed. It is sometimes played without the joker/bug.

3.9 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.

NOTE: This game is most commonly played as pot-limit (PLO), but is sometimes played as a limit game.

3.10 Omaha High/Low 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.

NOTE: Both limit (O8) and pot-limit versions (PLO8) of this game are popular.

3.11 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 $K\heartsuit$, $K\diamondsuit$, $K\clubsuit$, and so on.

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.

3.12 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♦, 2♥, 2♠, and so on.

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.

3.13 Stud High/Low 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♦, 2♥, 2♠, and so on.

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.

3.14 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 (as in razz). The $K\spadesuit$ is the highest possible card followed by the $K\heartsuit$, $K\diamondsuit$, $K\clubsuit$, and so on.

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 (as in razz).

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.

NOTE: This game is also known as Stud High/Low Regular.

3.15 Texas 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. NOTE: Commonly known as Hold'em. No-limit Hold'em is currently the most popular game, both for tournaments and cash games. Limit Hold'em used to be the most popular cash game. This game is now rarely spread in a pot-limit format.

Chapter 4

Other Games

4.1 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.

4.2 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 flop cards 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.

4.3 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 card (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.

4.4 Crazy Pineapple High/Low 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.

4.5 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. $A\spadesuit$ is the highest possible card followed by the $A\heartsuit$, $A\diamondsuit$, $A\clubsuit$, and so on.

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.

4.6 Dramaha

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.

Then 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. Note that this differs from Triple Draw Dramaha, where the draw takes place BEFORE the flop betting.

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 Omaha high hand (using exactly two cards from the player's hand and exactly three cards from the board) and the best five card draw hand (using all five cards from the player's hand) splits the pot.

4.7 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.

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

4.8 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♦, 2♥, 2♠, and so on.

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.

4.9 Four Card Chowaha High/Low 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 hold 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.

4.10 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.

Note: unlike Omaha, a player may use both, one, or none of the cards in their hand to make either the high or the low.

4.11 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 (but NOT all three) from each player's hand and the remaining cards from the board.

4.12 Lazy Pineapple High/Low 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.

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

A player may use zero, one, or two cards (but NOT all three) from their hand to make a five card high hand and a five card California low hand with an eight qualifier. The best high and best qualifying low will split the pot.

4.13 London Lowball

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 $K\heartsuit$, $K\diamondsuit$, $K\clubsuit$, and so on.

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. For all rounds, the minimum bet will be equal to the size of the bring-in and the minimum raise is the size of the last bet or raise. The maximum wager is the size of the pot.

A second up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting. 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.

A fourth up card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting.

A third down card is dealt to all active players. This is followed by a round of betting. 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 Ace-to-Six low hand wins the pot. Straights and flushes count against the player, unlike California Lowball (Ace-to-Five) but like Kansas City Lowball (Deuce-to-Seven). Unlike Deuce-to-Seven, the Ace is the low card, not the high card. Thus the nuts is a non-flush 6432A hand. See the **Appendix** on Lowball Scales.

NOTE: The rules for London Lowball were written assuming the game is played pot-limit, which is traditional for this game as described in *Pot-Limit & No-Limit Poker* by Stewart Reuben and Bob Ciaffone and how it was played at BARGE 2018. It is not played with a joker/bug.

4.14 Murder

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. Two columns of three cards each (X) are placed in the center of the table as the flop. There is a round of betting at the lower limit.

A third column of three community cards (Y) are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit.

A fourth column of three community cards (Z) are placed face up. This is followed by a round of betting at the big bet limit. This is followed by a showdown.

The final board will look like this:

| | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| X | X | Y | Z |
| X | X | Y | Z |
| X | X | Y | Z |

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.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best high hand and the best California low hand with an 8-or-better qualifier split the pot. As in Omaha, hands are made using exactly two cards from each player's hand and exactly three cards from the board to form each portion of their hand. When forming a hand (high or low), each player may use only one card from each row on the board! Separate hand and board cards may be used by each player to create their high and low hands.

Warning! Given the number of cards in a player's hand, the number of possible combinations of cards that may be used from the board, the fact that the game is split pot, and the fact that each hand must be formed using only one card present in each row of the board cards, evaluating hands can be especially tricky.

4.15 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 $K\heartsuit$, $K\diamondsuit$, $K\clubsuit$, and so on.

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.

4.16 Scrotum

Forced Money

The game is played with a button and blinds.

Dealing Procedure

Each player is dealt five cards face down. This is followed by a round of betting at the small bet limit. Each player will discard between zero and four of the cards they've been dealt (leaving from $x = 1$ to $x = 5$ cards remaining in their hands.) Each player must arrange their down cards on the table such that it is apparent how many cards each has kept.

When a player first indicates their willingness to continue with the hand (by putting chips in the pot or indicating that they check,) at the same time they should place the cards they wish to discard under the chips they've placed in the pot.

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 all x cards from the player's hand and $5 - x$ cards from the board, i.e., the number of board cards necessary to make a five-card hand.

NOTE: Unlike Omaha/8, no matter what comes on the board a low hand is possible as long as a player has retained a sufficient number of cards to make a qualifying low hand.

4.17 Triple Draw Dramaha

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. 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. Note that this differs from Dramaha, where the draw takes place AFTER the flop betting.

One additional community card is placed face up. 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.

One additional community card is placed face up. 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.

Evaluating the Showdown

The best Omaha high hand (using exactly two cards from the player's hand and exactly three cards from the board) and the best five card draw hand (using all five cards from the player's hand) splits the pot.

4.18 Two or Five Omaha High/Low 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 their hand to make a 7532A low, and all five cards from their hand to make a ace-queen high flush.

Note that this player does not have the nut low, as it is possible that another player holds a five card hand that makes a better California low hand than 7532A.

Appendix A

Lowball Scales

A.1 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 with 32A. 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.

A.2 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 22543. 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, Binglaha, 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” (see Appendix B) with no check and raise allowed.

A.3 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 Section A.4) and would beat all other ace-low hands and any paired hand.

Again, if all players at showdown are paired, the lowest pair would win. But 22543 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 6543-Joker, 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 and 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 is allowed).

A.4 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).

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. This version made its BARGE debut in 2018.

A.5 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 a *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*.

A.6 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” (i.e. the fourth best possible hand), 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.

| # | Ace-to-Five | Deuce-to-Seven | 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 |
| 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 |

| # | Ace-to-Five | Deuce-to-Seven | Ace-to-Six |
|----|-------------|----------------|------------|
| 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 |

Appendix B

The “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:

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 $8 - 4 - 3 - 2 - A$, and is out of contention. You show your wheel $5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - A$, and start to reach for the pot. Cindy shows a $6 - 4 - 3 - 2 - A$ 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 its 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