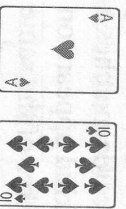
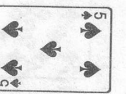
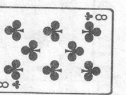
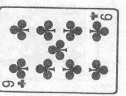
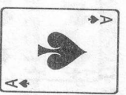


board shows K, K, 3, 7, 5. You hold J, 3 and another player holds a 10, 3. Both of you have two pair, Ks and 3s, but you win, since your J-kicker beats the 10-kicker. As mentioned before, it is possible for the top kicker to appear on the board, in which case the pot is split. Suppose for the same pocket cards, the board showed, K, K, 3, 7, A. Both of you have Ks and 3s with an Ace kicker. Your J does not get to play and the pot is split. When comparing hands with two pair, the top pair determines who wins. Which brings us to another important concept in Hold'em—the *overcard*. Suppose you have K, Q in the pocket and the board comes up K, 3, 3, Q, A. The Ace on the board is an overcard to your King. Your hand is two pair, Kings and Queens but you lose to anyone holding a single Ace in the pocket, since they also have two pair (Aces and threes).



ONE PAIR—two cards of the same rank. If you have two pocket cards of the same rank, you have one pair. If two cards of the same rank appear on the board, everyone has at least one pair. Any card you hold that matches at least one card on the board gives you one pair.



HIGH CARD—If none of the combinations described can be formed, the high card wins at showdown. If players share the same high card, the second highest card plays, and so on.

SPLIT POTS—Suits are not ranked in poker. If two or more players have the same five-card hand at showdown, the money is split between them.

Betting

A hand of Texas Hold'em has four rounds of betting. In a *limit* game (the most common form of Hold'em), the first two betting rounds are set at an arbitrary limit (such as \$2), and the last two betting rounds are at twice the limit of the early rounds. All bets and raises must be in increments of the limit. Hold'em games are referred to by their limits. In a \$2–4 limit game, the betting increments in the first two rounds are \$2 and in the last two rounds \$4. The flowchart on Page 10 shows the four betting rounds and the possible decisions in each round.

Seeding the Pot: Before any cards are dealt, two designated players must place *blind bets* to seed the pot. The player selected as the *small blind* must bet half the smaller limit. Then the player to the immediate left of the small blind, designated as the *big blind*, must bet the full amount of the smaller limit. In a typical \$2–4 game, the small blind bet is \$1 and the big blind bet is \$2. After each hand, the blind positions shift by one seat.

Round 1—After the Deal: The first round of betting occurs after all players are dealt their pocket cards. Betting begins with the player to the immediate left of the big blind, who must *call*, meaning match the big blind bet in order to stay in the game. Betting proceeds to the left. To stay in the game, each player must call the current bet. All players, including the blinds, have the option of raising when it is their turn. *Raises*, which are a match and increase of the previous bet, are in increments of the big blind bet (if \$2 is the blind bet, then all raises are in increments of \$2). Usually, raises are capped at three: If three raises have been made, no further raising is allowed. When play reaches the small blind, that player must make up the difference between the small and big blind bets, plus any raises, to stay in the game. The big blind player has the option to raise (if the cap has not been reached) after all the other players have acted.