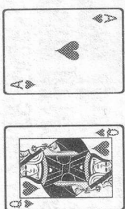


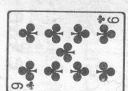
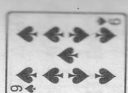
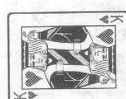
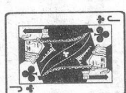
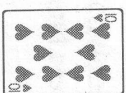
In Hold'em, cards on the board are *community cards*—they are used by all the players in forming their hands. Your hand is the best five-card combination possible, using your two pocket cards and any of the five community cards. If the best five-card hand consists of the five cards on the board, that is your hand. Your pocket cards only matter if one or both of them improve what is on the board.

### Hand Rankings

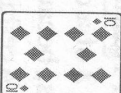
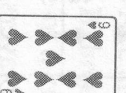
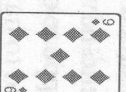
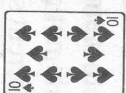
The recognized five-card combinations are summarized next in order of rank (the highest-ranked hand, which is the least likely to occur, is listed first). To reinforce the concept of pocket cards and community cards, a sample hand is shown for each hand ranking. Pocket cards are on the left, and the complementing community cards follow each description. Learn to spot patterns in the formation of hands. The use of community cards creates possibilities for hands in Hold'em that players of Seven-Card Stud don't think about. For example, in contrast to Stud, it is possible for two Hold'em players each to have three cards of the same rank. However, it is impossible for two Hold'em players to have flushes in different suits. These new possibilities and new limitations are discussed.



**STRAIGHT FLUSH**—five sequentially ordered cards of the same suit. The value of the highest card determines the value of the straight flush. Therefore the highest-ranked hand possible is a *royal flush*: —A, K, Q, J, 10 (all of the same suit).



**FOUR OF A KIND**—four cards of the same rank, such as four 9s or four Aces. In Hold'em, at least one pair must appear on the board for someone to have four of a kind. For example: if you are dealt two 9s, the other two 9s must appear on the board for you to have four 9s. You can also have four 9s if three 9s appear on the board and you hold the remaining 9. If two pairs are on the board, it is possible for two players to have four of a kind. In this case, the rank of the cards forming the hand determines the rank of the hand (four 9s beat four 8s). If all four 9s appear on the board, then all players have four 9s as their hand. To win the hand in this circumstance, one of your pocket cards must be higher than anyone else's pocket card and higher than the fifth card on the board. This illustrates an important concept in Hold'em—the *kicker*. A kicker is a pocket card that is not part of the combination, but decides ties. If the fifth card on the board is higher than anyone's kicker, all players have the exactly the same hand and the pot is split.



**FULL HOUSE**—A full house (also referred to as a *boat*) is three of one kind and two of another. For someone to have a full house, at least a pair must appear on the board. There are several card combinations that allow you to have a full house. One

