5 Card Draw Poker rules
Expert Tips

Standard Poker Hand Rankings

There are 52 cards in the pack, and the ranking of the individual cards, from high to low, is **ace, king, queen, jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2**. There is **no** ranking between the suits - so for example the king of hearts and the king of spades are **equal**.

A poker hand consists of five cards. The categories of hand, from highest to lowest, are listed in the chart below. Any hand in a higher category beats any hand in a lower category (so for example any three of a kind beats any two pairs). Between hands in the same category the rank of the individual cards decides which is better, as described in more detail below.

In games where a player has more than five cards and selects five to form a poker hand, the remaining cards do not play any part in the ranking. Poker ranks are always based on five cards only.

Poker Hand Rankings

1. Royal Flush - A royal flush is a straight flush that has a high card value of Ace. This is the highest hand in poker.

2. Straight Flush - A straight flush is a five card sequence of the same suit.

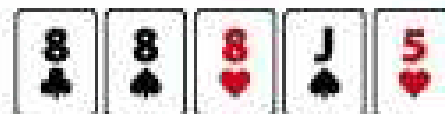**3. Four of a Kind** - All four cards of the same rank / value.

4. Full House - Three of a kind combined with a pair. Ties are broken by the three of a kind and then by the higher pair if necessary.
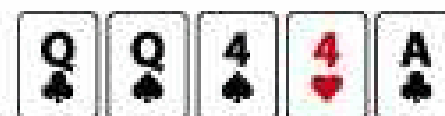
5. Flush - Any five cards of the same suit, but not in sequence. Ties are broken by the high card within the flush

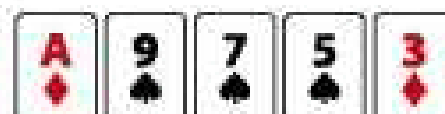**6. Straight** - Five cards in sequence of mixed suits. The straight that has the highest card is the winner.

7. Three of a Kind - Three cards with the same rank / value. Ties are broken by the highest value.

8. Two Pair - Two sets of equal value cards. The pair with the higher value is the tie breaker.

9. Pair - Two cards of equal rank / value.

10. High Card - A hand with no other combination is valued by the highest ranked card.

1. Royal Flush

This is the highest poker hand. It consists of ace, king, queen, jack and ten, all in the same suit. As all suits are equal, all royal flushes are equal.

2. Straight Flush

Five cards of the same suit in sequence - such as ♣J-♣10-♣9-♣8-♣7. Between two straight flushes, the one containing the higher top card is higher. An ace can be counted as low, so ♥5-♥4-♥3-♥2-♥A is a straight flush, but its top card is the five, not the ace, so it is the lowest type of straight flush. The cards cannot "turn the corner": ♦4-♦3-♦2-♦A-♦K is not valid.

3. Four of a kind

Four cards of the same rank - such as four queens. The fifth card can be anything. This combination is sometimes known as "quads", and in some parts of Europe it is called a "poker", though this term for it is unknown in English. Between two fours of a kind, the one with the higher set of four cards is higher - so **3-3-3-3-A** is beaten by **4-4-4-4-2**. It can't happen in standard poker, but if in some other game you need to compare two fours of a kind where the sets of four cards are of the same rank, then the one with the higher fifth card is better.

4. Full House

This consists of three cards of one rank and two cards of another rank - for example three sevens and two tens (colloquially known as "sevens full" or more specifically "sevens on tens"). When comparing full houses, the rank of the three cards determines which is higher. For example **9-9-9-4-4** beats **8-8-8-A-A**. If the threes of a kind were equal, the rank of the pairs would decide.

5. Flush

Five cards of the same suit. When comparing two flushes, the highest card determines which is higher. If the highest cards are equal then the second highest card is compared; if those are equal too, then the third highest card, and so on. For example ♠K-♠J-♠9-♠3-♠2 beats ♦K-♦J-♦7-♦6-♦5 because the nine beats the seven.

6. Straight

Five cards of mixed suits in sequence - for example ♠Q-♦J-♥10-♠9-♣8. When comparing two sequences, the one with the higher ranking top card is better. Ace can count high or low in a straight, but not both at once, so **A-K-Q-J-10** and **5-4-3-2-A** are valid straights, but **2-A-K-Q-J** is not. **5-4-3-2-A** is the lowest kind of straight, the top card being the five.

7. Three of a Kind

Three cards of the same rank plus two other cards. This combination is also known as Triplets or Trips. When comparing two threes of a kind the hand in which the three equal cards are of higher rank is better. So for example **5-5-5-3-2** beats **4-4-4-K-Q**. If you have to compare two threes of a kind where the sets of three are of equal rank, then the higher of the two remaining cards in each hand are compared, and if those are equal, the lower odd card is compared.

8. Two Pairs

A pair is two cards of equal rank. In a hand with two pairs, the two pairs are of different ranks (otherwise you would have four of a kind), and there is an odd card to make the hand up to five cards. When comparing hands with two pairs, the hand with the highest pair wins, irrespective of the rank of the other cards - so **J-J-2-2-4** beats **10-10-9-9-8** because the jacks beat the tens. If the higher pairs are equal, the lower pairs are compared, so that for example **8-8-6-6-3** beats **8-8-5-5-K**. Finally, if both pairs are the same, the odd cards are compared, so **Q-Q-5-5-8** beats **Q-Q-5-5-4**.

9. Pair

A pair is a hand with two cards of equal rank and three other cards which do not match these or each other. When comparing two such hands, the hand with the higher pair is better - so for example **6-6-4-3-2** beats **5-5-A-K-Q**. If the pairs are equal, compare the highest ranking odd cards from each hand; if these are equal compare the second highest odd card, and if these are equal too compare the lowest odd cards. So **J-J-A-9-3** beats **J-J-A-8-7** because the 9 beats the 8.

10. High Card

Five cards which do not form any of the combinations listed above. When comparing two such hands, the one with the better highest card wins. If the highest cards are equal the second cards are compared; if they are equal too the third cards are compared, and so on. So **A-J-9-5-3** beats **A-10-9-6-4** because the jack beats the ten.